



## US&R PROGRAM DIRECTIVE – 2014-006

April 15, 2014

**FOR:** National Urban Search & Rescue Response System  
Task Force Representatives

**FROM:** Fred Endrikat, Chief  
Urban Search and Rescue Branch

**SUBJECT:** US&R Program Directive 2014-006 – Washington Mudslide Response Post-Mission Medical and Veterinary Screening

National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Response System (the System) Program Directives have been issued to provide post-mission medical screening or surveillance direction for deployed task force personnel or canines after some responses. Multiple medical opinions exist on the topic of post-mission medical screening however, the System stands firm on the fact that the health and welfare of task force personnel and canines are the highest priority.

During the March & April response to the Washington Mudslide, the question was raised as to the necessity for post-mission medical screening for task force personnel or canines working or living within direct proximity to field operations at the landslide site.

The operational environment was examined and it was found that hazards encountered during US&R field operations included:

- Household hazardous materials
- Household septic systems (fecal coliform counts were within, and did not exceed, local historical findings)
- Electrical transformers (manufactured after prohibition of PCB oils)
- Petroleum products
- Biohazards (contact more than respiratory)

A review of the above hazards was conducted by the Incident Support Team (IST) Physician, task force Physicians, and the IST Veterinarian. For task force personnel it has been determined that there is no recommendation for any detailed surveillance or prophylactic treatments. For all deployed task force canines, canine specific post-mission screening recommendations have been developed.

Post-mission screening for any personnel and canines that deployed to and operated in the Washington Mudslide operational areas is a fully reimbursable cost related to the deployment.

**REQUIRED ACTIONS**

For the Washington Mudslide response, the following was determined to be appropriate actions for System task force personnel and canines:

- For System task force personnel that were in the operational environment:
  - CA-2 Form – No CA-2 Form documentation is planned due to the fact that there was no documented direct exposure to hazardous material or substance;
  - Post-Mission Medical Screening – Although there are no specific endemic human diseases anticipated the following symptoms should prompt medical evaluation:
    - Fever within 14 days post-deployment;
    - Upper or lower respiratory symptoms that worsen or persist longer than 5-7 days without improvement;
    - Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting and particularly diarrhea);
    - Skin rashes or infections;
    - Musculoskeletal (muscle or joint) pain that worsens or persists longer than 7-10 days without improvement; and / or
    - Sleep disturbances, nightmares, frightening thoughts, flashbacks, difficulty concentrating, feeling emotionally numb or irritable.
  - CISM – Per the IST and task force Physicians there is no indication of need for implementation of a coordinated CISM plan. It is recommended that each Sponsoring Agency address CISM issues on a case-by case basis through normal mechanisms.
- For System canines that were in the operational environment:
  - Demobilization physical examinations will be performed by the IST Veterinarian, Lori E. Gordon, DVM:
  - Post-Mission Veterinary Screening – Within 7-14 days of demobilization, have the following testing done:
    - Home-based primary care veterinary physical examination
    - Complete Blood Count (CBC)
    - Full Chemistry Profile
    - Urinalysis
    - Fecal (Centrifugation AND Giardia ELISA)
  - Monitoring should occur for signs or symptoms of illness, specifically those associated with Leptospirosis, which include: not eating, tired, fever, vomiting, dehydration, shivering, and/or muscle tenderness). If seen, the canine shall see their primary care veterinarian for examination and Leptospirosis testing. This is a reportable disease in some states.
  - **A copy of all results and exam findings are to be sent to Dr. Gordon via:**
    - E-mail: [Jellegl@gmail.com](mailto:Jellegl@gmail.com); or
    - Address: 4 Rose Lane, Atkinson, NH 03811

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**APPROVAL**

Issue is approved for FEMA National US&R Response System implementation:

Signed:

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Fred Endrikat, Chief, Urban Search and Rescue Branch

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April 15, 2014  
Date

Implementation Date: Immediate

Expiration Date: October 15, 2015

Distribution:

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- US&R Strategic Group
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