

HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

Report of Animal Welfare Committee

June 11, 2008

Committee Members:

Chair: Claudine Singer
Member: Roxanna Sanchez
Member: Diane Valantine
Member: Judy Johns (Certified Animal Safety Rep for American Humane)
Ex Officio: Dave Valantine
Advisor: Dean Cerf, DVM (Veterinary Consultant)

Purpose of the committee:

The purpose of the Animal Welfare committee is to research, create, and recommend to the Board of Directors policies for the humane care and treatment of HOPE AACR animals while on duty.

Scope of Project

This work has now been ongoing since November 2005 with the existing Committee. The Committee has been meeting on a monthly basis Sunday afternoons for 4 to 5 hours. The Committee now feels that its work has come to fruition.

The Committee has either defined or found definitions for:

- Animal Welfare
 - As defined by Broom and Johnson, 1993
- Variables-Risk Index
 - Travel
 - Living Conditions
 - Predictability (Deployment Scene)
 - Temperature (working environment) Hot weather / Dew point
 - Temperature (working environment) Cold weather /Wind chill
 - Noise Exposure
 - Congestion (At the scene)
 - Air Quality Index
 - Team Experience
 - K9 Characteristics
 - Body Condition and Breed Type Factors in hot climate
 - Body Condition and Breed Type Factors in cold climate

Other modules that have been completed are:

- Canine Body Language
- Stress Signals
- Basic Animal Field Care
- Pet Poison Safety Tips
- Hazardous Materials
- Zoonotics/Infectious Diseases
- Backpack and First Aid Kit

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- SOS Card
- Lessons Learned
- Recommended Reading

A *risk value* system of 1 thru 10 has been developed for each variable. The value of “1” represents the least amount of stress a team may be exposed to while the value “10” represents a point at which a team should cease to participate in an event. This risk value system has been developed to be used as a *tool* to help guide individual teams to evaluate the potential danger to a handler and his or her canine partner. The Committee has also defined the risk value system with sample analysis to help to facilitate the understanding of every aspect of an event that may be faced prior to being deployed. The system also serves to guide teams’ awareness of what they need to look for once they are at the scene of a crisis or in an emergency situation.

The Committee last met on April 20, 2008 at which time the Welfare Guidelines Manual was completed. A draft of the manual was then turned over to author and grammarian, Nick Nolan, for editing. At the same time, the manual was reviewed by Dr Dean Cerf, a renowned Veterinarian from New Jersey. Final revisions, based on Dr Cerf’s and Mr. Nolan’s recommendations were then incorporated and the manual is now ready for review by the HOPE AACR Board of Directors.

Once the revisions from the BOD are made, then the Guidelines will be added to the HOPE website for our teams’ use. The next phase of this project will be the development of presentation material for the purpose of training HOPE AACR teams.

The information gathered has come from various resources such as government web sites, other Internet research, miscellaneous books, publications and articles. Naturally, the call-out experience of our teams was drawn upon as a source of information as well.

I would like to thank the very, very dedicated Committee members for their devotion, the constant brain-storming and “homework” that went on between each meeting, and for over 2 ½ years of perseverance and patience. This project could not have been completed without each and everyone’s commitment. As the Committee chair, I consider myself truly blessed by all of my teammate’s continued support and friendship.

For the profound love of our canine partners and their unconditional devotion, I remain

Pawsitively,

Claudine Singer
Animal Welfare Chair