

Meeting record Search Dog Handlers Sub-Commission

Wednesday 18th Thursday 19th October 2018 – Chamonix, France.

We welcome all the associations and dog handlers to the commission in Chamonix with a special welcome to those representatives from Andorra and Iceland who are new to the commission.



Meeting Chamonix from 18th October 2018

Time: 8.00 am until 5.30 pm

Lead: Marcel Meier, Alpine Rescue Switzerland

Those attending: 35 Delegates

Agenda items:

1. Address list / Introduction of the participants
2. Meeting record from Andorra 2017
3. Introduction of the dog handlers

4. Review of the workshop in Passo Rolle April 2018

1) Address list / Introduction of the participants:

All the participants filled out the address list and are gave a short introduction.

2) Meeting record from Andorra 2017:

The meeting record from Andorra was approved unanimously.

3) Introduction of the new members:

The new participants of the Search Dog sub commission gave a short introduction of their organisation.

The new participants are:

- Welcome to Iceland BHSI
- Welcome to Andorra

4) Presentations:

4.1 Thora Jonasdottir – Search dog handler and vet, Iceland.

An introduction to Icelandic search dogs and some of the challenges i.e. volcanic eruptions, very sharp volcanic rocks, lava flows, weather, river crossings. Most of the population lives in Reykjavik, rest of the country very sparsely populated so potentially long travel times between handlers, this is challenging for both training and operations. Increasing number of tourists, some badly prepared for hikes etc.

4.2 Dave Benson, Dog Handler and Instructor, Lake District, England.

Mantrailing.

Terminology, Tracking / trailing, scent discrimination, working junctions and other challenges and terrain complications.

Working in the mountains.

Videos demonstrating aspects of working.

4.3 Chris Francis, Dog Handler, Instructor, and Callout Coordinator. Lake District, England.

2018 incidents to date 12th October

Dogs deployed 32 incidents.

Several multi day searches

75%+ searches were mountain incidents.

Two multi day incidents described in more detail, including an account of experiences from a casualty missing in the mountains for 2 days in January.

4.3 Elly Whiteford, Dog Handler and Instructor, Lake District, England.

Dog Welfare, the five ICAR best practise guide lines.

1 Nutrition and hydration

2 Hazard analysis – risk assessing on the hill for you and your dog, terrain, extreme weather of all types including heat, cold, wet and winds. The possibility of aggressive / violent missing people in certain categories of search.

3 Physical Fitness and condition. Capable of carrying out the task required.
Providing calming rest environment

4 Equipment – protect from the elements, cold and heat.

5 Behavioural - Coordinated responses of handlers and search dogs to internal and external stimuli. When to stop working, take breaks.

4.5 Christyne Judge, Dog Handler and Instructor, Lake District, England.

Dog Grooming.

Importance of maintaining your dog's coat. How to trim your dog's nails.

Ear infections, how to avoid.

Avoiding and dealing with a matted coat.

4.6 Michael Partholl, Dog Handler, Bavarian Rescue Dogs.

Transceiver on the dog.

Description of a series of trials involving the fitting of a transceiver operating in search mode and a radio to an avalanche search dog. The object of the exercise was try and use the speed of the dog to shorten transceiver search time.

The radio on the dog is constantly transmitting, the handler is then listening to the transmissions and can hear when the avalanche transceiver picks up a signal.

The hoped for result is that the dog will also pick up on the scent as well as the handler hearing the transmission and been able to a transceiver team to that location.

It is hoped that this will speed up the overall search.

4.7 Tracy Christensen, Dog Handler and President, Wasatch Backcountry Rescue, Utah, USA

Presentation on all data collected during a survey from the Search Dog organisations in ICAR.

Tracy hopes to create a platform for the exchange of experience,

best practice, methods etc. Allowing everyone to learn from each other using the wide range of skill sets, diverse working practices, types of incident responded to and technical solutions that exist among ICAR Dog-Handlers and organisations.

Also proposed by Tracey, the use of a standard coloured flag, across the different organisations, to be used when marking a casualty site in an avalanche situation. No decision at this time has been made.

4.8 Peter Karlsson – Sweden, Sledge Dog Professional.

Basic Training and Nutrition with working dogs in demanding situations.

Basic physical training from puppies, breaking in with the harness, dog fitness and fitness recovery time, injuries and recovery, stamina, methods of transport used in training, nutrition for the dog pre and post working to maximise performance and well-being.

4.9 Handler from Croatian dog team.

Search and rescue on the Islands of Mijet and Rab, Never Putna. British hiker missing for four days. A Very extensive multi agency search was undertaken for the missing male, in heat and difficult terrain. Casualty went four days with no water or food although there was water only 50yards away unbeknown to the casualty.

Casualty found alive.

5. Seppolo Lederhaas, Dog Handler Austrian Avalanche Search Dogs.

Helping to locate the casualty in wilderness search using the casualty's mobile phone in conjunction with Google Earth and the Android operating system, phone find function etc. (some techniques need casualty to provide google password).

5.1 Jennifer Coulter, Dog Handler and instructor, Canadian Avalanche Rescue Dogs.

Injuries to dogs (mostly lacerations to legs from ski edges) resulting from skiing to incidents, how big is the problem? Can different skiing techniques and positioning of dog reduce these potentially very serious injuries. Some first aid techniques for dealing with these injuries. Unfortunately some compromises essential as on busy ski slopes dog has to be close or between skier's legs at all times raising potential risk of injury. Can be more flexible with dog position when skiing to off-piste / backcountry incidents.

5.2 Knut Skar, Dog Handler, Instructor and Chairman Norwegian Search Dogs.

Cooperation project between Norway, England, Iceland, Malta and Sweden.

Some organisations granted E.U. ERASMUS funding for this project. Looks at all aspects of the organisations involved.

There are 5 Events scheduled, the first 3 have already taken place;

1. Lake District England December 2017

Structure, funding, local and national integration etc.

2. Norway April 2018

Avalanche Search, response, training and techniques, further discussion about call out systems, funding etc.

3. Iceland August 2018

Terrestrial Search, response, training and techniques.

4. Malta December 2018

Disaster Search, response, training and techniques.

5. Lake District England May 2019 (TBC)

Instructors, selection, requirements, training programmes etc.

Possibility to continue project making larger study using University involvement? Could be a lot of work and would need considering

carefully regarding costs in both money and time compared with expected benefits. Alternatively continue cooperation on less formal basis with 1 event every year rotating venues between the countries involved.

5.3 Alberioli Alessandro/GdF Dog Handler Italian Avalanche Search dogs.

Fatigue influences the search strategy but not the likelihood of success of well-trained avalanche (military) dogs.

Research indicating a dog that is tired from, for example, a journey of several kilometres to an incident site will still perform to the usual standard when finding buried casualties. Search strategies however can be modified to make some allowance for, and maximise performance of, a tired dog.

Introduction of the dog handlers from Chamonix
Thursday 18^h October. Real
Training in the field.

Education with young and certified dogs.

Dog demonstrations with and without distractions, simulated helicopter sound, smoke, flares, slide and high line. None of the dogs demonstrated that they had been stressed going through the distraction before their search and search effectively afterwards. Thank you to the French dog handlers for setting this up.



Work group for welfare

Work group to be created to make recommendations relating to dog welfare etc.

Recommendations will then be put together in the standard ICAR format.

Workgroup to be made up of, Peter (Sweden), Jennifer (Canada), Elly and Dave, to chair (England), Knut (Norway) and Thora (Iceland) Marcel (Switzerland).

Various:

Cooperation with the management board:

The president of the search dogs sub commission will discuss further steps, namely the updating off the byelaws to reflect the creation of a stand-alone search dog sub commission and the inclusion on the board of the position of president of the search dog sub commission.

Future Congress

The president asks that members of the sub commission continue to submit presentations and articles to ensure we have a full programme to be included in the time table along with the other commissions. Having a full and interesting programme may encourage visits from members from other commissions.

Current members should continue to encourage other suitable search dog groups to attend ICAR

A suggestion of “team work“, submitted by the dog handlers sub commission as a main theme for the next congress was accepted by the board.

Big thanks for all the good work by all involved in the dog’s commission. We have come a long way and hope to continue push this forward with the eventual goal of a full Search Dog Commission.

Expectations for the future...

The next Congress in Zakopane 2019

What do we do when things go wrong, with dog training?

Stopping a problem progressing, once problems arrive how do we deal with it?

The next workshop, Slovakia 2020

To end the search dog commission, Marcel thanked all attendees for the great and active work

Commission Members also thanked Marcel for his ongoing work on their behalf.

