

Address the basic Health and psch/soc needs of the team.

- A) There is a possibility they we may be deployed into situations were we are unable to access medical providers, basic pre approved protocols for the treatment of non-complex issues should be addressed by each team and the leadership has a whole. I am not suggesting that we replace DMAT or the use of a Medical officer I only suggest that we look after ourselves this would of course require overview by a medical officer and the need for integration of a medical type to each team. I am suggesting that we become prepared for what we may face in the future. Addressing simple “ first aid “ type issues now will prevent complex “ turf” wars in the future. I would suggest even adopting red cross first aid guidelines would be a step in the right direction and training members of the team to deal with these issues would be of great value not only to our team but to those we support in the field.
- B) Simple over the counter medications treat many illnesses and can prevent major difficulties for a team deployed. We should look into providing standing orders to internally treat team members only. I would suggest starting with protocols to dispense items in the O.T.C. area. This would include items such has Tylenol , Advil , clartion, zantec. Ect. This would allow the medical person on the team to within established guidelines dispense small amounts of medication for a set period (I would suggest 24 to 48 hours) if a medical officer is not in the area and refer the team member to the medical officer when practical. Unit dose antidotes should also be considered for chemical and biological issues has well has antidotes for the “ Dart guns “ used to sedate critters in the field.
- C) Ensure that these medications if approved are with each team and are able to be dispensed in a unit dose format with written directions to include side effect and pregnancy warnings.
- D) It is important that we consider placing a “ Human “ provider on each team, with the goal of this person to be the team members. It is difficult to have members with two radically different tasks assigned when deployed. If your assignment is to be a responder with an assignment you will be expected to do this has your primary task. This is not to exclude us from learning to multitask but rather to assign a member to look after the well fare of the team has a whole.
- E) Speaks for it self we need to protect ourselves, part of this is reducing liability to the team has a whole; part of this is personal responsibility.
- F) Ensure standing orders for events, we must remember that sometimes the best we will be able to do is to establish a safe zone and not enter the area, some things are best left to those with the experience to deal with them. Our role in a majority of incidents will be one of support. The traditional role for vets is one of food, water, safety and medical support. Our role will expand depending of the time of deployment but human treatment and support will no doubt be our primary initial focus expanding to other areas when this is addressed.
- G) We need to think of establishing a provider for mental health issues with each team I would also like to see a chaplain assigned to every team to help support those who are dealing with mental health issues. We are acutely aware of the benefit of Tx. Animals but seem to shy away from addressing the spiritual issues that we face. I am not suggesting that we offer religion to our teams I only suggest

- that we consider the fact that many people are more comfortable talking with a chaplain. Spiritual pain can be as real as physical pain and should be addressed.
- H) You are never wrong to refer. If you believe that a team member is ill, stressed or needs a break take the action to ensure they receive the help needed. The team functions the best when all members look out for each other and use resources open to them.

Redundancy issues:

- A) Basic training should be considered for those with no experience with animals, perhaps not to the level of a Vet tech rather the basics of transport, handling, feeding and set up of critter treatment areas. It is also important that all members understand the basics of Vet terminology in order to ensure that all members are on the same basic page.
- B) All members should be familiar with the lay out of equipment required to perform our basic task, I would suggest that we consider allowing activation of the teams for training during the year. This could be accomplished by setting aside funding to allow teams four weekend events for the purpose of direct intensive hands on training with the equipment that are expected to use. My experience is that book knowledge must be practiced in real time to be effective. Anyone who has assembled items knows that the book tends to overlook the difficulties involved with actual assembly.
- C) This speaks for itself, we need to have more than one member aware of these items and a limited amount of duplicates need to be provided to other members of the team, we are a disaster response unit and this implies that everything and everyone may not arrive as planned. We need to prepare for this. Also things get lost or overlooked.
- D) Cross training is vital, members need to learn at least one other task within their ability, I am not suggesting that the members become professionals in another job code but that members are assigned to learn enough about a different task to perform that task until someone who is able to do it has a primary job is able to do so.
- E) Set up trainings that rotate members into key leadership roles, and allow others to learn the officers jobs so that in case of emergency or pressing need at least administrative tasks can be performed until the crisis is averted or the member usually assigned arrives.
- F) Funny thing about this is that it has become a requirement, we will be used as a supporting unit for human treatment and need to learn to embrace this.

Think Like a team:

- A) A chain of command is important, and back up chain of command is equally important you never know who will arrive when during a disaster. This should be direct and to the point with all deployable personnel on a flow type list in order to accommodate both the members of the team and for those with overall responsibility for the unit both at the location and at the national headquarters.
- B) It is extremely important to know what you do and how it is done this includes the set up of the equipment you are responsible for. It is imperative to cross train others in the set up of equipment and basic requirements of the unit have a whole.

- C) A vulnerability analysis needs to be done for every team and every unit of the team, use this not to criticize the team but has a learning tool, remember that nothing replaces real time drills and what you learn can be used to improve future actions prior to deployment. After deployment you start over and work on what needs to be improved. But the key is to change over time and work towards overall improvement, This is not an issue of positive or negative rather an issue of self critique designed to help all involved. This also needs input from all involved.
- D) Practice is a good thing and helps all involve improve. Many hands make the task light but many hands without effective leadership and lack of practice make many avoidable mistakes.