



UNION INFO—August 2013

Detector Dog Program Review (National Meeting)

On August 13th, 14th & 15th 2013, we met with CSC management, Ms. Lockwood, Ms. Matthews and Mr. Woodward, to discuss a number of issues related to the dog detector program. The union was represented by dog detector handlers (DDH) Jason Layman and Aaron Lang from the Prairies Region, Dominic Pélouquin from the Quebec Region, Mike Gagne from the Pacific Region, Roger Huneault and Randy Gurnsey from Ontario, and Luc Mazerolle from Atlantic. We were also joined by the regional coordinators for the detector dog handlers (PSAC).

The purpose of this meeting was to conduct a review of the operations and procedures manual for dog detectors as well as the manager's manual and related Commissioner's Directives. We also took the opportunity to raise a number of operational issues in the field associated with this program. Here is brief summary of those discussions:

We requested that CD 566-13 include a reference to the dog handlers manual to ensure that local sites are complying with the requirements in the manual;

- * We discussed in great details the delegated line of authority to action the manual, as often times local managers completely ignore the requirements outlined in the manual, i.e. dog kennels must be in place prior to a new detector dog arriving at the site;
- * We insisted that the employer agree to regular bilateral meetings nationally to discuss problematic issues arising in the field;
- * We recommended that both manuals be combined to make it easier for managers and dog handlers to follow;
- * We requested that the dog handler allowance be specifically earmarked for the purposes for the dog program and not held back or used for other purposes, specifically allocated from NHQ and that the process be made easier to purchase items such as dog food without such a rigorous approval process with the intent of establishing a common list of items.

In addition we pointed out to the employer that if our collective agreement is ratified by UCCO-SACC-CSN members, the two parties will have to sit together and establish an accurate, reasonable allowance for the cost and care of the detector dog based on current costs rather than when the program was implemented some years ago (tentative language agreed upon in article 43.03 of the CA).

- * We talked about improved communications between local managers, regional DDH coordinators and especially SIOs, also to include regular educational information for all staff to have a better understanding of the job the DDH performs. To also include more demo days for staff.
- * We talked about establishing specifications for DDH vehicles, dog kennels and required equipment to do the job including specific items for training, i.e. access to firearms for training purposes.
- * Uniform issues (to be referred to the National Uniform Committee).
- * The need to improve schedules while ensuring operational requirements are met by expanding on the current 10-hour shift pilot at Saskatchewan Pen.
- * One hour care and maintenance of the dog (time in lieu of).
- * We insisted that dog detector handlers not be deployed elsewhere without their consent unless in the event of an emergency (already in the manual).
- * We asked for proper office space to work (not shared) and to clarify level 5 security clearance around drug kits.
- * That training requirements be adhered to as per the manual and the opportunity to work and assist other agencies, provided operational institutional needs are being met, as well as assistance from Rigaud for DDH training issues, (not just Ontario & Quebec because of proximity but for all regions).
- * Taking a dog out of service (retirement) or back to Rigaud if the handler is off on leave and appropriate timeframes, etc.

We asked CSC to give us their time frame in order to complete this review with which they responded by telling us their goal was to complete a draft for EXCOM by March with the hope for presenting in April. We insisted that we be given proper time to continue our consultations to conclude this process. The employer agreed and suggested more meetings with the group to follow in order to finalize something tangible for presentation.

We consider our first consultation with the employer to be productive and are hopeful this trend continues as we continue our consultations over the next several months. Please contact the detector dog handler rep from your region for more information.