



United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

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Congressional Committees

Subject: TSA's Explosives Detection Canine Program: Status of Increasing Number of Explosives Detection Canine Teams

This report formally transmits the attached briefing in response to section 1307 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007. The act requires the Comptroller General to report on the utilization of explosives detection canine teams to strengthen security and the capacity of the national explosives detection canine team program, which is administered by the Transportation Security Administration.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees. We are also sending copies to the Secretary of Homeland Security. This report will also be available at no charge on our Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>. Should you or your staff have any questions concerning this report, please contact me at (202) 512-3404 or berrickc@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report were William Crocker, Assistant Director; Mary Catherine Hult, Assistant Director; Alana Finley; Lara Kaskie; Thomas Lombardi; and Clarence Tull.

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Enclosure: Briefing for Congressional Committees



TSA's Explosives Detection Canine Program: Status of Increasing Number of Canine Teams

Briefing for Congressional Committees



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Introduction

- Under its National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program (NEDCTP), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) procures, trains, deploys, and certifies explosives detection canine teams—each of which is a canine paired with a handler—to provide mobile and flexible deterrence and explosives detection capabilities in furtherance of its mission to secure all modes of transportation.¹
- Section 1307 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act (9/11 Commission Act) requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to begin to increase the number of explosives detection canine teams certified by TSA for transportation-related security by up to 200 teams annually by the end of 2010.²
- Section 1307 also requires GAO to report on the utilization of explosives detection canine teams to strengthen security and the capacity of the national explosives detection canine team program.

¹TSA trains its explosives detection canine teams to detect explosives but not radiological materials or chemical, nuclear, or biological weapons.

²Pub. L. No. 110-53, § 1307, 121 Stat. 266, 395-97 (2007) (authorizing appropriations of such sums as may be necessary to carry out section 1307 for fiscal years 2007 through 2011).

Objective

- Our objective was to determine whether TSA has a plan to increase its number of certified explosives detection canine teams as required by statute and, if so, to evaluate the extent to which TSA has the capacity to do so and is on track with its plan.
- We are also including information on
 - Department of Homeland Security (DHS) components' explosives detection canine programs (app. I) and
 - DHS efforts to establish industrywide training and certification standards for explosives detection canines (app. II).



Scope and Methodology

- To satisfy our objective, we
 - reviewed federal laws and related materials and analyzed TSA's canine program policies and procedures, as well as its goals, plans, and actions for training, deploying, and certifying additional explosives detection canine teams;
 - observed the training laboratories and the Canine Breeding and Development Center at NEDCTP's Canine Training and Evaluation Branch at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas; and
 - interviewed TSA canine program officials.
- To describe DHS's explosives detection canine programs and efforts to establish industrywide standards for explosives detection canines, we analyzed information and interviewed officials from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Federal Protective Service, DHS's Office for Bombing Prevention; and the Scientific Working Group on Dog and Orthogonal¹ Detector Guidelines.

¹Orthogonal refers to independent detection methods, such as canines and electronic sensors.



Scope and Methodology (cont'd)

- We conducted this performance audit from November 2007 through July 2008 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Summary



TSA Has a Plan and Has Begun to Increase Its Capacity to Train and Deploy Additional Explosives Detection Canine Teams, and Is on Track with Its Plan during the First Year of Implementation

- TSA plans to train, deploy, and certify up to 200 canine teams annually over the next 3 years, consistent with statutory requirements.
 - Collectively, the statutes provide TSA with flexibility to determine the number of additional teams it will deploy within this range to satisfy the requirements of the mandates.
 - For example, TSA's plan for 2008 meets the minimum increase required by the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007¹ (Iraq Supplemental) (170 teams) and is within the upper limit (200 teams) range set forth in the 9/11 Commission Act.
 - TSA's plan includes a specific training and deployment schedule for 2008 and 2009, but TSA has not yet determined these specific schedules for 2010.

¹Pub. L. No. 110-28, 121 Stat. 112, 140-41 (2007).



Summary, cont'd

TSA Has a Plan and Has Begun to Increase Its Capacity to Train and Deploy Additional Explosives Detection Canine Teams, and Is on Track with Its Plan during the First Year of Implementation

- TSA has begun to increase its capacity to implement its plan to train, deploy, and certify additional canine teams, for example, by
 - making arrangements to procure additional canines by contracting with a private kennel to supplement existing canine sources and
 - adjusting NEDCTP's training schedule to accommodate additional classes.

- TSA is on track to implement its planned increase in its number of explosives detection canine teams for calendar year 2008.
 - For example, TSA has conducted, or is in the process of conducting, training classes for 104 canine teams out of 204 planned for 2008.
 - In order to successfully increase the number of explosives detection canine teams by about 200 in 2009, some ongoing issues will need to be resolved, such as hiring additional instructors to conduct training classes and certify newly deployed teams.



Background: Congressional Mandates to Increase Explosives Detection Canine Teams

- The 9/11 Commission Act
 - requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to begin to increase the number of explosives detection canine teams certified by TSA for transportation-related security by up to 200 teams annually by the end of 2010,
 - provides options for how to increase the number of canine teams, and
 - authorizes the appropriation of such funds as necessary to carry out this mandate for fiscal years 2007 through 2011.
- The Iraq Supplemental appropriated funds for use by TSA to expand NEDCTP by no fewer than 170 additional canine teams, including the use of agency-led teams, to support air cargo security.



Background: Congressional Mandates to Increase Explosives Detection Canine Teams (cont'd)

- Funding:
 - Of amounts appropriated to TSA through Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (DHS Appropriations Act, 2008), the accompanying explanatory statement directs \$10 million to remain available until September 30, 2009, to increase the number of explosives detection canine teams.¹
 - The Iraq Supplemental appropriated \$80 million to TSA, to remain available until September 30, 2009, for air cargo security. Of this, TSA allocated \$20.3 million to its canine programs.
 - TSA plans to use \$3.5 million in fiscal year 2008 funding to expand the number of explosives detection canine teams to be used in mass transit.

¹Explanatory Statement accompanying Pub. L. No. 110-161, Div. E, 121 Stat. 1844, 2042 (2007), at 1046-47.



Background

NEDCTP: Program Overview

- Established in 1972, NEDCTP's mission is to deter and detect the introduction of explosive devices into the transportation system. (See app. III for more information about NEDCTP's organization and budget.)

- NEDCTP is a partnership between TSA and state or local law enforcement authorities (LEA) with jurisdiction over airports or mass transit systems.
 - An LEA agrees to participate in the program for 5 years, provide three officers (each must serve a minimum of 3 years), and maintain TSA-certified canine teams available for 24-hour incident response.
 - TSA provides a canine for each handler, team training, explosives to use for training, certification, and a partial stipend (about \$50,000 per year).
 - Teams are to devote 80 percent of their duty time in their operational environment (e.g., airport) conducting TSA-related activities.¹

¹Teams can be used to support local needs (e.g., responding to bomb threats at other locations) during the other 20 percent of the time.

Background

NEDCTP: Uses of Canine Teams

- NEDCTP team responsibilities include
 - searching during bomb threats associated with aircraft, airport terminals, vehicles, luggage, and cargo;
 - patrolling airport or mass transit terminals, including for airports ticket counters, curbside areas, and secured areas;
 - screening air cargo; and
 - serving as general deterrents to would-be terrorists or criminals.

- NEDCTP teams also participate in Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) missions.¹
 - From December 2005 through December 2007, TSA conducted about 500 missions.
 - According to officials, TSA tries to use canines in all of the VIPR missions and uses either NEDCTP teams or other local canine teams.

¹VIPR missions are targeted deployments of integrated TSA and other federal, state, or local assets to secure any mode of transportation. VIPR missions can occur in a variety of venues.



Background

NEDCTP: Deployment of Canine Teams

- According to TSA officials, taking into account LEA voluntary participation, TSA deploys its canine teams to
 - airports on the basis of passenger and cargo volume and airport size and
 - mass transit systems on the basis of factors such as a system's passenger volume, proximity to critical infrastructure, and threat information for the mass transit sector.

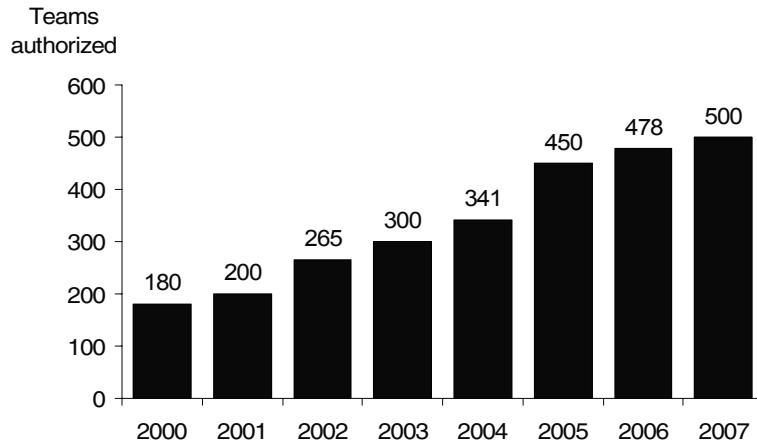
- As of June 9, 2008, about 430 certified explosives detection canine teams were deployed in aviation and mass transit systems nationwide:
 - 370 teams were deployed to 69 airports and
 - 56 teams were deployed to 14 mass transit systems.



Background

NEDCTP Program Growth, 2000 – 2007

Figure 1: NEDCTP Teams Authorized and Number of Participating Airports and Mass Transit Systems per Year



	Year							
Airports	39	39	64	64	64	75	75	75
Mass transit systems	1	1	1	1	1	11	13	14

Source: GAO analysis of TSA data.



Background

NEDCTP: Training and Certification

- It takes about 7 months from the date a canine enters training to a canine team's initial certification.
 - For about 2 months, canines are pretrained through a series of repetitive tasks to identify several explosive odors.
 - To be deployed, teams must then complete a 2-½-month (10-week) training course conducted by NEDCTP's Training and Evaluation Branch at Lackland Air Force Base, where the teams are trained to detect the explosive odors in environments including aircraft and mass transit terminals, luggage, vehicles, cargo, and buildings.
 - To be initially certified, after a 2-month acclimation period, teams must complete a 14-day "training mission" in their operational environment.¹
- Thereafter, teams must pass an annual certification evaluation. All certifications are conducted by NEDCTP staff.

¹All handlers must attend the 10-week training. LEAs may obtain trained canines outside of TSA (about 4 percent have non-TSA procured and trained canines), but these teams must pass TSA's annual certification evaluation.



Results: TSA has a plan to increase the number of certified explosives detection canine teams



TSA's Plan: Is Consistent with Statutory Requirements to Increase Number of Canine Teams

- TSA plans to train, deploy, and certify up to 200 canine teams annually by the end of 2010 in accordance with the 9/11 Commission Act.¹
 - Of these, TSA plans to train and deploy 170 teams by the end of calendar year 2008 to support efforts to secure air cargo as required by the Iraq Supplemental.
 - TSA plans to deploy the remaining teams in NEDCTP to aviation and mass transit systems and for attrition replacement of existing teams. These teams are scheduled to be trained and deployed primarily in calendar years 2009 and 2010.

- Taking into account currently deployed teams,² TSA plans to have
 - 627 teams deployed by the end of fiscal year 2008 and
 - 720 teams deployed by the end of fiscal year 2009.

¹TSA considers a team to be deployed after it graduates from the 10-week training course and returns to its airport/mass transit system. Certification occurs about 2-½ months after.

²These totals assume that TSA will train and deploy replacements for attrition teams.



TSA's Plan: Is Consistent with Statutory Requirements to Increase Number of Teams (cont'd)

- Consistent with the 9/11 Commission Act, to meet mandated increases in the number of certified canine teams, TSA plans to procure additional canines, use its NEDCTP facilities, and increase its staff.
 - The statutes provide TSA with some flexibility in determining how many additional teams it will deploy to satisfy the statutory requirements.
 - The Iraq Supplemental appropriated funding for no fewer than 170 additional canine teams to support efforts to secure air cargo.
 - The 9/11 Commission Act requires an increase of up to 200 canine teams that support transportation-related security annually.
 - According to officials, TSA interprets meeting the requirements of the Iraq Supplemental as contributing to its efforts to meet the requirements of the 9/11 Commission Act. As such, the 170 canine teams to be procured in accordance with the Iraq Supplemental fall within the upper limit of 200 teams per year established by the 9/11 Commission Act.
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TSA's Plan: Includes Establishing Proprietary Canine Program to Support Air Cargo Screening Efforts in Iraq Supplemental

- Of the 170 teams funded by the Iraq Supplemental, TSA plans to deploy 85 in its Proprietary Canine Program, which was established in January 2008 within the Office of Security Operations (OSO),¹ to support air cargo screening efforts.
 - NEDCTP is responsible for training and certifying the Proprietary Canine Program teams, but the canine teams will have TSA employees as handlers instead of LEA handlers.
 - Teams will be dedicated to searching air cargo, for example cargo warehouses.
- TSA plans to add the other 85 teams to NEDCTP; these teams will have LEA handlers.
 - To increase overall efforts in screening air cargo, TSA requires that all NEDCTP teams spend 25 percent of their duty cycle actively screening air cargo. This requirement translates to 60 minutes per duty cycle.²

¹According to TSA officials, on June 3, 2008, they approved the consolidation of OSO Proprietary Canine Program teams under NEDCTP in the Office of Law Enforcement/ Federal Air Marshal Service.

²According to TSA officials, a handler's duty cycle is typically an 8-hour workday, of which canines spend up to 4 hours actively screening.



TSA's Plan: Includes Deploying Additional Explosives Detection Canine Teams to Aviation and Mass Transit Modes

- TSA plans to fund the procurement, training, and deployment of additional canine teams through its fiscal year 2008 appropriation, and TSA plans to deploy them in NEDCTP.
 - A total of \$10 million has been allocated to support the deployment of 92 teams.
 - As of June 2008, TSA is considering deployment options for these teams, but officials said that at least 46 will be deployed in NEDCTP.
 - Options for the other 46 include deploying in the Proprietary Canine Program with TSA handlers, in maritime mode, or to support multimodal efforts.
 - A total of \$3.5 million has been allocated to support 45 NEDCTP mass transit teams.



Results: TSA has begun to increase its capacity to train and deploy additional explosives detection canine teams



Capacity: TSA Has Begun to Increase Its Capacity to Implement Its Plan to Satisfy Statutory Requirements

- TSA has begun to increase its capacity to implement its plan to train, deploy, and certify additional explosives detection canine teams, as required, including
 - making arrangements for procuring additional canines,
 - conducting outreach efforts to secure handlers,
 - adjusting NEDCTP's training schedule to accommodate additional training courses, and
 - authorizing additional staff positions to support planned efforts.



Capacity: TSA Has Made Arrangements for Procuring Additional Canines to Support Planned Increases

- TSA receives canines from the Department of Defense (DOD) through an existing interagency support agreement.
 - Officials said that they have requested up to 190 canines per year for 2007 through 2009, which historically has provided enough canines for 108 teams plus attrition.¹
- TSA operates a Canine Breeding and Development Center, which since 2002 has provided 36 canines that have been deployed in NEDCTP.
- To support planned increases, TSA supplemented its existing supply of canines by contracting with a private kennel for 200 pretrained canines for fiscal year 2008.
 - TSA selects canines to purchase after conducting performance (such as evaluating if a canine can detect pretrained odors or is not aggressive around people) and medical tests.
 - There is a contract option for 270 additional canines for fiscal year 2009, bringing the total to 470 canines.

¹These canines are not pretrained to detect odors; TSA trainers pretrain the canines.



Capacity: TSA Has Taken Steps and Conducted Outreach Efforts to Secure Canine Handlers

- In November 2007, TSA posted an internal announcement for 85 Transportation Security Inspector-Cargo explosives detection canine handlers for the Proprietary Canine Program.
 - NEDCTP scheduled training for these positions in its 2008 training schedule.
- NEDCTP has made efforts to secure volunteer LEA handlers for 2008 and 2009, according to officials.
 - Field canine coordinators¹ work with LEAs in their assigned areas to determine the LEAs' interest in participating in the NEDTCP program.
 - Once an LEA expresses interest, TSA sends it a formal invitation to participate in NEDCTP. If the LEA accepts the invitation, it signs an interagency cooperative agreement with TSA and determines which of its officers will attend training and be deployed as handlers.

¹Field canine coordinators are NEDCTP personnel responsible for, among other things, coordinating with LEAs, overseeing deployed canine teams, and monitoring explosives provided to LEAs for training purposes.



Capacity: TSA Has Adjusted Its Training Schedule to Double Student Output While Using Existing Facilities

- NEDCTP training facilities can support two classes, of up to 12 student teams each, conducted simultaneously.
 - To meet its plan, starting in January 2008 NEDCTP doubled its capacity for the number of 12-student classes conducted per year from 9 to 18, which increases the maximum number of teams that can be trained from 108 to 216 annually.
 - NEDCTP plans to stagger the class start dates and adjust the daily schedules so that up to four different classes can be in training during the same time.
 - The training curriculum and requirements, length of the course, and number of students per class are not being modified.
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Capacity: TSA Has Authorized Staff Positions to Support Planned Efforts

- To support efforts to increase the number of deployed teams, TSA authorized 24 additional positions, 16 of which were to support the Training and Evaluation Branch. These include
 - 14 instructor positions, responsible for conducting training classes and certifying deployed canine teams, and
 - 2 support positions that include one management and program analyst and one administrative assistant.
- These additional positions increase the branch's authorized staff to 54 full-time equivalents. Officials said that this increase was based in part on a 2006 study of NEDCTP's human capital needs,¹ and once the positions are filled, TSA will be able to assess future needs to support the increased number of teams.
- According to officials, NEDCTP has focused on filling instructor positions because of their dual role in conducting training and certifying deployed teams.
- Four of the newly authorized positions are for additional field canine coordinators to increase oversight capacity of deployed teams.²

¹TSA's Office of Human Capital study of NEDCTP conducted in 2006 occurred prior to the enactment of 9/11 Commission Act, and therefore did not take into account resources needed to accommodate and sustain the mandated increase.

²The remaining positions are an explosives specialist at NEDCTP's Explosives Branch and three management and program analysts at TSA headquarters to support canine air cargo operations.



Results: TSA is on track with its plan during the first year of implementation



Implementation: TSA Is On Track in 2008 Implementation, but Some Issues Need to Be Resolved for Future Years' Implementation

- Thus far, TSA has generally obtained canines to meet its needs for 2008 despite early issues with purchasing canines from the private kennel.
- To deploy the 170 additional canine teams required by the Iraq Supplemental, TSA has secured canine handlers and scheduled them for training in 2008. TSA efforts to secure volunteer LEA handlers for 2009 are ongoing.
- TSA is on track with its training schedule: Half of the planned 2008 training classes are completed or are in process, with 104 teams deployed or in training.
- TSA is in the process of filling instructor positions to support training and deployment, but the focus on training additional canine teams and the remaining vacancies could affect annual certifications. Additionally, TSA has identified the need for additional oversight and training support for deployed teams.



Implementation: Thus Far, TSA Has Generally Obtained Additional Canines for 2008 Despite Early Issues with Purchasing Pretrained Canines

- Thus far, TSA has generally obtained the number of canines it needs to conduct its training classes in 2008. Nine training classes have been conducted or are in process, and TSA has made arrangements to obtain canines for the remaining eight classes in 2008.
 - TSA has received 55 canines from DOD.
 - TSA has received six of the nine scheduled fiscal year 2008 deliveries from the private kennel, but purchased 64 canines out of 126 canines delivered. (See table 1.)
 - TSA canceled one training class in February because of the lack of pretrained canines. However, TSA officials stated that the kennel did not receive the explosive odors from TSA to allow enough time to pretrain the first two shipments of canines.
 - TSA officials said that despite initial growing pains there has been an even progression in the quality of the dogs from the private kennel. TSA trainers are still pretraining the canines for about 30 days before they enter classes. However, officials said that they are satisfied with the canines that they have purchased and that they will likely continue buying canines from the kennel.
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Implementation: Thus far, TSA Has Generally Obtained Additional Canines for 2008 Despite Early Issues with Purchasing Pretrained Canines (cont'd)

Table 1: Number of Canines Purchased through Contract with Private Kennel through June 2008

Delivery date	Number of canines stipulated in contract	Number of canines delivered for selection	Number of canines selected/purchased
Dec. 24, 2007	14	16	6
Jan. 18, 2008	14	20	9
Mar. 3, 2008	14	20	14
Apr. 7, 2008	18	16	10
May 12, 2008	28	27	15
June 16, 2008	28	27	10 ^a
Total	116	126	64

Source: GAO analysis of TSA data.

Note: The kennel is to provide additional canines to let TSA select the best qualified canines after reviewing performance and medical tests. For example, although only 12 canines are needed for a training class, the contract states that the kennel provide 14 canines, which allows TSA the option of purchasing the best qualified 12 of the 14.

^aAccording to officials, vehicle difficulties that occurred in supplying this delivery resulted in canines being exposed to heat conditions that affected their suitability for NEDCTP. As a result, they purchased fewer canines than expected.



Implementation: Canine Handlers Have Been Secured and Scheduled for Training in 2008; Efforts to Secure Volunteer Handlers for 2009 Are Ongoing

- To deploy 170 additional canine teams as required by the Iraq Supplemental, TSA has hired 85 Transportation Security Inspector-Cargo explosives detection canine handlers that are to be deployed with canine partners in the Proprietary Canine Program and has identified LEAs to fill the additional 85 positions in NEDCTP. These handlers are scheduled to complete training and be deployed by December 2008.
- TSA has extended 12 invitations thus far to LEAs for participation in NEDCTP in 2009, and officials said that they expect about 10 of these LEAs to accept the invitation. However, TSA will likely need to extend additional invitations to meet planned needs.
- According to TSA officials, recruiting LEAs to participate in NEDCTP has not historically been a problem. However, with the expansion of the program, TSA officials identified a potential need for incentives to encourage more LEAs to participate.



Implementation: Half of the Total 2008 Planned Training Classes Are Completed or in Process

- NEDCTP has conducted, or is in the process of conducting, 9 of the 17 planned classes for calendar year 2008. (See table 2.)
 - In these nine classes, 104 out of 108 (planned) canine teams have been trained and deployed or are in training.
 - Of the 24 graduating teams from the two January training classes, 9 teams have been certified, 12 have been or need to be scheduled for 14-day training missions, and TSA plans to reschedule 3 for another 14-day training mission.
 - TSA plans to conduct 15 training classes in 2009.
 - NEDCTP's planned training schedule for 2009 is similar to the training schedule for 2008; for example, NEDCTP plans to conduct two classes simultaneously with staggered start dates that are similar to those dates in 2008.
 - TSA has allocated training spots for teams in specific modes of transportation.
 - TSA has not yet determined a training schedule for 2010.
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Implementation: Half of 2008 Planned Classes Are Completed or in Process (cont'd)

Table 2: Number of Teams Planned for and Trained/in Training under NEDCTP's Doubled Capacity Training Schedule, 2008

Class dates (no. of classes)	Proprietary		NEDCTP		Total students	
	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual
Jan 7 – Mar 14 (2)	12	12	12	12	24	24
Feb 4 – Apr 11 (1)	6	6	6	4	12	10
Mar 17 – May 23 (2)	12	11	12	12	24	23
Apr 21 – June 27 (2)	12	11	12	12	24	23
May 27 – Aug 1 ^a (2)	12	12	12	12	24	24
Total teams	54	52	54	52	108	104

Source: GAO analysis of TSA data.

Note: TSA's plan for 2008 includes 17 training classes, each with 12 teams, for a total of 204 planned teams.

^aThis training course is ongoing; the table indicates the actual number of teams that enrolled in the course.



Implementation: Hiring Instructors to Support Training and Deployment Is Ongoing, but Training Focus and Remaining Vacancies Could Affect Certifications

- NEDCTP is in the process of hiring additional instructors to support training and deployments. Of 44 authorized instructor positions, 35 are filled or pending and 9 are vacant.
- While they are making progress filling these positions, officials said that these instructors needed to be on board earlier in the year because of their dual purpose of training and certifying. Given that training additional teams to support statutorily required increases was their priority for 2008, officials said that they are not on pace to simultaneously complete the planned training and certifications of deployed teams by the end of the year.
 - NEDCTP has completed, or has scheduled for June 2008, 100 of the 398 certifications for deployed teams that are to be completed this year.
 - Officials said that they need to devise a plan to address training and certification needs but currently do not have the resources to complete both.



Implementation: TSA Has Identified Need for Additional Oversight and Training Support for Deployed Teams

- Despite filling three of the four newly authorized field canine coordinator vacancies, officials said that NEDCTP may also need additional field positions to provide oversight and sustain operations for additional teams. The 2006 TSA human capital study identified the need for additional resources to ensure quality and consistency of canine handlers concomitant with program growth.
- In implementing its plan to train and deploy canine teams, TSA officials identified the potential need for on-site training support at some locations with Proprietary Canine Program teams. Options include providing incentives for NEDCTP LEAs to provide on-site training to Proprietary Canine Program teams or authorizing new positions for instructors to visit locations in need of additional training.



Agency Views

- We provided a draft of the briefing slides to TSA for review and comment, and TSA provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.
 - We also provided a draft of the applicable sections of appendix I, which contains information on the DHS components that employ explosives detection canine teams, to the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Federal Protective Service, the U.S. Secret Service, and DHS's Office for Bombing Prevention. We also provided a draft of appendix II, which contains information about DHS's contributions to developing explosives detection canine standards, to U.S. Customs and Border Protection and DHS's Office of Bombing Prevention. Each of these components provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.
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GAO Contacts

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- Should you or your staff have any questions on the matters discussed in this briefing, please contact Cathleen Berrick at (202) 512-3404 or berrickc@gao.gov.

Appendixes

- Appendix I: Overview of DHS's Explosives Detection Canine Programs
 - U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP): Office of Field Operations Canine Enforcement Program
 - U.S. Coast Guard: Canine Substance Detection Program
 - U.S. Secret Service: Special Operations Division Canine Explosives Detection Unit
 - Federal Protective Service (FPS): Explosive Detection Dog Program
- Appendix II: DHS Efforts to Establish Industrywide Standards for Explosives Detection Canines
- Appendix III: Information about TSA's NEDCTP Organization and Budget

Appendix I



CBP: Office of Field Operations Canine Enforcement Program

- Establishment and Mission

- The U.S. Customs Service established a narcotics detection canine program in 1970, and the U.S. Border Patrol established a canine program in 1986.
- The program's initial explosives detection canine teams were trained in 2002.
- The program's mission is to prevent terrorists and their weapons from entering the United States and to assist other law enforcement agencies.

- Number of Teams and Deployment

- CBP's Office of Field Operations has several dozen explosives detection canine teams that are deployed to numerous ports of entry throughout the United States.¹

- Uses of Teams

- Together, CBP's Office of Field Operations and Office of Border Patrol programs have over 1,200 canines trained in various disciplines—explosives, narcotics, concealed humans, and currency detection and search and rescue.

¹CBP considers the number and deployment locations of its explosives detection canine teams to be sensitive information.

Appendix I



CBP: Office of Field Operations Canine Enforcement Program (cont'd)

- Uses of Teams (cont'd)
 - Explosives detection teams screen for explosives on tractors, trailers, rail, ferries, and passenger cruise ships; at airports on aircraft and in air cargo; on passengers; and in luggage and occupied buildings.
- Training and Certification
 - Canine handlers have been CBP officers for a minimum of 3 years.
 - CBP uses internally developed standards to train explosives detection teams at CBP's canine training center in Front Royal, Virginia.
 - CBP also trains and certifies U.S. Coast Guard teams.
 - Teams undergo certification evaluations every 6 months.
- Sources of Canines¹
 - CBP has a breeding program on-site at its training center.
 - CBP also procures canines from private vendors for its program and for the U.S. Coast Guard.

¹The DHS Inspector General released a report on CBP's canine program procurement in April 2008.



Appendix I

U.S. Coast Guard: Canine Substance Detection Program

- Establishment and Mission

- The first U.S. Coast Guard canine explosive detection teams were fielded in 2003, as part of the implementation of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002,¹ to detect explosive substances in support of homeland security and law enforcement.

- Number of Teams and Deployment

- The U.S. Coast Guard's explosives detection canine teams² are deployed to several ports around the nation as part of Maritime Safety and Security Teams and the Maritime Security Response Team.

- Uses of Teams

- Teams conduct searches at port facilities and onboard vessels entering port.
- Teams participate in interagency partnerships, provide assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies, and provide immediate response to interagency needs through Adaptive Force Packages (combinations of discrete operational capabilities designed to meet discrete mission requirements).

¹See Pub. L. No. 107-295, 116 Stat. 2064 (2002).

²U.S. Coast Guard considers the number and deployment locations of its explosives detection canine teams to be sensitive information.

Appendix I



U.S. Secret Service: Special Operations Division, Canine Explosives Detection Unit

- Establishment and Mission

- The U.S. Secret Service established a canine unit in 1976 to provide a safe and secure environment for individuals and locations protected by the U.S. Secret Service.

- Deployment

- Its explosives detection canine teams¹ are based in Washington, D.C., and are deployed to other locations as needed.

- Uses of Teams

- Teams are responsible for providing explosives detection services for the White House Complex, Vice President's Residence, and Foreign Missions Branch. Additionally, as needed, teams provide these services worldwide in support of the U.S. Secret Service protective mission.

¹U.S. Secret Service considers the number of explosives detection canine teams to be sensitive information.



Appendix I

U.S. Secret Service: Special Operations Division, Canine Explosives Detection Unit (cont'd)

- Training and Certification
 - The U.S. Secret Service personnel train canine teams at the agency's training facility in Maryland using internally developed training standards.
- Sources of Canines
 - The U.S. Secret Service procures its canines from a private kennel.



Appendix I

FPS: Explosive Detection Dog Program

- Establishment and Mission
 - FPS established its canine program in 2003 to provide an explosive detection capability in the protection of life and property and a strong visible and psychological deterrence against criminal and terrorist acts.
- Number of Teams and Deployment
 - Over 50 canine teams¹ are deployed nationwide with teams in each FPS region.
- Uses of Teams
 - Teams are responsible for conducting routine explosive searches of office areas, vehicles, materials, packages, and persons housed in federally owned or leased facilities, and responding to bomb threats and unattended packages.
- Training and Source of Canines
 - FPS canines have previously been procured through and teams trained in partnership with a public university's canine training center, but the training contract has expired and FPS is examining options for future training providers.

¹FPS considers the number and deployment locations of its explosives detection canine teams to be sensitive information.

Appendix II



Canine Standards: DHS Has Contributed to Progress in Developing Guidelines for Explosives Detection Canines

- Although DHS explosives detection canine teams are generally trained and certified by DHS component agencies, DHS has contributed to industrywide efforts to develop explosives detection canine guidelines through the Scientific Working Group on Dog and Orthogonal Detector Guidelines (SWGDOG).
 - In 2003, SWGDOG was established to address the performance and reliability of canines used for various detection disciplines (e.g., explosives, narcotics).
 - The group has 55 members, including international, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies; academic entities; and private sector stakeholders.
- In August 2007, SWGDOG's membership approved guidelines for explosives detection canines. These guidelines were publicly vetted and include best practices for training and certification, such as explosive substances to use in training and certification.
- DHS has contributed funding for SWGDOG, and DHS representatives contributed to developing the guidelines as members of an explosives detection canine subcommittee. A DHS representative is chair of the subcommittee.

Appendix II



Canine Standards: While DHS Agencies' Standards Meet the Guidelines, Standardized Terminology from Guidelines May Be Incorporated

- According to TSA and CBP officials, these agencies' training and certification standards meet or exceed SWGDOG's guidelines, and the agencies do not plan to make substantive changes to their standards as a result of SWGDOG's guidelines.
- Some DHS agencies may choose to adjust their standards to incorporate the standardized terminology in SWGDOG's guidelines, according to the Senior Advisor for National Canine Policy and Standards at DHS's Office for Bombing Prevention.

Appendix II



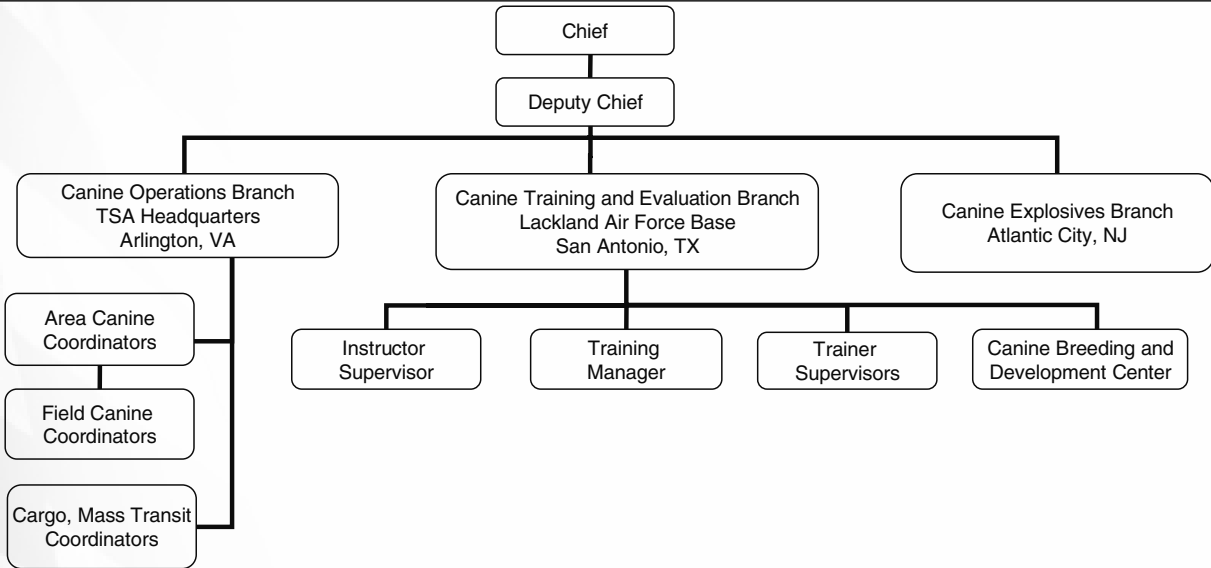
Canine Standards: Some Efforts Are Under Way to Incorporate Newly Developed Guidelines

- DHS's Office for Bombing Prevention is planning to use SWGDOG's guidelines as a baseline for developing canine training curriculum and standards consistent with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 19, according to the office's Senior Advisor for National Canine Policy and Standards.
- Participants of TSA's Transit Security Grant Program and DHS's Homeland Security Grant Program are required to maintain data to document compliance with SWGDOG's guidelines for their explosives detection canine teams.

Appendix III



TSA NEDCTP Organization Structure



Source: GAO analysis of TSA data.

Appendix III



TSA NEDCTP Budget Information

- NEDCTP receives funding through three different TSA accounts: aviation, surface/rail, and air cargo. According to TSA, its fiscal year 2008 canine budget was about \$69 million.
 - Aviation teams: \$36.3 million
 - Surface/rail (mass transit) teams: \$5.5 million
 - Air cargo inspection program: \$7.0 million
 - Iraq Supplemental: \$20.3 million
- For fiscal year 2009, TSA requested the consolidation of these canine programs into one account. Officials said that consolidating the accounts would help TSA to deploy teams to multiple transportation modes and not restrict the number of teams capable of being deployed to a particular mode on the basis of funding.

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