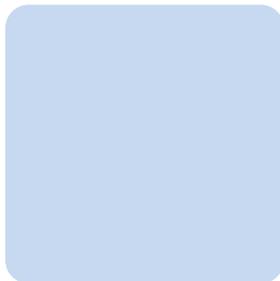
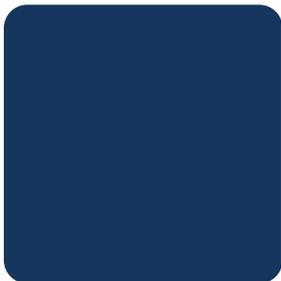




COVID-19 Infectious Disease Training Strike Team Concept of Operations



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Concept of Operations

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Table of contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Purpose	4
2.1	Initial Training	4
2.2	Enhanced Support	4
3	Methodology	4
4	Training Priorities	5
5	Phases	5
5.1	Phase 1	5
5.2	Phase 2	5
5.3	Phase 3	5
6	Challenges	5
7	Benefits	6
8	Conclusion	6

1 Introduction

In accordance with National Standard Operating Procedures (NSOP) to protect Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) personnel, national headquarters has identified the need for specialized COVID-19 Training Strike Teams (COVID-19 TST). The COVID-19 TST will train higher risk rescue specialists and other delegates in appropriate infectious disease case management. COVID-19 infections are, at this stage of the pandemic, concentrated in areas with larger populations. However, cases have begun to spread throughout the country. The training teams should be led by Search and Rescue (SAR) programs, with the rescue specialist training coordinators being the preferable choice.

Where health officers are available they will provide support to develop training and support the strike teams as appropriate.

2 Purpose

This team will provide two critical capabilities.

2.1 Initial training

They will, in the initial phase, be responsible for delivering training to front-line rescue specialists and seagoing personnel. The training will improve the readiness and capability of the CCG to protect its own personnel while delivering critical public safety services.

2.2 Enhanced support

The teams will add additional support to carry out the requirements of the NSOPs for vessels, helicopters and facilities.

Subsequent to, and during, the training phase, the team will be available to respond when requested to assist with evacuation of CCG personnel/patients utilizing helicopter transport or by road if necessary.

3 Methodology

Training for rescue specialists and other delegates will take into account the new guidelines for social distancing or technologies that will limit the amount of personal contact. The training should cover the basics of potentially infected patient care tactics, donning and doffing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), transport and quarantine tactics. The strike team should receive the following training:

- the basic training and instructor training
- training on how to implement the new guidelines on social distancing when it comes to training personnel, working in both vessels and office settings, and other situations that arise from carrying out CCG programs
- training in broader aspects of infectious disease care
- enhanced training in prolonged isolated patient care
- sea, air, and land transport tactics

4 Training priorities

The priorities for initial training should be set by the regions taking into account their overall operational requirements. These priorities should be linked to COVID-19 case densities, general tempo of the units to be trained, and historic information regarding number of SAR calls and medical evacuations.

5 Phases

5.1 Phase 1

Each region should determine the number of strike teams to carry out this program within their area of operation. Regions should select launch sites for this new training initiative and should take into account population densities and locations where there are COVID-19 outbreaks.

Training should take into account the role of screening both CCG personnel and non-CCG personnel.

5.2 Phase 2

The lead trainers should look to onboard additional trainers from other areas of the CCG, leading to the capability to deploy multiple strike teams. The number of teams available will allow for time off and some capacity to support phase 3 emergency operations.

5.3 Phase 3

Eventually, the strike teams should be able to respond to significant COVID-19 cases as required.

6 Challenges

Training will have to take into account the new guidelines on social distancing. The option of online training may also face additional challenges due to ongoing network availability issues.

Training all rescue specialists to an acceptable standard to handle infectious disease is a huge undertaking due to geographical issues, shifts, vessel deployments, the technical nature of the issue and limited PPE. If a rescue specialist becomes ill due to sub-standard practices, they could infect the entire vessel/station.

Decisions respecting the deployment and after action management of a rescue specialist team respecting a potential COVID-19 case will be informed by the guidance prescribed from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The training schedule may pose fatigue challenges for the lead trainer(s) in the early stages of phase 1. Consequently, the delivery timelines and tempo for initial training may require to be relaxed.

Air transport schedules have been impacted by COVID-19. Therefore, CCG aviation resources may need to be employed to move the trainers around.

7 Benefits

COVID-19 strike team trained personnel will be able to support the requirements of the NSOPs for CCG vessels, helicopters and facilities.

COVID-19 strike team trained personnel will have the capacity to care for infected patients for long term voyages and to properly disinfect spaces, which will reduce the impact on CCG programs and increase safety for the work force.

COVID-19 strike team will have advanced medical training that will lessen or eliminate the need for inter-agency partners to enter contaminated areas.

COVID-19 strike team will have the capacity to respond to future pandemics and train more personnel where required.

8 Conclusion

The establishment of these COVID-19 strike teams will gradually reduce risk to CCG employees and programs during the current pandemic, proving the benefits and risks for future pandemic response by the CCG. This Concept of Operations will strengthen the readiness and resilience of the CCG across the country.

