Office for Domestic Preparedness
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TO All State Administrative Agency Heads
All State Administrative Agency Points of Contact
All Core City/Core County Points of Contact
All State Homeland Security Directors

FROM: Matt Mayer
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SUBJECT: Urban Search and Rescue Training (US&R) Clarification

The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) in the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP) encourages States, territories, and Urban Areas to use funds to enhance the capabilities of State and local emergency preparedness and response personnel through development of a State homeland security training program. Allowable training-related costs under SLGCP grant programs include: 1) establishment of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) terrorism and cyber security training programs through existing training academies, universities or junior colleges; and 2) overtime and backfill costs associated with attendance at SLGCP-sponsored and -approved CBRNE and cyber security training courses.

On September 1, 2004, ODP issued Information Bulletin #132 on the Interagency Security Planning effort. In this bulletin, ODP expanded the allowable use of grant funds to support additional training in the areas of search and rescue, SWAT, and medical trauma provided certain requirements were met. ODP further issued Information Bulletin #144 on December 17, 2004 providing an Update on Allowable Training Expenditures for current and previous fiscal years. The Office for Domestic Preparedness takes note of variances in State and local regulations and policies governing the certification of search and rescue teams in training requirements from state to state with respect to US&R training. While the identification of federal US&R teams and the specified training of their members is guided by the standards and protocols established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), there is significant interest in enhancing State and local capacity in response to potential WMD incidents by training additional personnel in search and rescue missions. Due to the hazards associated with such training, the following guidance is provided to address safety concerns in the context of providing State and local jurisdictions the flexibility to meet identified needs in a manner consistent with State and local statutes and training standards while preserving the integrity of the FEMA US&R training program http://www.fema.gov/usr/usrtraining.shtm. The following language found in Information Bulletin #144 is redacted:

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> *Only Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) courses approved by FEMA and delivered by FEMA-certified providers are eligible for use of SLGCP funds. A list of these courses and providers will be maintained by SLGCP in coordination with FEMA.*

and superceded by the following:

> *Only search and rescue courses* ***approved*** ***by the state fire service training agency and*** ***delivered*** ***by state fire service training agency approved providers*** *are eligible for use of SLGCP funds. A list of these state fire service training agencies is available at http://www.usfa.fema.gov/pocs/*

The training must not supplant existing resources, but rather must build additional capabilities above and beyond those that currently exist. Any additional capabilities pursued through these training opportunities must meet a specific need identified through the homeland security assessment process and must comport with the State or Urban Area Homeland Security Strategy.

If the search and rescue course fully addresses the fire service and or hazardous materials sections included in the *ODP Emergency Responder Guidelines* and the *ODP Homeland Security Guidelines for Prevention and Deterrence*, no additional CBRNE-specific training is necessary for eligibility purposes. However, if the search and rescue course does **not** fully address these sections included in the *ODP Emergency Responder Guidelines* and the *ODP Homeland Security Guidelines for Prevention and Deterrence*, then the student must also complete follow-on CBRNE awareness training within a reasonable timeframe in order for the search and rescue course to be considered an allowable use of SLGCP funds.

These search and rescue courses are intended to build a critical capacity at the State and local levels. **The execution of this training in the stated capacity-building context is unrelated to designation of national Urban Search and Rescue teams. Therefore, States and UASI jurisdictions may not request such designation based on training.**

States and Urban Areas shall ensure that search and rescue training supported with SLGCP funds is in compliance with:

- NFPA 1670, *Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Rescue and Search Incidents*
- NFPA 1006, *Standard for Rescue Technician Professional Qualifications*

State Administrative Agencies wishing to fund such training should coordinate with their Preparedness Officer and submit the appropriate attendance information via the training section of the ODP website (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/training.htm) using the web form at the following link: http://198.104.156.52/ODP_Webforms/Attending_Non_Form.asp.