

Dogs Graduate from Explosives Detection Program

The 10 teams will be deployed to help protect transit systems across the U.S.

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Ten new teams have graduated from the Transportation Security Administration's National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program, the TSA announced Dec. 21.

The teams will be assigned to airports in Denver, Miami, Houston and Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and to the mass transit system in San Francisco. Three of the teams will return to San Francisco and another three will serve in Fort Lauderdale.

"As part of the Federal Air Marshal Service, the canine program is important to TSA's multi-layered approach to transportation security," National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program director Dave Kontny said in a statement. "These teams can be anywhere in the airport or mass transit system in a matter of minutes and can examine any number of potential threats quickly and efficiently."

During training, canines and officers were provided instruction on handler skills and explosives safety. Officer-dog teams spent much of their time searching for explosives training aids in specialized indoor and outdoor training labs that included an aircraft fuselage, a terminal area, cargo warehouse, and a newly-created mass transit terminal. The teams also practiced searching luggage and a parking lot filled with vehicles.

The program is a cooperative partnership with participating airports and mass transit systems. TSA provides and trains the canines, offers in-depth training for the handlers, and partially reimburses the participating agency for costs associated with the teams, such as salaries, overtime, canine food and veterinary care.