

POLICE CANINE OPERATIONS

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I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Because of their superior senses of smell and hearing, physical stamina and agility, trained law enforcement canines are a valuable supplement to police manpower. However, utilization of canines requires adherence to procedures that properly control their use-of-force potential and channel their specialized capabilities into legally-acceptable crime prevention and control activities.

Police dogs are not infallible. Their effectiveness depends largely upon the intelligent application of their capabilities. Police dogs react as trained to situations. Anyone making a sudden or threatening move toward the dog or handler risks the chance of the dog's engaging and causing injury.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a set of guidelines for the proper management and control of the department's canine team(s), as well as the use of police canine team(s) from other police agencies during daily and specialized operations.

This policy will familiarize department personnel with canine operating procedure and policy to ensure the best use of canine teams; the policy will also educate department supervisors on the appropriate uses of canine teams to ensure effective utilization and management in deployment situations.

II. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the Everett Police Department that the Canine Team operates as a unique support service, which will supplement and assist

responding units. The Canine Team will assume routine patrol responsibilities for the purpose of integrating its operation with the overall patrol function of the Department in responding to calls-for-service. The Canine Team serves as a very important asset which may substantially reduce the inherent danger to law enforcement officers in the performance of their duties. These procedures are to ensure the effective use of Canine Teams in criminal apprehension, tracking and locating missing persons (criminal or civilian), building searches, evidence and narcotic detection, explosive detection, crowd control and promoting favorable public relations through Canine demonstrations. It will be the duty and responsibility of the Canine Officer to exercise overall deployment of the Canine Team.

- B. This department may utilize regional police agencies' canine team(s) when it is felt that their use will aid in the apprehension of wanted or escaped persons, tracking, search and rescue operations, seizure of contraband, discovery of explosives, crowd control, locating articles, arson investigation, public relations demonstrations, and other needs of the department.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Canine Team Utilization

1. CANINE HANDLING
 - a. Only officers trained to handle a police canine and authorized by the Chief of Police may handle a canine.
 - b. The handler shall maintain control of the canine to avoid injury to persons as well as to the dog.

2. WHEN OFFICERS ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE K-9, THEY SHALL NOT:
 - a. Provoke the canine at any time;
 - b. Feed the canine without the expressed approval of the canine officer;
 - c. Pet or touch the canine without expressed approval of the canine officer;
 - d. Initiate any sharp noise or movement which would affect the stability of the canine when confined to the vehicle or working under the direction of the canine officer;
 - e. Interfere with or attempt to direct the canine team;

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- f. Request canine assistance that will not allow the canine to perform.
3. OFFICERS AT THE SCENE – OTHER THAN CANINE OFFICERS:
- a. When it is determined that a canine team is required, it is the responsibility of the other officers at the scene to:
 - 1) Secure the area until the canine team arrives;
 - 2) Avoid contaminating the area in any way (physical presence and use of chemicals should be minimized);
 - 3) If a break is in progress, do not enter the building unless ordered to do so by a supervisor at the scene;
 - 4) Assist the K-9 Unit only as requested by the K-9 Officer.
4. AVAILABILITY
- a. Canine teams may be used to augment routine patrol functions.
 - b. The teams may engage in assignments not listed here with the approval of the OIC/Patrol supervisor.
5. CANINE TEAM DEPLOYMENT
- a. A patrol unit in need of assistance from the Canine Team may make its request through dispatch, a Patrol Supervisor, or directly through the Canine Officer.
 - b. The canine handler is responsible for determining whether a situation justifies canine use. The decision on how to deploy the canine team is a decision of the handler. The responsibility for the evaluation of risk and safety of the team lies with the handler.
 - c. Arrestees shall not be transported in a vehicle with a police canine unless alternative transportation is not available and immediate transport is essential for safety or security reasons.
 - d. MUTUAL AID REQUESTS: All requests for services of the Canine Team outside the City shall be directed to the OIC. The OIC at his discretion may direct the Canine Team to respond, but only for the nature of incidents in which the Unit would normally respond to within the City. The OIC will ensure a mutual aid card is made at the time of the request listing the requesting Department, nature of the call, and the location.
 - e. OFF DUTY REQUESTS: The Canine Team may be called out during off-duty time for canine related services, if available. If a call-for-service from an outside agency is received during off-duty hours, the nature of the incident will be considered. The OIC will, then, dispatch the canine team to the outside agency, if appropriate.

The OIC should inquire as to the nature of the call and on-duty availability of canine teams from other agencies.

f. BUILDING SEARCH:

- a) When a suspected building break has been determined, the officer at the scene will request the use of the Canine Team. Officers at the scene will secure or otherwise seal the area, requesting assistance, as necessary, to prevent possible, escape from the building.
- b) Officers should take particular care not to enter the building or allow others to contaminate the area unless told to do so by a supervisor.
- c) Upon arrival of the Canine Team, the Patrol Supervisor on scene will brief the Unit on all aspects of the situation, paying particular attention to the location of exits, concealed hazards within the building. If shots have been exchanged or heard the Patrol Supervisor will advise the Canine Officer, and discuss an efficient course of action.
- d) The Canine Officer will advise the Patrol Supervisor how the dog may best be deployed. The final decision relative to committing the dog will be that of the Canine Officer. He will give serious consideration to the advice of the Patrol Supervisor.
- e) The Canine Team will enter the building and allow the dog to search the area. Whenever possible, and prior to entering, the suspect should be advised by warnings that the canine is to be deployed and will use force, if necessary.
- f) The officers on the outside of the building will not enter the site while the Canine Team is working, unless specifically requested by the Canine Officer. Other officers should secure all possible avenues of escape and eliminate as much noise as possible, thereby reducing distractions for the Canine Team.
- g) If a suspect is apprehended by the Canine Team, the Canine Officer will request assistance from other officers at the scene, if necessary. All apprehended persons will be turned over to the arresting officer for prosecution and medical treatment, unless ordered by the Patrol Supervisor

2) TRACKING/AREA SEARCHES:

- a) Officers will request the assistance of a Canine Team when the need for a track/area search arises. While awaiting the Canine Team's arrival, officers should take all precautions to

protect evidence at the scene, ensuring materials which may be used later by the Canine Team during the search are not to be handled. Once the evidence becomes contaminated with the scent of an officer; it may confuse the dog and render the unit inoperative. The dog will pick up the freshest scent available.

- b) Upon arrival of the canine Team, the Patrol Supervisor will brief the team on all aspects of the situation, paying particular attention to the identification of the subject (criminal or missing person), perimeters of the search area and concealed hazards. A course of action should be agreed upon which identifies search priorities, landscape, and securities of boundaries which will assist the Canine Team in performing the search. The Canine Officer will make the final decision relative to committing the canine.
- c) The Canine Team will enter the track/search area in accordance with training and experience and allow the dog to search the area. Where search involves locating a criminal suspect, the suspect should be advised, if possible, by loudspeaker or equivalent that a Canine is being deployed and will use force if necessary.
- d) In the event of a stolen or abandoned vehicle, the officers should remain at least ten feet from the vehicle to preserve a point of origin for tracking.

3) ARTICLE SEARCHES

- a) Secure the area where the articles are to be searched for to avoid any further scent contamination.
- b) Leave items in plain view, undisturbed and in place, if possible, and point them out to the handler.
- c) If articles must be recovered, advise the handler of what was recovered and where.

B. Injuries

1. CANINE OFFICER

- a. When a Canine Officer is injured, the following precautions will be taken by all personnel:
 - 1) Do not under any circumstances approach the dog or attempt to render first aid unless a fatality will result from delay;
 - 2) Request medical attention for the Canine Officer immediately;

- 3) Attempt to get the Canine Officer to control the dog and/or move the Canine cruiser close to the injured officer and open the door;
- 4) If possible, contact another Canine Officer to come to the scene and control the dog;
- 5) Most importantly, if a fatality will occur because of delay, officers should take all necessary steps to aid the injured officer.

2. CANINE INJURED

- a. In instances where the dog sustains an injury as a result of line of duty work, the Canine Officer will determine the ability of the animal to continue the mission. In all cases, the Canine Officer's decision will be final. The Canine Officer will be responsible for the health, security, and safety of the dog at all times. If injury does occur, the Canine Officer must submit a report through the Chain-of-Command to the Chief of Police. In the event of an off-duty injury or illness, the Canine Officer may seek the services of Department approved veterinarian. All veterinarian visits will be reported by the Canine Officer during his next scheduled tour-of-duty.

3. CANINE BITES

- a. Whenever a canine bites an individual, or physically apprehends a person whether or not the canine was acting in the line of duty, the handler shall:
 - 1) Ensure that proper medical attention is administered to anyone injured by the dog;
 - 2) Notify OIC/Patrol Supervisor of all injuries caused by the canine;
 - 3) All injuries will be photographed after medical treatment, when possible, to adequately display the nature and severity of the injury;
 - 4) All injuries sustained by any person, which result in laceration or hemorrhage, will be examined and attended to by an EMT and, if necessary, by a doctor at the local hospital. A copy of the dog's health and vaccination reports should be on file and accessible at all times.
 - 5) Any injuries inflicted by the canine will be carefully documented in the canine Officers "Use of Force" report and forwarded to the Chief of Police through the Chain-of-Command.

4. EQUIPMENT

- a. The Canine Officer will be issued equipment for handling and caring for the Canine. The Canine Officer will be responsible for the maintenance and proper use of all Canine equipment. Specialized canine equipment shall be furnished by the department.
- b. In addition to all equipment normally in fully marked police vehicles, following items shall be kept in the canine vehicle at all times;
 - 1) Tracking lead(patrol canine only) ;
 - 2) Patrol leash;
 - 3) Muzzle (patrol canine only)

5. TRAINING

- a. Initial Training: Initial training and certification is required prior to assignment of Canine Teams to street duty. All Canine Teams will be trained at facilities which are approved by the Massachusetts Police Training Committee.
- b. Re-Training: Whenever a Canine Team attends maintenance training, the Canine Officer will submit a written report stating the specific or specialized training work the Canine Team received. Training Records should be kept by the Canine Officer and reviewed periodically by his immediate superior
- c. Maintenance Of Canine Records:
 - 1) The Canine Officer shall be responsible for maintaining all Canine files which shall include the following sections:
 - a) Copies of all medical documents
 - b) Copies of all certifications and training documents
 - c) Canine demonstrations
 - d) Copies of all canine incident reports
 - e) All training records
- d. Each time the canine is used, the Canine Officer shall complete a Canine Deployment Form or Canine Computer Entry Card.

6. CANINE DEMONSTRATIONS

- a. Requests for demonstrations shall be made through the Canine Officer, Patrol Commander or Chief of Police;

- b. Canine Officer shall ensure that appropriate distances between the Canine and the public, and other safeguards, are implemented during all Canine Team demonstrations;
- c. Canine Officers shall ensure that the demonstration content is appropriate for the age of the audience;
- d. Spectators shall be advised of the firing of blank ammunition prior to the demonstration (if used).