



Canine Operations

I. PURPOSE

- A. The primary purpose of the canine (K-9) team is to provide line support to the Ridgely Police Department by using highly mobile and specially trained canine. The canine team can be especially effective for:
1. Locating and apprehending individuals suspected of committing certain crimes;
 2. Searching buildings and enclosed areas for individuals suspected of committing certain crimes;
 3. Aiding in the search for missing persons, articles and evidence of criminal activity;
 4. Crowd control by establishing a perimeter control in situations such as crime scenes, large fires or maintaining order at large public gatherings;
 5. Detecting the presence of illicit drugs;
 6. Providing assistance in the service of certain warrants;
 7. Providing inner perimeter security of subject containment at barricade situations;
 8. Promoting community relations;
 9. Providing a strong psychological deterrent for criminals; and
 10. Safeguarding Officers in the performance of certain duties.

4-4-2 DEFINITIONS

- A. Police Canine (K-9) - a canine recognized for its ability to serve the law enforcement community.
- B. Police Patrol Dog - a police working dog trained and used to aid Deputies in law enforcement duties and field enforcement operations.
- C. CDS - Controlled dangerous substance.
- D. Canine Handler - a Deputy charged with the responsibility of using a police canine dog in the performance of his/her duties and attending to that dog at all times.
- E. Canine team - comprised of a canine handler and an assigned police canine.
- F. Canine Supervisor - The supervisor assigned to oversee the administration and operation of the canine unit.

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G. Cross Trained Canine - a police canine that has been trained for both routine patrol operations (police patrol dog) and for special situations, such as the detection of illicit drugs.

H. Dog Bite - any injury or wound inflicted by the mouth of a dog, whether accidentally or intentionally, to a human being. A breaking, puncturing, or tearing of the skin of the victim need not be present to be considered a dog bite, as long as there is a visual indication where the dog inflicted the wound (e.g., teeth impression, bruise or puncture).

I. On-Lead - the condition when there is a physical attachment or connection by means of an appropriate strap, rope, chain, etc. between the dog and handler for purposes of control and restraint.

J. Off-Lead - the condition when there is no physical attachment or connection between the dog and handler.

K. Alert - (Positive Alert) the canine exhibits behavior indicating it recognizes the drug scent.

L. No Alert - (Negative Alert) the canine does not alert.

M. False Alert - (False-positive Alert) the canine alerts in absence of a drug scent.

N. Miss - (False-negative Alert) the canine does not alert in the presence of a drug scent.

III. CANINE OFFICER SELECTION

A. Among the characteristics an Officer should possess to be selected as a canine handler are:

1. Demonstrated competence as a patrol Officer with at least two years law enforcement experience;
2. Maturity, health and fitness; an affection and enthusiasm for the working dog; and a lifestyle suited to caring for the police dog;
3. The willingness to care for and house the canine at the Officer's residence and a secure outdoor area for the canine that conforms with agency requirements;
4. Good verbal and written communication skills;
5. Willingness to undertake canine handling that include:
 - a. Training for effective use of the police dog.
 - b. Give consideration to canine health and safety.
 - c. Maintain canine vehicle and equipment.
 - d. Advance canine skills through training.
 - e. Complete accurate canine reports.
 - f. Handle public relations, education, and demonstrations.
 - g. No prior sustained use of force complaints.
 - h. The ability (lifestyle) that permits call out when needed.

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IV. POLICE CANINE SELECTION

A. Among the characteristics a dog should have to be selected as a police canine are;

1. Age: A mature canine, usually 18 months to 4 years of age.
2. Breed: Adequate size to assist in arrests; physical capability to perform required search tasks; and be a deterrent image for psychological impact.
3. Sex: Either an intact male or a spayed female.
4. Health and Fitness: Have completed x-rays and a medical evaluation conducted by the Ridgely Police Department veterinarian.
5. Character and drive for police work; The canine needs to display aggression for patrol tasks; search drive for detection tasks; and sociability for public relations tasks and off-duty life.

4-4-5 CANINE HEALTH AND CARE

A. The canine handler is responsible for the health, care and well-being of their assigned canine(s).

B. The canine handler will ensure that his/her canine(s) are kept in the best possible health and cleanliness through routine bathing and maintenance of the canine's home environment and assigned patrol vehicle.

C. The canine handler is responsible for maintaining the health of the canine through regular visits to the Ridgely Police Department veterinarian for checkups and routine medical shot maintenance. Veterinarian visits for matters others than emergencies and routine medical shot maintenance must first be approved through the Chief of Police.

D. In the event of serious sickness or injury, the canine will be taken to the Ridgely Police Department veterinarian, whether the incident occurs during duty or off-duty hours, the Chief of Police will be notified. If the canine is injured while on duty, a canine deployment report will be completed.

E. In the event that a canine is sick or injured to the degree that it cannot perform it's assigned duties, the canine handler will immediately notify the Chief of Police.

F. All receipts and documentation of the Ridgely Police Department veterinarian visits must be supplied to the Chief of Police.

G. During periods of vacation, extended leave, or sickness when the canine handler cannot maintain an assigned canine, the canine will be housed only at the specified kennels approved by the Chief of Police.

H. Canine food and supplies will be purchased as needed through the pre established businesses, with receipts or documentation supplied to the Chief of Police.

I. Canine handler will not use excessive force in the handling, training, or working of any assigned police dog.

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VI. CANINE SAFETY

A. Safety must be the primary concern of the canine handler at all times. A canine handler must be in complete control of the canine at all times, as the handler is solely responsible for the actions of the canine. Safety and control must be practiced at home as well as on duty.

B. Showing off with the canine is strictly forbidden.

C. While in public, the canine handler must be mindful of pedestrian traffic and be particularly alert for unpredictable actions from the public, such as attempts to pet or agitate the canine.

D. When at home, contact with the canine must be limited to the canine handler and household/family members. Canines will be properly and safely isolated if needed, whenever friends, guests, relatives, etc are visiting the handler's home. Doors used to isolate canine during such times will be equipped with a locking or slide type bolt lock placed high enough to prevent children from opening the door.

E. In absence of the handler, care for the canine will be limited to mature and responsible members of the handler's household who have demonstrated the ability to control the canine. Canines will not be removed from the handler's property by household members, except under emergency conditions, such as the need for veterinary care.

F. At no time will the canine be left outside unsupervised, unless on the handler's confined property. Gates to the confined property must be locked or secured to the extent that a child cannot open the gate.

VII. OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

A. The canine unit has a specific objective, which is to provide support to all RPD units. The decision to use a police canine in accordance with this policy is an act of discretion and will be reviewed with respect to information reasonably available to the canine handler at the time the decision is made. The ultimate disposition of any related criminal proceeding will have no bearing on determining the reasonableness of any such decision.

B. A canine team may be made available for use by other law enforcement agencies. Requests by other agencies will be considered on a case by case basis. If the law enforcement agency is outside of the jurisdiction of the RPD, the request must be approved by the K9 handler if on duty. If the K9 handler is off duty, the request must be approved by the Chief of Police.

C. If the law enforcement agency is within the jurisdiction of the RPD, the availability to handle the requests will be determined by the canine handler.

D. If the canine unit is off duty, it may be called out only with the approval of the Chief of Police.

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VIII. ARREST AND APPREHENSION PROCEDURES

A. The primary task of the canine team is the search and apprehension of criminals. A canine may be used to apprehend an individual if the canine handler reasonably believes that the individual has either committed or is about to commit any offense and if any of the following conditions exists:

1. There is a reasonable belief that the individual poses an immediate threat of violence or serious harm to the public, any officer, or the handler.
2. The individual is physically resisting arrest and the use of the canine reasonably appears to be necessary to overcome the resistance.
3. The individual is believed to be concealed in an area where entry by anyone other than the police patrol dog would pose a threat to the safety of Officers or the public.

B. Situations may arise which do not fall within the provisions set forth in this policy. In any such case, a standard of objective reasonableness, in view of the totality of the circumstances, will be used to review the decision to use a canine.

C. Without the presence of one or more of the above conditions, mere flight from a pursuing Officer will not serve as good cause for the use of the canine to apprehend the individual; unless the individual is a fleeing felon.

D. In preparing to use the canine to search for or apprehend any individual, the handler and/or Supervisor on scene will carefully consider all pertinent information reasonably available at the time. This information will include, but is not limited to the following:

1. The individual's estimated age.
2. The nature and severity of the suspected offense.
3. Any potential danger to the public and/or other Deputies at the scene if the canine is released off-lead. Under no circumstances should a canine be released off-lead for apprehension purposes in a crowded area or when other persons are in or near, the path of the fleeing suspect. Additionally, particular attention should be given to the potential for injury to the handler and the canine by vehicular traffic on nearby roadways.
4. The degree of resistance, if any, the individual has shown.
5. The potential for escape or flight if the canine is not used.
6. The potential for injury to Officers or the public caused by the individual if the canine is not used.

E. A handler has the ultimate authority not to deploy the canine. The handler will evaluate each situation and determine if the use of the canine is technically feasible. Generally, the decision to deploy the canine will remain with the handler. However, a Supervisor who is sufficiently apprized of the situation may decide not to deploy the canine.

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F. On building, area/woods, and trail searches, the canine handler will be in charge of the search area and will deploy and/or direct other personnel to aid him/her on the search.

G. In the event that the canine handler affects an arrest, **and** the suspect is injured, whether from the use of physical force or the use of the canine, the handler will immediately notify the Chief of Police. The Supervisor will ensure the required reports are completed:

1. Canine Incident Report
2. Use of Force Report
3. Detailed Report
4. Criminal Investigative Report (If applicable)
5. Photographs of the canine involved-injuries: full body and facial.

H. The Supervisor will include comments regarding the deployment of the canine, and if required will address any issues that should be handled through maintenance training. If applicable, areas of concern will be identified and corrective action taken, either through the maintenance training or through administrative punishment as determined by the Chief of Police.

I. The handler will use, and/or permit the canine to use only that amount of force that is necessary to apprehend and render safe, a fleeing, hiding, and/or combative individual. The deployment of a canine for the location and apprehension of a suspect is a use of force that must be consistent with Ridgely Police Department principles of escalation and de-escalation of force.

J. Except in exigent circumstances, or where there is an imminent danger of death or serious injury, the handler should keep the canine in visual contact.

K. When apprehending a suspect, the canine will be commanded to disengage as soon as the suspect is subdued or readily complies with the handler's directions

L. The canine will be leashed upon the arrest of the suspect or conclusion of a building search.

M. A canine team will not be used to apprehend a person suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol or a person believed to be suffering from a psychological condition if no crime has been committed.

N. No canine will be committed until a proper announcement has been given in a loud and clear voice, such as "Police K-9, come out or the dog will be released". A public address system in a building or from a patrol vehicle can assist in this announcement. This will allow innocent persons the chance to exit the area and allow the suspect the opportunity to surrender.

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1. A reasonable amount of time will be given to allow persons to comply with this warning prior to releasing the canine off-lead. The warning will be repeated on each level of a multi-level structure (including private residences) and/or as the search progresses through a large or divided building.

2. When there is a reasonable belief that the suspect speaks a language other than English, an officer or other individual fluent in that language should be summoned to the scene if available and exigency of the situation permits.

O. A canine will not normally be handled or given commands by anyone other than the assigned handler. Only under emergency conditions will another handler command the canine.

P. Any unusual incidents will be reported through the proper chain of command.

IX. BUILDING SEARCHES

A. Generally, the police canine should not be released until a back-up officer is available to assist the canine team with the search. Ridgely Police Department personnel will secure the building perimeter.

B. Whenever possible, the building owner should be contacted to determine whether there may be tenants or other occupants in the building and to ascertain the building's layout.

C. The on-scene Officer will take the following steps, if possible, in preparation for the search:

1. Evacuate all tenants, workers, or others from the building.
2. Request that all air conditioning, heating, or other air-blowing systems be shut-off so as to not interfere with the canine's scent.

D. Upon entrance into the building, all exits should be secured, and communications limited to those of tactical nature.

E. No one, including other Officers, owners, or residents, will be permitted into the building with the canine team while the search is being conducted, unless the handler determines it to be necessary. Officers who assist the canine team will be under the direct supervision of the handler.

F. Two or more canine teams may be committed to building searches when it is determined that the area to be searched would necessitate more than one canine team due to the size of the area, floors, number of areas, etc. In searching large buildings, canines must be separated, i.e., in multiple floored buildings or rooms that can be divided by locked doors.

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G. When a suspect is contained and known to be armed, a canine will not be sent off-lead into a building, house, or confined area for apprehension purposes. Under such circumstances, the On-Scene Officer will contact the Caroline County Special Response Team for assistance. The only exception would be to save the life of an Officer or innocent person facing immediate death or serious injury at the hands of the armed suspect.

X. WOODS SEARCHES/TRACKING

A. When a trained canine is available for tracking, it may be used with supervisory approval to track missing persons, criminal suspects, or to locate evidence that the supervisor has reason to believe has been abandoned or hidden in a specified open area. Such searches are subject to the following conditions and limitations:

1. When an Officer is pursuing a suspect and contact with the suspect is lost, before requesting a canine team the Officer will:
 - a. Stop and pinpoint or estimate the location where the suspect was last seen;
 - b. Turn off vehicle engines in the area if possible. Exhaust fumes contaminate the search area and interfere with the canine's scenting abilities; and
 - c. Avoid contaminating the area where the suspect or individual was last seen by eliminating foot and vehicle movement in the area.
2. The on-scene Supervisor will:
 - a. Secure the perimeter of the area to be searched;
 - b. Secure the integrity of the area to be searched by keeping/removing all people out of the area; and
 - c. Protect any items of clothing or other items that will be used for scent discrimination from being handled.
3. If the scene involves a suspect who fled from a vehicle (bailout), the on-scene Supervisor will also:
 - a. Prevent anyone from entering suspect vehicle;
 - b. If the vehicle's engine running, approach the vehicle from the side opposite the bailout and turn it off; and
 - c. Secure and leave undisturbed any clothing or articles which may have been discarded, lost, or left behind by the suspect and make the handler aware of these items.
4. The canine handler will conduct the track with the canine on a leash of sufficient length to provide a reasonable measure of safety to the subject of the search without compromising the canine's tracking abilities.
5. The handler will determine which personnel will have access to the area being searched or will accompany the canine team on trails.

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6. Upon locating a suspect, the handler will give a verbal warning in order to afford the suspect a chance to surrender without further action that may require the use of the canine in the apprehension.

XI. CROWD CONTROL

A. A canine team may respond as backup for, but will not deploy the canine for crowd control at a peaceful demonstration.

B. A canine team may be used upon approval of the on-scene Supervisor to protect life or property during a riot or other major unlawful assembly after an order to disperse has been made and disregarded. In these situations, the canine will:

1. Be kept on a short lead at all times in order to protect individuals from serious injury.
2. The handler will not initiate any offensive action, unless to guard against imminent loss of life, serious bodily injury, or substantial property damage.

XII. AFTER-BITE PROCEDURES

A. Whenever a police canine has bitten or scratched an individual or is alleged to have done so, whether on-duty or not, the handler will:

1. If no arrest is made, offer to the individual to provide medical attention and treatment by qualified medical professional.
2. If an arrest made, provide the individual with medical attention in accordance with office policy on transporting and booking prisoners. If possible, the medical personnel will be summoned to the scene of the incident.
3. A subject's refusal to accept medical treatment should be documented in writing, if possible. The Officer will obtain a copy of the refusal so that it may be placed in the case file.
4. If possible, the canine handler will take color photographs of the affected area before and following medical treatment. The photographs will be placed into Property Held as evidence and the proper chain of custody will be maintained. If the subject alleges an injury that is not visible, the location of the alleged injury will be photographed and the Chief of Police notified.
5. The handler will complete the required reports according to RPD policy and submit them to the Chief of Police for approval.
6. It will be the responsibility of the canine handler to complete and document the necessary post-bite interviews. The purpose of the interviews is to prevent false accusations and statements that may arise in the future. Among those to be interviewed may be:

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- a. The suspect
- b. Other Officers
- c. Witnesses on the scene, including persons who may not have heard any commotion
- d. EMS personnel on scene
- e. Transporting Officers
- f. Hospital personnel
- g. Jail personnel

7. A canine involved in a bite will be taken to the Ridgely Police Department veterinarian within 14 days of the incident for medical clearance. A copy of the documentation will be provided to the Canine Supervisor to be placed in the case file and the canine's regular file maintained by the canine Handler.

XIII. ACCIDENTAL BITES

A. An "accidental bite" is an injury caused by a canine to a person who was not intended to be bit or injured. The following procedures will be followed after an accidental bite:

1. The Officer will summon emergency personnel to provide medical attention to the subject and, if necessary to transport the subject to the hospital. If the subject refuses medical treatment, the handler will attempt to obtain documentation of the refusal and note the refusal in the report.
2. The handler will immediately notify the Chief of Police. The shift supervisor will take color photographs of the injury and obtain a written statement from the subject.
3. The canine handler will submit the required reports to the Chief of Police, including:

- a. Detailed Incident Report

XIV. DRUG DETECTION CANINE GUIDELINES

A. The drug detection canine may be used to:

1. Search or scan vehicles, building, parcels, areas, or other items;
2. Support probable cause in obtaining a search warrant;
3. Assist in the search for CDS during the execution of a search warrant; and
4. Assist in drug education programs and demonstrations.

B. The drug detection canine will not be used to search a person for CDS. If a canine alert causes the handler to believe that a person may be in possession of CDS, the Officer in charge of the investigation will determine how to proceed. The canine only if removed from the person may scan personal possessions.

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C. The decision to use the canine rests solely with the handler. The handler is responsible for deployment of the police canine as a method of investigation.

D. A drug detection canine team may be made available for use by other law enforcement agencies. Requests by other agencies will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

1. If the law enforcement agency is outside of the jurisdiction of the Ridgely Police Department, the Chief of Police must approve the request.
2. If the law enforcement agency is within the jurisdiction of the Ridgely Police Department, the availability to handle the requests will be determined by the canine handler.
3. If there is no canine team on duty, one may be called out only with the approval of the Chief of Police.

XV. PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS

A. The Chief of Police must approve a request for public demonstration by a canine team in advance.

B. A canine handler will not demonstrate "apprehension" work to the public unless authorized to do so by the Chief of Police.

XVI. POLICE CANINE INITIAL TRAINING

A. Initial training for either a police patrol canine team or a drug detection canine team will be conducted through an outside agency or vendor designated by the Chief of Police.

XVII. MAINTENANCE TRAINING

A. After receiving initial training and certification, each will be recertified through an outside agency or vendor on an annual basis.

Additional training considerations are as follows:

1. Handlers are encouraged to engage in additional training with the approval of the Chief of Police.
2. To ensure consistency in training, no Handler, trainer, or outside vendor will train to a standard that is contrary to the policies of the Ridgely Police Department.
3. All training/deployment problems related to a canine's performance will be resolved through maintenance training and documented.
4. A canine team that has been unable to re-certify due to a documented problem with the canine's or the handler's performance will be immediately placed out of service.

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5. The canine team will complete 16 hours of maintenance training on a monthly basis. The Supervisor will ensure that the team completes the required training and will document and maintain training records.

XVIII. CDS CANINE TRAINING AIDES

A. The CDS training aides will be used only for the training of drug detection canine teams.

1. Only the Canine Handler will obtain CDS training aids.
2. The Canine Handler will be responsible for:
 - a. Maintaining a current list of training aides possessed and providing a copy to the Chief of Police.
 - b. Maintaining current certifications for the CDS through the State of Maryland and the Drug Enforcement Administration.
 - c. Storing the training aides in a secured location within the Ridgely Police Department. Only the Canine Handler and the Chief of Police will have access to the storage location.
 - d. Ensuring that CDS training aides are stored in waterproof, military ammunition-type boxes. To prevent scent-contamination, each box will only contain one type of CDS. There will also be a list of the training aides that are required to be in each ammo-type box attached to the inside lid of each box.

IXX. USE OF CDS TRAINING AIDES

A. The following procedures are designed to maintain the integrity of the CDS training aides.

B. The Canine Handler who removes a CDS training aide will complete the CDS Training Aide Sign Out Log.

C. As the box is removed from the storage location, and before the aides are used for training or demonstration, the CDS training aides in the box will be inventoried using the CDS Training Aide Inventory Check Form. This form will also be used for an inventory check prior to returning the box to storage after the training or demonstrations are completed.

D. The Officer who removes CDS training aides from storage is solely and personally responsible for their use during the training or demonstration and for their safe return.

E. CDS training aides will not be removed from the storage for any reason other than training, demonstration, inventory, except for the approval of the Chief of Police.

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F. At no time will a person other than the canine handler, or Chief of Police have possession of a CDS training aide.

G. If a CDS training aide is lost or stolen, the Chief of Police will be immediately notified and the appropriate paperwork will be completed.

H. The Canine Handler and the Chief of Police will conduct a monthly inventory of the CDS training aides and document the inventory on the CDS Training Aide Inventory Form.

I. If, because of the receipt of a new aide, the loss of an aide, the destruction of an aide, etc., a revision to the CDS Training Aide Inventory Form is needed, a memo explaining the revision will be completed and approved by the Chief of Police.

J. The procedure for disposing of old or damaged CDS training aides is as follows:

1. Whenever a CDS training aide begins to leak any of the substance contained in the packaging, or if the CDS training aide is accidentally damaged, the aide will immediately be placed into a plastic bag.
2. The Chief of Police will be notified of the incident and the appropriate paperwork will be completed.
3. If the CDS training aide is not salvageable and must be destroyed, the aide will be repackaged and placed into Property Held for Destruction. If the incident affects the CDS training inventory, the appropriate procedures must be followed.

XX. HANDLER COMPENSATION

Handlers will be compensated for the "At Home Care" of their canines (time spent in the care, feeding, grooming, and other needs of the animal) in a manner consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

XXI. ON-CALL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Canine Unit must keep their phones with him/her at all times and are subject to calls for canine assistance during off-duty hours.

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XXII. CANINE EQUIPMENT

A. Each Canine Officer will maintain the following equipment in good working order:

1. Transport cage
2. Muzzle
3. Tracking line
4. Metal link collar
5. 6-foot lead
6. Water bowl
7. Reward toy
8. Protective vest
9. Grooming tools
10. A secure kennel is required at the Officer's residence
11. Leather collar