



Approved:

Chief Marcia Harnden

Subject:

847. Comfort Canine

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847.1: PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for governing the deployment, training, evaluation, and use of a comfort canine, and defines the authority, circumstances, and responsibility for their use. The trained comfort canine is a valuable supplement to Albany Police Department (APD) wellness resources. The function of the comfort canine is to provide interaction with employees and victims to reduce anxiety, provide comfort for people during times of crisis, and to provide aid and comfort to individuals impacted by violence, tragedy, or traumatic events.

847.2: POLICY

It is the policy of the Albany Police Department that teams of handlers and comfort canines meet and maintain the appropriate proficiency to effectively and reasonably carry out wellness objectives.

847.2.1: DEFINITIONS

Comfort Canine Program Supervisor - Appointed by the Operations Captain and responsible for the overall coordination of the comfort canine program.

Comfort Canine Stewards – APD employees voluntarily trained to interact and care for the comfort canine, to include overnight visits at the employees' home, deploying the comfort canine, and assisting with daily care and activities.

847.3: ASSIGNMENT

Comfort canine activities will generally be assigned based on needs of the Department.

847.4: COMFORT CANINE PROGRAM SUPERVISOR

- a. The comfort canine program supervisor shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Operations Division Captain or the authorized designee.

- b. The comfort canine program supervisor shall ultimately be responsible for the health and welfare of the canine and shall ensure that the canine receives proper nutrition, grooming, training, medical care, affection, and living conditions.
- c. The responsibilities of the comfort canine program supervisor include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Maintaining a liaison with command staff and functional supervisors.
 - 2) Recommending and overseeing the procurement of equipment and services for handlers and canines.

847.4.1: COMFORT CANINE EQUIPMENT

The comfort canine program supervisor will ensure the following equipment is available to canine stewards:

- a. Canine Equipment:
 - 1) Water dish and water bottle;
 - 2) Food/Treats;
 - 3) Collar/Leads;
 - 4) Identifying harness;
 - 5) Crate/Bedding;
 - 6) Toys;
 - 7) Medication;
 - 8) Emergency K9 first aid kit;
 - 9) Veterinary care.
- b. Additional equipment may be issued at the direction of the comfort canine program supervisor.

847.5: CANINE SELECTION

The comfort canine program supervisor will be responsible for coordinating the canine selection process. Any canine selected to serve as a member of the Albany Police Department, in any capacity, will be owned by the Albany Police Department. Canine purchases will be contingent upon available funding and approval of the Operations Captain. The comfort canine program supervisor will be responsible for determining the most suitable option to use for the selection and evaluation of a prospective comfort canine.

- a. The selection and evaluation process will be coordinated through a recognized comfort, crisis dog organization, or another canine organization, business, or association approved by the Operations Captain.
- b. All pre-service training will be coordinated and approved by the Operations Captain. All pre-service training shall meet the established standards for the comfort canine as set by a recognized comfort, crisis dog organization, or other accredited and recognized animal handling organization.

847.6: FACILITY LIVING GUIDELINES

The goal of the comfort canine program is to provide an additional wellness resource to all employees. The comfort canine will live at the Albany Police Department for the majority of the time. General guidelines for the comfort canine living at the APD facility include, but are not limited to:

- a. The comfort canine shall have multiple areas designated as safe spaces, which generally include an enclosed office or space with canine bedding, water, toys, and free of open trash containers and small items that can be easily ingested. Designated safe spaces include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Records unit with barricade;
 - 2) Dispatch; and
 - 3) Property and evidence.
- b. The whiteboard located at the entrance of the Records Unit shall be utilized on a daily basis for the coordination of care of the comfort canine. Daily whiteboard activities include: meals, walks, medication administration, potty breaks, and where is s/he now? On-duty comfort canine stewards shall share the responsibility of daily care maintenance and record activities throughout the day and week on the white board to ensure the comfort canine is properly cared for.
- c. At the end of each week, a photo should be taken of the whiteboard and emailed or texted to the comfort canine program coordinator. Providing weekly logs of the care and maintenance of the comfort canine is important for the overall health and wellbeing of the canine. The comfort canine program coordinator will log the weekly activity and look for any behavior or medical issues that may arise over time.
- d. The comfort canine shall wear a designated collar, which includes an Apple tracker device, at all times. The Apple tracker provides location of the canine. In the event the comfort canine's whereabouts are unknown, the Comfort Canine Program Supervisor shall be notified immediately to obtain current location of the comfort canine.

847.6.1: OVERNIGHT STAYS AT EMPLOYEE RESIDENCE

Overnight stays at comfort canine stewards home residence are encouraged especially over the weekend to provide an environment of rest and activity

- a. Comfort canine stewards will be allowed to take the comfort canine to their personal residence for overnight visits.
- b. Comfort canine stewards must be able to provide the following care requirements at their personal residence:
 - 1) Fully fenced outdoor space.
 - 2) Indoor sleeping quarters.
 - 3) Environment free of open trash containers and small items that can be easily ingested.
- c. Comfort canine stewards shall coordinate overnight visits with the comfort canine program supervisor to include date and time of departure and arrival to the police department. This information shall be

added to the whiteboard prior to taking the comfort canine home to reflect who has the comfort canine.

- d. Any unusual or unsafe behavior or incidents shall be immediately reported to the comfort canine program supervisor.

847.8: COMFORT CANINE STEWARDS

It is the goal of the Albany Police Department to have the majority of our employees trained as comfort canine stewards. Employees who wish to interact and care for the comfort canine shall receive initial training. The comfort canine program supervisor will be responsible for in-service and monthly trainings. Training will be offered to all employees to include proper handling, voice commands, and care and maintenance. All TRUST team members are encouraged to be trained as comfort canine stewards.

847.8.1: STEWARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Comfort canine stewards will be responsible for the following:
 - 1) Except as required during appropriate deployment, the stewards shall not expose the canine to any foreseeable and unreasonable risk of harm.
 - 2) Stewards shall maintain all department comfort canine equipment under his/her control in a clean and serviceable condition.
 - 3) Stewards should not tether a canine in a manner that would violate ORS 167.325(1), ORS 167.330(1) and/or ORS 167.343.

847.8.2: POLICE CANINES IN PUBLIC AREAS

- a. The canine should be kept on a leash when in areas that allow access to the public.
- b. The canine shall not be left unattended in any area to which the public may have access.
- c. The canine should not be left unattended in a vehicle at any time.

847.9: REPORTING DEPLOYMENT

The comfort canine program is to provide interaction with employees and victims to reduce anxiety, provide comfort for people during times of crisis, and to provide aid and comfort to individuals impacted by violence, tragedy, or traumatic events. The comfort canine will also be utilized in community events in public settings. Comfort canine deployments shall be categorized as:

- 1) Public event (any public event not hosted by APD)
- 2) APD community outreach (any department hosted community event)
- 3) School event (any event or visit to schools)
- 4) Traumatic incident (assisting with non-department employee victims)
- 5) Department related critical incident (assisting with an internal APD incident involving APD employees)

- a. Any comfort canine deployment should be tracked through CAD by adding the comfort canines radio number to the call.
- b. In the event that injury is caused by the comfort canine to a person or another canine, the incident should be promptly reported to the comfort canine program supervisor and/or watch supervisor and an incident report shall be completed.
 - 1) If the local public health administrator has exempted this department from the requirement to hold the canine after a bite, the canine handler shall notify the local public health administrator immediately should the canine develop any abnormal behavior within 10 days of biting a person ([OAR 333-019-0024](#)).

847.10: CANINE INJURY AND MEDICAL CARE

- a. If a canine is injured, or there is an indication that the canine is not in good physical condition, the injury or condition will be reported to the comfort canine program supervisor or watch supervisor as soon as practical and appropriately documented.
- b. All medical attention shall be rendered by the designated canine veterinarian or specialist (with comfort canine program supervisor approval), except during an emergency where treatment should be obtained from the nearest available veterinarian.
 - 1) All records of medical treatment shall be maintained in the comfort canine's training file in Laserfiche.

847.11: TRAINING

- a. Initial comfort canine training shall be provided upon transfer of the comfort canine by the canine organization from which APD purchases the comfort canine from. Initial training should include basic commands, medical history, canine personality traits, and care and maintenance standards.
- b. The comfort canine shall complete Canine Good Citizen (CGC) training within the first year of service with APD.
- c. Monthly in-service training will consist of a combination of CGC reinforcement training, and training with a certified canine trainer, which shall include basic commands, obedience training, and therapy dog training.
- d. The comfort canine program supervisor shall be responsible for scheduling periodic training for all department members to familiarize them with how to conduct themselves in the presence of the comfort canine.
- e. All canine training should be conducted while on-duty unless otherwise approved by the comfort canine program supervisor or watch supervisor.
- f. Canine stewards are encouraged to engage in additional training with approval of the comfort canine program supervisor.

847.11.1: ANNUAL EVALUATION

- The comfort canine program supervisor shall perform an annual evaluation with the comfort canine to include:
- a. CGC standards are being met (basic obedience); and

- b. The comfort canine displays appropriate behavior in public settings.

The annual evaluation shall be included in an administrative review of the comfort canine program.

847.11.2: TRAINING RECORDS

All canine training records shall be maintained in the comfort canine's training file in Laserfiche. Training records shall include:

- a. Training related documents;
- b. Certifications;
- c. Veterinary/medical records;
- d. Activity/deployment reports; and
- e. Any other documents related to the comfort canine.