



Approved:  
*Chief Marcia Harnden*

Subject:

# 250. Police Canines

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## 250.1: PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of canines to augment law enforcement services to the community including, but not limited to, locating individuals and contraband and apprehending criminal offenders.

## 250.2: POLICY

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

## 250.3: ASSIGNMENT

Canine teams will generally be assigned based on needs of the Department.

## 250.4: CANINE COORDINATOR

- a. The canine coordinator shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Operations Division Captain or the authorized designee.
- b. The responsibilities of the coordinator include, but are not limited to:
  - 1) Reviewing all canine use reports to ensure compliance with policy and to identify training issues and other needs of the program.
  - 2) Maintaining a liaison with vendor kennels.
  - 3) Maintaining a liaison with command staff and functional supervisors.
  - 4) Maintaining a liaison with other agency canine coordinators.
  - 5) Maintaining accurate records to document canine activities.

- 6) Recommending and overseeing the procurement of equipment and services for the teams of handlers and canines.
- 7) Scheduling all canine-related activities.
- 8) Ensuring the canine teams are scheduled for regular training to maximize their capabilities.

#### **250.4.1: POLICE CANINE EQUIPMENT**

The canine coordinator will issue the following equipment to canine handlers based on their assignment needs:

- a. Patrol Canine Equipment
  - 1) Water dish and water bottle;
  - 2) Leads (3 various lengths);
  - 3) Temperature Control Monitor for Patrol Vehicle;
  - 4) Remote door release;
  - 5) Muzzle;
  - 6) Identifying harness;
  - 7) Bite sleeve;
  - 8) Electronic training collar;
  - 9) First aid kit.
- b. Drug Detection Canine Equipment
  - 1) Water dish and water bottle;
  - 2) Lead (3 various lengths);
  - 3) Temperature Control Monitor for Patrol Vehicle;
  - 4) Muzzle;
  - 5) Identifying harness;
  - 6) Drug training aid locker;
  - 7) First aid kit.

Additional equipment may be issued at the direction of the canine coordinator.

#### **250.4.2: CANINE SELECTION**

The Canine Coordinator 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 Support Services Captain. The Canine Coordinator will be responsible for determining the most suitable option to use for the selection and evaluation of a prospective canine.

- a. The selection and evaluation process will be coordinated through the Oregon Police Canine Association (OPCA), or another canine organization, business, or association approved by the Canine Coordinator.

- b. All pre-service training will be coordinated and approved by the Canine Coordinator. All pre-service training shall meet the established standards for the canine's specific discipline as set by the OPCA or other accredited and recognized animal handling organization.

#### **250.5: REQUESTS FOR CANINE TEAMS**

- a. Department members are encouraged to request the assistance of a canine team when appropriate.
- b. All requests for canine assistance from outside agencies must be approved by the Shift Supervisor and are subject to the following:
  - 1) Canine teams shall not be used for any assignment which is not consistent with this policy;
  - 2) The canine handler shall have the authority to decline a request for any specific assignment which they feel is unsuitable;
  - 3) It shall be the responsibility of the canine handler to coordinate operations with agency personnel in order to minimize the risk of unintended injury;
  - 4) It shall be the responsibility of the canine handler to complete all necessary reports or reports as directed.
- c. Priority should be given to the use of on-duty canine units from this agency and on-duty canine units from mutual aid agencies prior to the call-out of off duty Albany Police canine units.
- d. All public requests for a canine team demonstration shall be reviewed and, if appropriate, approved by the canine coordinator prior to making any resource commitment.
  - 1) The canine coordinator is responsible for obtaining resources and coordinating involvement in the demonstration to include proper safety protocols.

#### **250.6: APPREHENSION GUIDELINES**

- a. A canine may be used to locate and apprehend a suspect if the canine handler reasonably believes that the individual has either committed, is committing, or threatening to commit any serious offense and if any of the following conditions exist:
  - 1) There is a reasonable belief the suspect poses an imminent threat of violence or serious harm to the public, any officer, or the handler.
  - 2) The suspect is physically resisting or threatening to resist arrest and the use of a canine reasonably appears to be necessary to overcome such resistance.
  - 3) The suspect is believed to be concealed in an area where entry by other than the canine would pose a threat to the safety of officers or the public.

- 4) Any other instance where the canine handler reasonably believes that the use of the canine is appropriate under the circumstances.
- b. Absent a reasonable belief that a suspect has committed, is committing, or is threatening to commit a serious offense, mere flight from a pursuing officer, without any of the above conditions, shall not serve as the basis for the use of a canine to apprehend a suspect.
- c. Use of a canine to locate and apprehend a suspect wanted for a lesser criminal offense than those identified above requires approval from the Shift Supervisor. Absent a change in circumstances that present an imminent threat to officers, the canine or the public, such canine use should be conducted on-leash or under conditions that minimize the likelihood the canine will bite or otherwise injure the individual.
- d. In all applications, once the suspect has been located and no longer reasonably appears to present a threat or risk of escape, the handler should secure the canine as soon as it becomes reasonably practicable.
- e. If the canine has apprehended the suspect with a secure bite, and the handler believes that the suspect no longer poses a threat, the handler should promptly command the canine to release the suspect.

#### **250.6.1: PREPARATION FOR DEPLOYMENT**

- a. Prior to the use of a canine to search for or apprehend any suspect, the canine handler and/or the supervisor on-scene should carefully consider all pertinent information reasonably available at the time. The information should include, but is not limited to:
  - 1) The nature and seriousness of the suspected offense;
  - 2) Whether violence or weapons were used or are anticipated;
  - 3) The degree of resistance or threatened resistance, if any, shown by the suspect;
  - 4) The suspect's known or perceived age;
  - 5) The potential for injury to officers or the public caused by the suspect if the canine is not utilized;
  - 6) Any potential danger to the public and/or other officers at the scene if the canine is released;
  - 7) The potential for the suspect to escape or flee if the canine is not utilized.
- b. As circumstances permit, the canine handler should make every reasonable effort to communicate and coordinate with other involved members to minimize the risk of unintended injury.
- c. It is the canine handler's responsibility to evaluate each situation and determine whether the use of a canine is appropriate and reasonable. The canine handler shall have the authority to decline the use of the canine whenever he/she deems deployment is unsuitable.

- d. A supervisor who is sufficiently apprised of the situation may prohibit deploying the canine.
- e. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, assisting members should take direction from the handler to minimize interference with the canine.

### **250.6.2: WARNINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. Unless it would increase the risk of injury or escape, a clearly audible warning announcing that a canine will be used if the suspect does not surrender should be made prior to releasing a canine.
  - 1) The handler should allow a reasonable time for a suspect to surrender and should quiet the canine momentarily to listen for any verbal response to the warning.
  - 2) If feasible, other members should be in a location opposite the warning to verify that the announcement could be heard.
  - 3) If available, warnings given in other languages should be used as necessary.
- b. If a warning is not given, the canine handler, when practicable, should first advise the supervisor of their decision to not issue a warning prior to releasing the canine.
- c. In the event of an apprehension, the canine handler shall document in any related reports how the warning was given and, if no warning was given, the reason(s) why.

### **250.6.3: REPORTING DEPLOYMENTS, BITES, AND INJURIES**

- a. Whenever a canine deployment results in a bite or causes injury to an intended suspect, a supervisor should be promptly notified, and the injuries documented in a canine use report.
- b. The injured person shall be promptly treated by emergency medical services personnel and, if appropriate, transported to an appropriate medical facility for further treatment.
- c. The deployment and injuries should also be included in any related incident or arrest report.
- d. If an individual alleges an injury, either visible or not visible, a supervisor shall be notified and both the individual's injured and uninjured areas shall be photographed as soon as practicable after first tending to the immediate needs of the injured party.
  - 1) Photographs shall be retained as evidence in accordance with current department evidence procedures. The photographs shall be retained until the criminal proceeding is completed and the time for any related civil proceeding has expired.
- e. Any unintended bite or injury caused by a canine, whether on- or off-duty, shall be promptly reported to the canine coordinator. Unintended bites or injuries caused by a canine should be documented in an administrative report, not in a canine use report.

- f. 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](#)).

### **250.7: NON-APPREHENSION GUIDELINES**

Properly trained canines may be used to track or search for non-criminals (e.g., lost children, individuals who may be disoriented or in need of medical attention) with Shift Supervisor approval.

- a. The canine handler is responsible for determining the canine's suitability for such assignments based on the conditions and the abilities of the canine.
- b. When the canine is deployed in a search or other non-apprehension operation, the following guidelines apply:
- 1) Absent a change in circumstances that present an immediate threat to officers, the canine or the public, such applications should be conducted on-leash or under conditions that minimize the likelihood the canine will bite or otherwise injure the individual, if located.
  - 2) Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, assisting members should take direction from the handler to minimize interference with the canine.
  - 3) Throughout the deployment the handler is responsible for ensuring that periodic verbal assurances are given that the canine will not bite or hurt the individual and encourage the individual to make himself/herself known.
  - 4) Once the individual has been located, the handler should place the canine in a down-stay or otherwise secure it as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### **250.7.1: ARTICLE DETECTION**

- a. A canine trained to find objects or property related to a person or crime may be used to locate or identify articles.
- b. A canine search should be conducted in a manner that minimizes the likelihood of unintended bites or injuries.

#### **250.7.2: NARCOTICS DETECTION**

- a. A canine trained in narcotics detection may be used in accordance with current law and under certain circumstances, including:
- 1) The sniff or search of vehicles, buildings, bags, parcels, and other articles;
  - 2) Assisting in search warrant service;
  - 3) Deployment seeking probable cause for lawful searches.

**250.7.3: BOMB/EXPLOSIVE DETECTION**

- a. Because of the high risk of danger to the public and officers when a bomb or other explosive device is suspected, the use of a canine team trained in explosive detection may be considered.
- b. When available, an explosive-detection canine team may be used in accordance with current law and under certain circumstances, including:
  - 1) Assisting in the search of a building, structure, area, vehicle or article where an actual or suspected explosive device has been reported or located;
  - 2) Assisting with searches at transportation facilities and vehicles (e.g., buses, airplanes, trains);
  - 3) Preventive sniff or search at special events, VIP visits, official buildings and other restricted areas.
    - A. Searches of individuals should remain minimally intrusive and shall be strictly limited to the purpose of detecting explosives.
  - 4) Assisting in the search of scenes where an explosion has occurred, and an explosive device or secondary explosive device is suspected.

**250.8: HANDLER SELECTION**

The minimum qualifications for the assignment of canine handler include:

- a. An officer who is not currently on probation;
- b. Residing in an adequately-fenced, single-family residence (minimum 5-foot high fence with locking gates), or with another secure area for the dog as approved by the Canine Coordinator;
- c. Living within 30 miles from Albany city limits;
- d. Agreeing to be assigned to the position for a minimum of five years.

**250.9: HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. The canine handler 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.
- b. The canine handler will be responsible for the following:
  - 1) Except as required during appropriate deployment, the handler shall not expose the canine to any foreseeable and unreasonable risk of harm.
  - 2) The handler shall maintain all department equipment under his/her control in a clean and serviceable condition.

- 3) When a handler is off-duty for an extended number of days, the assigned canine vehicle should be stored at the Albany Police Department facility.
- 4) Handlers shall permit the canine coordinator to conduct spontaneous on-site inspections of affected areas of their homes as well as their canine vehicles to verify that conditions and equipment conform to this policy.
- 5) Any changes in the living status of the handler that may affect the lodging or environment of the canine shall be reported to the canine coordinator as soon as possible.
- 6) When off-duty, the canine shall be in a kennel provided by the City at the home of the handler. When a canine is kenneled at the handler's home, the gate shall be secured with a lock.
- 7) When off-duty, the canine may be let out of the kennel while under the direct control of the handler.
- 8) The canine should be permitted to socialize in the home with the handler's family for short periods of time and under the direct supervision of the handler.
- 9) Under no circumstances will the canine be lodged at another location unless approved by the canine coordinator or Shift Supervisor.
- 10) Whenever a canine handler is off-duty for an extended number of days, it may be necessary to temporarily relocate the canine. In those situations, the handler shall give reasonable notice to the canine coordinator prior to arrangements being made.
- 11) Handlers should not tether a canine in a manner that would violate ORS 167.325(1), ORS 167.330(1) and/or ORS 167.343.

#### **250.9.1: POLICE CANINES IN PUBLIC AREAS**

- a. The canine should be kept on a leash when in areas that allow access to the public. Exceptions to this rule would include specific law enforcement operations for which the canine is trained.
- b. A canine shall not be left unattended in any area to which the public may have access.
- c. When the canine vehicle is left unattended, all windows and doors shall be secured in such a manner as to prevent unauthorized access to the dog. The handler shall also ensure that the unattended vehicle remains inhabitable for the canine.

#### **250.10: 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 canine coordinator or Shift Supervisor as soon as practicable and appropriately documented.



- b. All medical attention shall be rendered by the designated canine veterinarian or specialist (with canine coordinator 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 K-9 team training file.

### **250.11: TRAINING**

- a. Before assignment in the field, each canine team shall be trained and certified to meet current Oregon Police Canine Association (OPCA) standards.
- b. The canine coordinator shall be responsible for scheduling periodic training for all department members to familiarize them with how to conduct themselves in the presence of department canines.
- c. All canine training should be conducted while on-duty unless otherwise approved by the canine coordinator or Watch Supervisor.

#### **250.11.1: CONTINUED TRAINING**

Each canine team shall thereafter be recertified to [OPCA certification standards](#) on an annual basis. Additional training considerations are as follows:

- a. The canine coordinator will schedule canine maintenance training each month to ensure canine teams have continued training opportunities.
- b. Canine handlers are encouraged to engage in additional training with approval of the canine coordinator.
- c. To ensure that all training is consistent, all canine training requests will be reviewed by the canine coordinator.
- d. All canine training shall be conducted while on-duty unless otherwise approved by the canine coordinator or the Watch Supervisor.

#### **250.11.2: FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE TRAINING**

- a. Any canine team failing OPCA canine certification standards, or other accredited or recognized animal handling organization standards, shall not be deployed in the field for tasks the team is not certified to perform until graduation or certification is achieved.
- b. When reasonably practicable, pending successful certification, the canine handler shall be temporarily reassigned to regular patrol duties.

#### **250.11.3: TRAINING RECORDS**

All canine training records shall be maintained in the canine handler's and the canine's training file.

**250.11.4: TRAINING AIDS**

- a. Officers possessing, using, or transporting controlled substances or explosives for canine training purposes must comply with federal and state requirements regarding the same.
- b. Alternatively, the Albany Police Department may work with outside trainers with the applicable licenses or permits.

**250.11.5: CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE TRAINING AIDS**

- a. Officers acting in the performance of their official duties may possess or transfer controlled substances for the purpose of narcotics-detection canine training in compliance with state and federal laws ([21 USC § 823\(f\)](#); [ORS 475.135](#)).
- b. The canine coordinator may authorize a handler or trainer to seek a court order to allow controlled substances seized by the Albany Police Department to be possessed by the member or trainer who is working under the direction of this department for training purposes, provided the controlled substances are no longer needed as criminal evidence.
- c. As an alternative, the canine coordinator may authorize the request of controlled substance training aids from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).
- d. These procedures are not required if the canine handler uses commercially available synthetic substances that are not controlled narcotics.

**250.11.6: CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE PROCEDURES**

Due to the responsibilities and liabilities involved with possessing readily usable amounts of controlled substances and the ever-present danger of the canine's accidental ingestion of these controlled substances, the following procedures shall be strictly followed:

- a. All controlled substance training samples shall be weighed and tested prior to dispensing to the individual canine handler or trainer. The canine coordinator will verify weights and mark all seals on the packaging.
- b. All controlled substance training samples will be double packaged to prevent leakage, contamination or exposure to the canine or handler.
- c. The weight and test results shall be recorded and maintained by this department.
- d. All controlled substance training samples will be inspected by the handler or trainer to ensure package integrity to prevent leakage, contamination and exposure to the canine or handler.
- e. Any loss or damaged controlled substance training samples shall be reported to the canine coordinator immediately.

- f. All controlled substance training samples will be stored in airtight and watertight cases always while not being utilized for training.
- g. The cases shall be secured in a locking container within the canine handler's assigned patrol vehicle, or within an appropriate locked container within the department.
- h. The canine coordinator shall periodically inspect every controlled substance training sample for damage or tampering and take any appropriate action.
- i. Any unusable controlled substance training samples shall be returned to Property and Evidence for disposal. In the case of DEA supplied controlled substance training samples, the documentation of the disposal will be provided to the DEA.