

**BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT****STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE****CANINE UNIT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Reviewed by: Sgt. James Smith	Effective Date: December 29, 1987
Authorized by: Chief Jamal A. Simington	Revision Date: February 26, 2025

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this SOP is to establish operational policy and procedure for the Bloomington Police Department Canine Unit.

**POLICY**

Canine units are a valuable tool for law enforcement agencies and can assist in a wide range of circumstances. The Bloomington Police Department created the Canine Unit to enhance its law enforcement capabilities and services to the community. Working under the Operations Division, highly skilled canine teams support both patrol and investigative operations.

The primary functions of the Canine Unit are as follows:

1. Building Searches
2. Article Searches
3. Area Searches
4. Crowd Control
5. Tracking
6. Narcotics Detection

**DEFINITIONS**

Canine Team: An officer/handler and his or her assigned police canine.

Canine Apprehension: Gaining control and custody of a suspect that is the direct result or clearly due to the deployment of a canine.

Canine Deployment: Use of a canine for purposes of finding, apprehending, containing, or controlling a suspect or for other purposes as authorized for canine use by this department. Mere presence of a canine at a crime or incident scene does not constitute a deployment.

Contact: In the context of this policy, the location of a suspect by a canine, biting or barking at a suspect for purposes of apprehension, or the presence of a canine in close proximity to a suspect sufficient to effect compliance.

**ASSIGNMENT OF CANINE**

The canine teams shall be assigned to a division or a patrol shift on an annual basis.

Canine teams should function primarily as cover units; however, they may be assigned by the Canine Unit supervisor or the on-duty patrol supervisor to other functions based on the needs of the shifts/units at the time.

## **SELECTION OF CANINE HANDLERS**

1. The agency's chief executive or his or her designee is responsible for selection of canine handlers in accordance with established departmental procedures.
2. Applicants for police canine teams must have
  - a. sufficient patrol experience with satisfactory work performance;
  - b. a willingness to remain with the unit for an extended period of time as prescribed by this agency;
  - c. a willingness and ability, together with other family members, to house the canine at the officer's residence in a safe and secure manner and with adequate provisions and facilities to properly care for the health and well-being of the canine in accordance with departmental requirements; and
  - d. the ability to perform essential job-related functions related to fitness and agility.
3. New canine handlers must complete the prescribed canine training course and successfully meet all course requirements.

The following are the minimum qualifications for the assignment of canine handler:

1. Bloomington Police Department officer who has completed probationary status;
2. Live within 25 miles of Bloomington, Illinois;
3. Minimum of three years of law enforcement experience;
4. Resides in a single-family residence;
5. Agrees to be assigned to the position for a minimum of three years.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE CANINE UNIT DURING PATROL DUTIES**

The canine handler is in the best position to know if and when to employ the canine. The canine handler will provide the on-scene commander with viable options for the best use of the canine based on training, experience, and the capabilities of their canine. While on routine patrol, the canine unit will operate subject to the orders of the Shift Commander. Special consideration should be taken with the canine unit's availability while on duty, response time to call for services, and the canine unit's required response time to assist with traffic stops. The canine unit should respond to call for services as a Secondary Officer or in a support role, not as a Primary Officer. The canine unit should only be dispatched to the following Call for Services:

1. All Felony in Progress calls
2. Calls involving persons actively using weapons
3. Residential or Business alarm calls
4. Suspicious vehicles or persons calls
5. Drug activity calls
6. Vehicle or foot pursuit calls
7. Traffic stops conducted by other officers
8. Provide extra patrol to patrol areas impacted recently by burglaries against vehicles, residences, businesses, or other felonies impacting the community.

9. Provide extra patrol to patrol areas impacted recently by drug complaints impacting the community.
10. Provide extra patrol to patrol areas impacted recently by gun violence impacting the safety of the community.
11. Provide extra patrol to patrol areas impacted by high profiled parties (pop-up parties) that have resulted or has the potential in resulting in violence, to include gun violence impacting the safety of the community.
12. Provide high visibility foot patrol when necessary.

Some call for services requires an extensive amount of time to investigate and or have a very low probability in the use of a canine unit. To ensure the canine unit is available for the call for services they are most needed for, the canine unit should not respond to the following calls for service:

1. Fire related calls
2. Calls requiring LEADS entries
3. Processing drivers Under the Influence involving traffic calls

There may be times canine handlers are the first to come in contact with such call for services as described in 1-3. The canine handler should not act as the Primary Officer and should make every attempt to ensure another officer responds to the scene to act as the Primary Officer. The canine handler should clear from these types of calls as soon as practical. The Shift Commander should make arrangements to replace and clear the canine unit from these types of call for services when practical.

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF CANINES**

A canine may be used to locate and apprehend a suspect if the canine handler reasonably believes the individual has either committed, threatened to commit, or is committing any serious offense and if any of the following conditions exist:

1. There is reasonable belief that the individual poses an imminent threat of violence or serious harm to the public, an officer, or the handler.
2. The individual 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 individual 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.

Once the individual has been located and/or apprehended and no longer reasonably appears to represent a threat or risk of escape, the canine should be removed and secured by the handler as soon as it becomes reasonably practical. Other officers, if available, should take responsibility for the suspect, allowing the handler to focus on securing the canine.

It is recognized that situations may arise that do not fall within the provisions set forth in this policy. In any such case, a standard of objective reasonableness based on the totality of the circumstances shall be used to determine whether to use a canine. The handler's decision will be reviewed by the same standard.

Flight alone from officer(s) shall not serve as reasonable grounds for the use of a canine to track and apprehend the individual.

## **PREPARATIONS FOR UTILIZING A CANINE**

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 that is reasonably available at the time. The information should include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The suspect's age or estimate thereof.
2. The nature and severity of the suspected offense.
3. Any potential danger to the public and/or other officers at the scene if the canine is released.
4. The degree of resistance or threatened resistance, if any, the suspect has shown.
5. The potential for escape or flight if the police dog is not utilized.
6. The potential for injury to officers or the public caused by the suspect if the canine is not utilized.

As circumstances permit, the canine handler should make every reasonable effort to communicate and coordinate with other involved personnel to minimize the risk of unintended injury.

A canine handler should have the ultimate authority not to deploy the dog. The handler will evaluate each situation and determine if the use of a canine is reasonable. Generally, the decision to deploy the dog should remain with the handler. However, a supervisor sufficiently apprised of the situation may decide not to deploy the dog.

Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, assisting personnel should take direction from the handler in order to minimize risk of injury or interference with the canine.

## **WARNINGS GIVEN TO ANNOUNCE THE USE OF A CANINE**

Unless it would otherwise increase the risk of injury or escape, a clear, loud, audible warning shall be given to announce that a canine will be released. Unless impractical, this announcement should be given without the dog present and a minimum of two times. Prior to releasing the canine, the canine handler will provide adequate time for the suspect(s) to surrender.

The canine handler, when practical, shall advise the supervisor of his/her decision if a verbal warning is not given prior to releasing the canine. In the event of an apprehension, the handler shall document in any related report whether or not a verbal warning was given. If no warning was given, the handler should document the reason why.

Example of announcement:

"Bloomington Police K-9 Unit --- Come out now --- Or a dog will be used to find you and may bite you."

## **GUIDELINES FOR NARCOTIC-DETECTION**

A narcotic-detection trained canine may be used in accordance with current law under the following circumstances:

1. To assist in the search for narcotics during a search warrant service.
2. To obtain a search warrant by using the detection canine in support of probable cause.
3. To search vehicles, buildings, bags and any other articles deemed necessary.

4. To obtain probable cause to search a mobile conveyance.

A narcotic-detection canine will *not* be used to search a person for narcotics.

### **GUIDELINES FOR NON-APPREHENSION USE AND TRACKING**

Because canines have senses far superior to those of humans, they may be utilized to track or search for non-criminals (e.g. lost children, individuals who may be disoriented or in need of medical attention). In such circumstances, it will be necessary for the handler to evaluate the conditions and the ability of the canine in order to determine the feasibility of such an application.

1. During non-apprehension use and tracking, the handler shall have his canine on a leash in order to minimize the likelihood of an unintended bite or injury. The exception to this would be if circumstances present an imminent threat to officers, the canine, or the public.
2. One officer shall accompany and assist the canine team during the tracking process.
3. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, assisting personnel should take direction from the handler in order to minimize injury or interference with the canine.
4. Once the individual has been located, the canine should be secured by the handler as soon as it becomes reasonably practical.
5. A canine handler should have the ultimate authority not to deploy the dog.

### **GUIDELINES FOR CROWD CONTROL**

The supervisor in charge of the scene will be responsible for the deployment of the canine unit against crowds only if an officer must be extricated from the crowd.

Canine teams shall not be used for the control of a peaceful demonstration.

The canine handler will be responsible to keep their canine on leash and under control in crowd control situations.

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

Whenever an on-duty canine deployment outside of the training environment results in a bite or causes injury (visible or non-visible), a supervisor should be promptly notified. The supervisor shall respond to the scene and, if applicable, SOP 6.01 shall be followed with the supervisor following the steps outlined in the *Investigation of Use of Force Involving Injury or Complaint of Injury* section.

The injured person shall be promptly treated by emergency medical services personnel. If deemed necessary, the injured person shall be transported to an appropriate medical facility for further treatment.

The handler shall take photographs of all injuries and of the scene where the injury occurred. If feasible, photographs should be taken of the injured area prior to treatment being rendered. Photographs shall be retained as evidence in accordance with current department evidence procedures. The photographs shall be retained until the criminal proceedings are completed and/or the time for any related civil proceedings has expired.

The handler is responsible for documenting the deployment and injuries by completing an EJS incident report and a Blue Team Entry. Blue Team Entries shall be routed to the Canine Unit supervisor for review and approval.

The Canine Unit supervisor or an on-duty supervisor should be promptly notified in the event of any unintended bite or injuries caused by a canine in the training environment. These instances shall be documented in an administrative memorandum by the handler. Photographs of the injuries shall be taken and submitted with the administrative memorandum to the Canine Unit supervisor. The Canine Unit supervisor should notify the Assistant Chief of Operations and retain the administrative memorandum and photographs.

It is the canine handler's responsibility to make sure the Canine Unit supervisor is made aware of any bite or injury caused by the canine as outlined in this section.

The department-approved veterinarian will be notified following any bite/apprehension. The handler will document this notification. Unless otherwise directed, the canine shall be under observation for 10 days following any bite. The observation shall consist of the canine being locked in a kennel, performing its official duties in a law enforcement vehicle or remaining under the constant supervision of its handler. Note, canines used by law enforcement agencies are generally exempt from impoundment and bite reporting requirements.

### **INJURY TO THE CANINE HANDLER**

If the canine handler becomes injured or otherwise incapacitated, the canine may become protective. Assisting officers should exercise extreme caution when providing aid.

If the canine handler is unable to secure the canine, contact another canine handler for assistance.

If a Bloomington Police canine handler is not available, consider requesting assistance from another area handler.

Use of the canine bite sleeve is an option for both distraction and/or control of the canine.

Once under control, the canine should be secured in the canine vehicle and transported as necessary.

### **REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER AGENCIES**

The Canine Unit supervisor or an on-duty patrol supervisor must approve all requests for canine assistance from outside agencies, subject to the following provisions:

1. Canine teams should not be used for any assignment that is not consistent with this policy.
2. The handler has the ultimate authority to decide whether the canine should be used for any specific assignment.
3. Canine teams should not be called out while off-duty or used outside the jurisdiction of the Bloomington Police Department unless authorized by the on-duty supervisor.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the canine handler to coordinate with outside agency personnel in order to minimize the risk of unintended injury.

### **REQUEST FOR PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS**

All public requests for canine teams shall be approved by the Canine Unit supervisor prior to commitment. The Canine Unit supervisor will notify the Assistant Chief of Operations of any scheduled public appearance or demonstration. Handlers shall not demonstrate any

apprehension/bite work to the public unless authorized to do so by the Canine Unit supervisor or Assistant Chief of Operations.

## **CANINE HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **AVAILABILITY**

The handler shall be available for call-out as directed by an on-duty shift supervisor.

### **CARE FOR THE CANINE AND EQUIPMENT**

The handler shall 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. The handler will be responsible for the following:

1. Unless required by a particular application, 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. Handlers shall permit the Canine Unit supervisor to conduct on-site inspections of affected areas of their residence as well as the Canine Unit, to verify that conditions and equipment conform to this policy.
4. Any changes in the living status of the handler which may affect the lodging or environment of the canine shall be reported to the Canine Unit supervisor as soon as possible.
5. When off-duty, canines shall be maintained in kennels, provided by the city, at the homes of their handlers. When a canine is kenneled at the handler's home, the gate shall be secured with a lock. When off-duty, canines may be let out of their kennels while under the direct control of their handlers.
6. Normally, the canine will not be lodged at another location unless approved by the Canine Unit supervisor or on-duty supervisor.
7. When off-duty, handlers shall not involve their canines in any law enforcement activity unless approved, in advance, by the Canine Unit supervisor or an on-duty supervisor.
8. Whenever a canine handler anticipates taking a vacation or an extended number of days off, it may be necessary to temporarily relocate the canine. In those situations, the handler shall make appropriate arrangements for the housing and care of their assigned canine with the approval of the canine supervisor.
9. The canine handler shall report any police canine injury or death immediately to the Canine Unit supervisor.

### **HANDLER COMPENSATION**

The canine handler shall be compensated for time spent in the care, feeding, grooming, and other needs of the dog as outlined in the employee's collective bargaining agreement. The applicable section of the Unit 21 collective bargaining agreement is Section 6.16.

### **MEDICAL CARE OF THE CANINE**

All medical attention shall be rendered by the designated canine veterinarian, except during an emergency.

Designated Canine Veterinarian:

Hawthorne Park Animal Care Center  
Dr. Denis Kilby  
4007 Pamela Drive, Bloomington, IL  
309-664-6320

### **NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

Non-emergency medical care will be coordinated through the Canine Unit supervisor. Any indication that a canine is not in good physical condition shall be reported to the Canine Unit supervisor or the on-duty patrol supervisor as soon as practical.

All records of medical treatment shall be maintained by the designated canine veterinarian. Records may also be maintained by the Canine Unit supervisor.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

The handler shall notify the Canine Unit supervisor as soon as practicable when emergency medical care is required.

Depending on the severity of the injury or illness, the canine should either be treated by the designated veterinarian or transported to a designated emergency medical facility for treatment.

After hours' emergency medical facility:

Highland Pet Hospital / Emergency Clinic  
118 Greenwood Ave, Bloomington, IL  
309-828-7722 - Select option 2 after hours

If the handler and dog are out of the area, the handler may use the nearest available veterinarian.

### **TRAINING**

Before assignment in the field, dog teams trained for the detection of narcotics shall be trained with programs that meet the minimum certification requirements established by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB).

Each canine team shall meet or exceed the current training and certification requirements set forth by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) on an annual basis. Additional training considerations are as follows:

1. Canine teams shall receive training as defined in the current contract with the Department's canine training provider.
2. Canine handlers are encouraged to seek and engage in additional training with approval of the Canine Unit supervisor.
3. To ensure that all training is consistent, no handler, trainer, or outside vendor is authorized to train to a standard that is contrary to the policies of the Bloomington Police Department.
4. All canine training should be conducted while on-duty, unless otherwise approved by the Canine Unit supervisor.
5. A canine team shall not be deployed in the field until State/ILETSB training standards have been met. The canine handler may be temporarily reassigned to regular patrol or other duties pending successful completion of training.



6. All canine training records shall be maintained by the canine handler and kept in compliance with current department practice.

### **CANINE UNIT SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Canine Unit supervisor is a staff officer of the rank of Lieutenant or Sergeant that is designated by the Office of the Chief of Police. The Canine Unit supervisor is directly responsible to the Assistant Chief of Operations.

The Canine Unit supervisor shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

1. Review all canine use reports to ensure compliance with policy and to identify training issues and other needs of the program.
2. Periodically review canine training / deployment records.
3. Twice yearly, conduct an on-site inspection of the dog kennel and affected areas of the canine handler's residence to verify that conditions and equipment conform to this policy.
4. Maintain liaison with the vendor kennel and department veterinarian.
5. Maintain liaison with administrative staff and functional supervisors.
6. Maintain liaison with other agency canine supervisors.
7. Maintain accurate records to document canine activities.
8. Recommend and oversee the procurement of needed equipment and services for the unit.
9. Be responsible for scheduling all canine-related activities and training.

### **NARCOTIC TRAINING AIDS**

Narcotic training aids are required to effectively train and maintain drug detecting dogs.

Narcotic training aids are defined as the controlled substances obtained from the DEA Special Testing and Research Laboratory used by canine teams during training.

Types of Narcotic Training Aids:

1. Heroin
2. Cocaine
3. Crack Cocaine
4. Methamphetamine
5. Cannabis

### **PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES FOR NARCOTIC TRAINING AIDS**

1. Narcotic training aids used for drug detection training by department canines shall be obtained from the DEA Special Testing and Research Laboratory.
2. It shall be the responsibility of the Professional Standards Lieutenant to obtain the narcotic training aids from the DEA Special Testing and Research Laboratory.
3. The Canine Unit supervisor will notify the Professional Standards Lieutenant whenever a training aid is in need of replacement.
4. When it is determined the narcotic training aids are no longer suitable for training purposes, the Canine Unit supervisor will return said narcotic training aids to the Professional Standards Lieutenant.

5. The Professional Standards Lieutenant will make arrangements for the narcotic training aids to be destroyed in accordance with current department practices outline in [SOP 3.04-Property and Evidence](#).
6. Once destroyed, the Professional Standards Lieutenant will submit a copy of the completed [Registrant's Inventory of Drugs Surrendered \(DEA-41\)](#) form to the Laboratory confirming the destruction of the previously obtained narcotic training aids.
7. The Professional Standards Lieutenant will complete and submit the DEA-222 form when requesting the issuance of new narcotic training aids.
8. The DEA Special Testing and Research Laboratory will issue quantities of one (1) 28-g package per drug type requested. A minimum of 12 months must have elapsed for requests for replacement materials to be considered.
9. The Canine Unit supervisor should work with the Professional Standards Lieutenant prior to issuance to determine the weight/quantity of each narcotic training aid being requested.

### **STORAGE OF NARCOTIC TRAINING AIDS**

1. Narcotic training aids will be assigned to the Canine Unit handlers.
2. The Canine Unit supervisor will normally inspect the narcotics training aids two times in a calendar year. Any integrity issues will be reported to the Professional Standards Lieutenant via departmental memorandum.
3. The Professional Standards Lieutenant and or designee will conduct monthly audits of the narcotic training aids.
4. Each canine handler is responsible for the storage, care, maintenance, and security of the narcotics training aids when in their possession.
5. When not being used for training, the narcotic training aids shall be stored in the Canine Unit safe located inside the MLI room.
6. Each type of narcotic training aid will be secured in a separate airtight container. Cannabis will be stored separately from the other narcotics, in a separate secured room.
7. Use and return of the narcotic training aids will be documented in the log book in the MLI Room.
8. The documentation in the log book will include the date, name/initial, time, type, and weight of the narcotic training aids during both check out and check in procedures.
9. The canine handler will notify the Canine Unit supervisor whenever a training aid is no longer usable due to age, deterioration, contamination, staleness, or any other reason.
10. Absent an identified need, narcotic training aids should be replaced every 2-3 years.
11. In the event a training aid is lost, the canine handler shall immediately contact the Canine Unit supervisor, or an on-duty shift supervisor. The canine handler shall submit an administrative memorandum detailing the circumstances surrounding the loss.

### **OWNERSHIP OF ASSIGNED CANINE**

The dogs assigned to the Canine Unit are the property of the Bloomington Police Department and shall not be used for purposes other than official police duties. They shall not be used for breeding purposes.

Should the canine or the assigned canine handler retire or be reassigned for any reason, the canine may become the property of the assigned handler at the discretion of the Chief of Police. If granted by the Chief of Police, a release of liability agreement shall be executed between the City and handler.

## **HOUSING OF ASSIGNED CANINE**

The department shall provide the necessary materials and labor to build a kennel at the canine handler's residence. The canine handler shall be responsible for the maintenance of the kennel while under his control. The kennel shall remain the property of the Bloomington Police Department.

Absent approval from the Canine Unit supervisor, all canines assigned to the program shall be housed in the issued kennel. The handler may house the canine inside during times of inclement weather or illness of the canine.

In the event that the provided kennel needs to be replaced, the following steps should be followed:

1. Notify the Canine Unit supervisor.
2. Notification shall consist of a memorandum and photographs of the current condition of the kennel.
3. The Canine Unit supervisor, with notification to the Assistant Chief of Operations, shall work with a designee from City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation to arrange for replacement.

## **CANINE UNIT VEHICLES**

Canine handlers will be assigned a squad which shall be specially equipped to transport canines. The canine vehicle will only be operated by members of the canine unit unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or during periods of regular maintenance. The canine vehicle will be maintained by the assigned canine handler who will be responsible for the general maintenance and upkeep of the vehicle. The canine handler is authorized to take his assigned squad car home.

All Bloomington Police Department canine vehicles shall meet the requirements outlined under the [\*Police Service Dog Protection Act \(510 ILCS 83/15\)\*](#).

## **CANINE UNIT UNIFORM**

Officers assigned to the Canine Unit will report for duty in an appropriate uniform for conditions and type of call. The handler will comply with all uniform regulations pursuant to department policy.

During departmental training, handlers will wear suitable attire clearly identifying themselves as officers. The attire must be capable of withstanding the rigors of their job function in case they are called back to full duty during their training day.

## **CANINE TRAINING EQUIPMENT**

The canine handler will be issued the necessary equipment to complete assignments with the canine. The assigned handler is required to keep his equipment in good condition and should report to the Canine Unit supervisor any equipment in need of repair or replacement.

Handlers will be issued the following equipment:

- Fur-savor collar
- Prong collar
- 2" leather agitation collar

- Electric collar
- 46" leather patrol lead
- 15' nylon tracking lead
- 30' nylon area search lead
- Leather agitation muzzle
- Dog harness
- Narcotic training aids
- Agitation whip
- Bite sleeve
- Kong aqua ball with rope

The Canine Unit will be issued the following equipment:

- Bite suit
- Bite tug
- Bite pillow
- Twenty (20) plastic PVC tube containers that meet the specifications set forth by Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) for narcotics re-qualification.  
[ILETSB - Canine Program](#)