



# **PUBLIC SAFETY**

## **CANINE UNIT**

**General Order Number: 47.0**

**Effective Date: December 3, 2019**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures and regulations governing the deployment, training, evaluation, and use of Public Safety Canines and define the authority, circumstances and responsibility for their use.

### **II. POLICY**

Public Safety Canines and their handlers serve in their primary roles as BPD Patrol Division and/or Community Service Division Officers in addition to serving as Department Canine Handlers. Canine Unit Handlers will utilize their primary chain of command for daily patrol assignments, and will partner with their canines during regular assignments.

Canine Unit Handlers will report to a designated unit Supervisor for administrative support, equipment, and training.

### **III. GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. The Canine Unit is capable of providing assistance in several critical areas including, but not limited to:

1. Officer Protection and Safety
2. Critical Incident Stress Management
3. Search, Detection and Recovery of:
  - a. Suspects
  - b. Victims
  - c. Missing Persons
4. Weapons/Evidence/Explosives
5. Building/Residence Clearances
6. Vehicles
7. Crime Scenes
8. School Support
9. Public and Community Relation Demonstrations
10. Site Security
11. Aid in investigations where children are victims and/or witnesses to violence

- 12. Critical Incident Mental Health Support
- 13. Community Relations

B. The Public Safety Canine Unit shall:

1. When requested and approved, assist members from the Department and those from other local and state agencies; and
2. Work under the direction of the Unit Commanding Officer, using designated protocols that vary according to assignment.
3. Develop and maintain highly trained and well-disciplined Public Safety Canine teams that are capable of maximum operational utilization applied in objectively reasonable circumstances, based on the totality of circumstances.

C. Functional Duties

1. Due to their superior sense of smell, hearing and agility, and a potential for utilization of learned apprehension tactics, the trained Public Safety Canine handlers are required to adhere to specialized procedures. These procedures must ensure that the handlers properly control their utilization of force involving the canine and channel their specialized capabilities into legally acceptable activities. These specialized procedures will be based on the "Graham Standard" of reasonableness. (Graham v Connor, 490 U.S. 398)
2. Prudence dictates that handlers follow all guidelines and procedures in every aspect of Public Safety Canine operations to ensure safety at all times. Handlers should use common sense and good judgement at all times, whether on or off duty.
3. Handlers are responsible for determining whether a situation justifies the use of a Public Safety Canine, however they will coordinate activities with the on-scene commander or patrol supervisor. The ultimate decision for Public Safety Canine deployment will rest with the on-scene commander with the input from the handler.
4. Anytime there is physical contact with any person, which includes biting, scratching, knocking down, or apprehension, the Handler will immediately render first aid to the victim or suspect. The Public Safety Canine Unit Supervisor will be notified immediately or as soon as possible. All handlers, following the above mentioned incidents, must complete the necessary reports as outlined in our Department's Use of Force Policy. All reports shall immediately be submitted to the unit commander.

D. General Protocols:

1. Public Safety Canines will be leashed at all times when moving from their vehicle to the area of deployment, training area, kennel etc. Handlers will use sound judgement and rely on their training and experience to determine when it is safe to search off lead, i.e. known break, building searches etc. However, prior to executing off lead searches in residences, handlers should take into consideration the presence of other animals and occupants. Tracking suspects, missing person(s) or victims will be executed on lead.
2. It is important that handlers understand their responsibilities anytime a Public Safety Canine is deployed. The following factors should be considered during deployment:
  - a. Handlers should not allow their dogs to urinate or defecate in or around any inhabited homes/ buildings etc. when possible.
  - b. Handlers are responsible to ensure that NO person be allowed to tease, agitate, or otherwise engage a public safety canine except during authorized training sessions.
  - c. No person or handlers shall work or train a Public Safety Canine without the express approval of the unit supervisor or trainer. This policy shall not preclude officers from performing their normal tours of duty.
  - d. A report will be submitted to the Canine Unit supervisor anytime a canine locates explosives, weapons, ballistic, or other evidence, missing persons, or for any other significant recovery.
  - e. Appropriate canine release warnings should be given prior to the deployment of a Public Safety Canine when possible.
  - f. Prior to canine deployment at an active scene, a canine deployment advisory should be announced via the radio, to inform other officers of the canine's presence.

#### E. Public Safety Canine Demonstrations

1. All Public Safety Canine demonstrations will be authorized by the Chief of Police or their designee.
2. No officer or handler will perform a demonstration without prior approval of the Chief of Police or their designee.
3. When conducting a demonstration, the handlers will base the content of the demonstration on the target audience.

#### F. Transportation

1. Public Safety Canines will be transported in Department issued vehicles. If the handler's police vehicle is disabled or unavailable, the use of a personal vehicle with an authorized vari-kennel will be permitted until a spare vehicle can be obtained.
2. Public Safety Canine vehicles are specially equipped and issued to each handler. No modifications or additions will be made to these vehicles without prior approval from the unit commander. All lettering and markings will be standardized on all canine vehicles. If lettering is missing or damaged, the handler will have the issue corrected by Fleet Maintenance.
3. All mechanical issues with canine vehicles will be reported to Fleet Maintenance for correction. If the problem will require an extended repair, the handler must contact the unit supervisor, who will in turn assign a spare vehicle.
4. Spare vehicles will be issued by the Canine Unit Supervisor; no officer is permitted to take a spare vehicle without prior approval. In the event that the problem occurs during late night hours, Public Safety Canine officers will utilize one of the spare cruisers, and immediately notify the unit supervisor via email.

#### G. Veterinary Services

1. The Department provides for routine medical service to all Public Safety Canines.
2. All handlers will utilize only the contracted animal hospital, unless there is a bona fide medical emergency that requires immediate treatment. If emergency treatment is required, the handler will provide the treatment as soon as possible at any certified animal medical facility and notify the unit commander. No routine veterinary appointments will be scheduled on your tour of duty.
3. Upon arrival at the veterinary hospital, handlers will leave their dogs inside of their vehicle until they are checked in.
4. During the examination all Public Safety Canine will be muzzled. Explosive/ Ballistic dogs will be muzzled as determined by veterinary staff.
5. All Public Safety Canine will be leashed while at the veterinary office unless directed otherwise by the staff.
6. Handlers will ensure that Public Safety Canines do not come in contact with other animals or civilians while in the veterinary office.

#### H. Uniforms and Equipment

1. The Public Safety Canine Handler's Uniform was adopted to provide the handler with a practical, durable garment capable of withstanding the heavy wear and tear involved with canine related patrol and training activities. A list of authorized

apparel and equipment can be found in General Order 29.1: Uniforms and Equipment.

2. The handler's badge and name tag will be displayed as described in General Order 29.1.
3. All handlers will maintain their issued equipment in a safe and working condition. Any broken or malfunctioning equipment will be immediately reported to the canine supervisor.
4. The issued canine unit baseball cap is the only headgear authorized while in BDU/ ACU attire.

#### I. Injured Handler Procedures

All officers shall consider the follow course of action in the event a Public Safety Canine handler becomes injured or unable to command their dog:

1. If the Public Safety Canine handler is down, in all probability, the dog will stand guard and prevent anyone from approaching. The dog and the handler train together and form a special bond. The dog's attitude will change and go into protective mode if the handler is hurt or in danger. **DO NOT APPROACH!**
2. Request assistance from another Public Safety Canine handler or the Public Safety Canine Supervisor immediately.
3. Do Not rush in on the handler or the dog.
4. Call to the handler, if possible he/she will call off the dog.
5. If the handler is unable to assist, move the canine vehicle or another cruiser to a position as close as possible to the handler and canine. Park the vehicle with the left side facing the canine and open the left rear door. In a loud and commanding voice, call to the dog giving the command "Kennel" stand behind the door and don't move. The canine is trained to respond. Close the door immediately if the canine enters.
6. If attempts fail to secure the canine; the training sleeve should be removed from the trunk of the canine vehicle. The canine will recognize the sleeve as a training tool or toy and respond to it. Once the canine's attention has been drawn to the left side facing the canine and open the left rear door. In a loud and commanding voice, call to the dog giving the command "Kennel" stand behind the door and don't move. The canine is trained to respond. Close the door immediately if the canine enters.

7. Most importantly the assistance of a trained handler or canine supervisor should be requested without delay. Euthanasia of the animal should only be initiated as a last resort.

#### **IV. QUALIFICATIONS AND SELECTION OF POLICE CANINE HANDLERS**

- A. Members must have a minimum of four full years of Brookline Police Department Service.
- B. The Police canine residence must be capable of housing the canine and/or have adequate space for the construction of a kennel, since the member will be required to keep the canine at his/her residence. In the event the member does not own the property, the member must obtain written permission from the property owner for housing the canine. In addition, there may be an interview of the canine candidates' family and/or site visit conducted by the Training Program prior to the candidate being selected for the position.
- C. The Police Canine Handler Candidate shall demonstrate proficiency and genuine interest in working with, training and caring for dogs.
- D. The Police Canine Handler will complete an approved state Canine Academy course with the canine prior to becoming operational.
- E. The Police Canine Handler will attend an approved monthly in-service with their Canine after successful completion of the Canine Academy

#### **V. DISPOSITION OF POLICE CANINE**

- A. Retirement of the Police Canine
  1. Recommendations to retire a police canine for cause will be made through the chain of command. After consultation with the Departmental veterinarian and an approved trainer, the Chief of Police will make the recommendation as to whether or not the Police Canine may be retired to the care of the handler or stay in service. If it is determined that the canine should be retired, the handler will have the option of adopting the dog, free of cost, for personal use with approval of the Chief of Police.
- B. Employee Leave
  1. In cases where a handler that has been teamed with a Police Canine for greater than five year leaves the department through resignation, injury, or retirement, if the canine is at the end of its working life, it shall be made available for adoption at no cost to the departing member, at the discretion of the Chief of Police. If the handler declines adoption, the dog may be assigned to a new handler or be offered up for adoption to another as determined by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

2. In cases where a handler leaves the Department through resignation, injury, or retirement, prior to five years of teamwork, the canine will remain the property of the Brookline Police Department. If the Police canine is determined to be suitable for reassignment to a new handler, it shall be retained within the unit or sold to the original handler for the cost of a replacement dog at the approval and discretion of the Chief of Police. If the canine is determined unsuitable for reassignment, the canine shall be made available for adoption at no cost to the departing member, if so desired. If the handler declines adoption, the dog may be assigned to a new handler or be offered up for adoption to another as determined by the Chief of Police or their designee.

#### C. Dissolution of the Program

If the Department discontinues the program, the canine shall be made available for adoption at no cost to the handler, if so desired. If the handler declines adoption, the dog may be offered up for adoption to another as determined by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.