# CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
## GENERAL ORDER

## CANINE OPERATIONS

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| **GENERAL ORDER:** 10.05 | **Created:** December 1, 2000 | **ISSUE DATE:** November 4, 2025 |
| **CALEA STANDARD:** 41.1.5, 84.1.4 | | **EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 4, 2025 |
| **ACTION:** Amends general order dated June 30, 2025. | | |

### 10.05.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this general order is to establish policies and procedures for the utilization of the Concord Police Department's canine team.

### 10.05.1 POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Concord Police Department to utilize a properly trained canine team to supplement patrol and investigative functions and to assist with any special operations group when beneficial to this department. Canines shall be purchased from a vendor and shall be tested and trained prior to being assigned to a handler.

### 10.05.2 DEFINITIONS

A. CANINE BITE

Physical contact between a canine's teeth and a person or animal. This physical contact does not need to result in broken or punctured skin to be a bite.

B. CANINE HANDLER

A sworn coworker of the Concord Police Department who has been trained and certified to work with a trained dog. Canine handlers shall be assigned to a patrol team, and for organizational, supervisory, and control purposes, is assigned to the Patrol Bureau.

C. CANINE TEAM

A canine handler and a trained dog that works together as a team.

D. LEAD

A line or rope used to walk or control a dog. May also be referred to as a leash.

E. NARCOTIC TRAINING AIDS

A sealed container containing controlled substances used in the training of drug detection canines.

## 10.05.3 CANINE OWNERSHIP AND DISPOSAL

A. All police canines are the property of the City of Concord and shall not be used for purposes other than official duties.

B. The canine shall not be registered with any society or organization unless directly related to department canine training.

C. The department shall not use or permit the use of any canine for breeding purposes.

D. Canines that are retired, permanently injured, or unsuitable for duty may be placed with their handler, if possible. The handler shall submit a request to take ownership of their canine through the chain of command. The Chief of Police and the city manager shall consider the request.

## 10.05.4 CANINE CARE

A. VETERINARY SERVICES

1. The canine handler is responsible for maintaining the fitness and well-being of their canine through regular visits to the veterinarian's office.

2. Each department canine shall be examined periodically by a veterinarian designated by the Concord Police Department.

3. In extreme emergencies, canine handlers may take the canine to the nearest available veterinarian for treatment. All emergency visits shall be reported to the Patrol Bureau commander as soon as practicable.

B. VACATION AND ILLNESSES

1. When a canine handler takes a vacation or is unfit for duty due to illness, the canine may be kenneled at the veterinary service provided by the City of Concord. However, the canine handler may take the canine with them while on vacation.

2. A canine handler wishing to kennel their canine during vacation shall report the dates of the kenneling to the Patrol Bureau commander in memo form at least 2 weeks in advance, if applicable.

3. In the event the canine becomes ill or incapacitated, the handler shall report to the Patrol Bureau commander and the department veterinarian.

C. HOME CARE

1. To better facilitate the strong working relationship necessary between the canine and canine handler, the canine shall be housed and maintained at the residence of the canine handler. Canine handlers shall either rent or own their home, and the backyard must be fenced in a way to provide a second barrier to prevent the canine from leaving the property and to keep the public from having access to the canine kennel.

2. Equipment, food, kennel, and medical care costs shall be the responsibility of the department. The canine handler shall be responsible for the proper care and security of issued equipment, and shall notify the lead canine handler of any needed replacement or supplemental equipment. Issued equipment may include, but is not limited to: canine first aid kit, protective armor, equipment bag, muzzle, collars, leads, harness, water containers, canine badge, and training aids.

3. The canine handler shall be responsible for the well-being of their assigned canine. The canine handler shall feed, water, and keep the dog well groomed. The kennel shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition and shall be cleaned frequently.

4. The canine's food bowl and water bucket shall be scrubbed out with a cleaning solution weekly.

5. Unannounced inspection visitations may be made at any time by the lead canine handler, the Patrol Bureau commander or designee.

6. Canine handlers shall be allotted a maximum of 45 minutes per day to accomplish home care duties.

## 10.05.5 CANINE AND CANINE HANDLER SELECTION PROCESS

Serving as a canine handler is a voluntary special assignment. Generally speaking, a police canine has a patrol expectancy of 7-10 years, or shorter in the case of a serious injury, illness, or death. A canine handler is expected to partner with a canine for as long as the canine is able to serve. It is a best practice to partner the canine with only one handler for its entire length of service, unless extraordinary circumstances arise. Canines shall only be re-assigned from one handler to another at the direction of the Chief of Police.

A. To be eligible to become a canine handler, the candidate at a minimum shall meet the following:

   1. Have at least one year of sworn service at the Concord Police Department;

   2. Have successfully completed twelve-month probationary status;

   3. Participate in an assessment process to include but not limited to an oral board;

   4. Have a suitable location to house the canine as well as be willing to care for the canine; and

   5. Be willing to work flexible hours and be available during off-duty hours.

B. Selection and evaluation requirements for police canines shall include but are not limited to the following:

   1. Drive (i.e. intensity);

   2. Temperament;

   3. Trainability;

4. Bite engagement (i.e. prey or defensive driven);

5. Health records (overall); and

6. Physical appearance.

C. The Chief of Police may waive or impose additional requirements according to the needs of the department and the number of candidates.

## 10.05.6 TRAINING

A. The canine team shall complete 4 hours of training activity per week or 16 hours monthly unless otherwise approved by the Patrol Bureau commander or designee. The handler shall document the training on Form K9-1 (Canine Training). Form K9-1 shall be submitted to the training sergeant coordinator and maintained in PowerDMS.

B. The canine team shall successfully complete an approved course of training prior to being released for patrol duties. The canine team is required to certify with the department within one year of the team's anniversary date of being placed in service with their canine. Annually, the canine team shall obtain certification through a department-approved certification program.

C. Daily training of the canine is strongly recommended and permissible on duty, when practicable with the approval of their supervising sergeant.

D. Based on a demonstrated need, the canine team may attend outside training facilities to increase effectiveness and efficiency in order to meet current or extended department goals, as approved by the Patrol Bureau commander.

## 10.05.7 USE OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES FOR TRAINING AIDS

In order to maintain a canine's proficiency in the detection of controlled substances, scent training is needed that utilizes controlled substances such as, but not limited to marijuana and its derivatives, cocaine and its derivatives, opiates and its derivatives, and methamphetamines.

A. OBTAINING NARCOTIC TRAINING AIDS

1. Narcotics needed by the canine handler for training purposes shall be obtained by utilizing seized narcotics that are eligible for disposal.

2. A request may be made that the judicial system turn over controlled substances pursuant to a valid court order for the use of narcotic training aids.

3. If controlled substances are obtained via court order, the appropriate disposition forms shall be included in the receipt file. A separate file containing disposition forms shall be maintained by an evidence custodian, separate from other evidence documents.

B. NARCOTIC TRAINING AID AUDITS

1. The Patrol Bureau commander or designee shall conduct annual audits of all narcotics utilized for training.

2. Any discrepancy found shall be documented in memo form and shall be submitted to the Chief of Police as soon as practicable.

3. An appropriate internal investigation shall be made at the order of the Chief of Police into all reported or suspected discrepancies or violations of procedure involving the use or accounting of all narcotics used for training purposes.

C. DESTRUCTION OF NARCOTIC TRAINING AIDS

1. When narcotic training aids are no longer needed or useful, the Patrol Bureau commander shall authorize the destruction of the items.

2. Destruction of the items shall be in compliance with state laws and department policies and procedures.

D. USE OF NARCOTIC TRAINING AIDS

1. The canine handler shall have sole responsibility for the proper security and use of the narcotics while in their possession.

2. Chain of custody shall reflect the receipt of the narcotic training aids and amounts.

3. Amounts obtained pursuant to a valid court order shall be secured in the narcotics vault within the main evidence room.

4. Canine handlers shall not allow anyone to handle or display narcotic training aids except in the course of approved canine training.

5. Narcotic training aids shall not be left unsecured or unattended at any time.

6. If at any time, any narcotic training aid becomes damaged, lost, or destroyed during training, the canine handler shall notify the Patrol Bureau commander as soon as practicable.

7. All narcotic training aids shall be returned to the Property Control Division prior to the end of their shift unless authorized by the Patrol Bureau commander or designee.

E. CHECKING OUT/RETURNING NARCOTIC TRAINING AIDS

1. Only canine handlers shall be authorized to check out narcotic training aids.

2. Narcotic training aids shall be weighed prior to the canine handler receiving and upon return to the Property Control Division.

3. An evidence custodian shall record the weight and/or amount of narcotic training aids during checkout and upon return.

4. Narcotic training aids returned during normal business hours shall be submitted directly to the Property Control Division. Narcotic training aids returned after normal business hours shall be deposited in an evidence locker for retrieval the next business day. The canine handler shall enter the locker number, and the time the narcotic training aid was secured in the log book in the "Bag and Tag" area.

5. An evidence custodian shall weigh the narcotic training aids in the presence of the handler if received directly and indicate the amount and type of drug returned on the lower portion of the checkout sheet. Any significant discrepancy shall be reported to the Patrol Bureau commander or designee as soon as practicable.

   **Note: If it is found that 1.0 gram or more is missing from a narcotic training aid, the person finding the discrepancy shall immediately report these findings to their immediate supervisor.**

## 10.05.8 USE OF FIREARMS FOR TRAINING AIDS

In order to maintain a canine's proficiency in obedience and aggression certification the canine shall be exposed to live gunfire. Training with live gunfire shall be conducted using blank rounds. During this training a handler shall notify communications in regards to training with live gunfire to provide the location and duration of the training.

A. OBTAINING FIREARM TRAINING AIDS

1. The Property Control Division shall maintain firearm(s) to be utilized by the canine unit for training.

2. These firearms shall be obtained by the Concord Police Department via a court order. If obtained via court order, the appropriate disposition forms shall be included and attached to the firearm in RMS. An OCA not currently in use (i.e., 0000000) shall be assigned to the firearm training aid by the evidence custodian.

3. Prior to being used for training by the canine unit, the firearm shall be inspected by a firearms instructor to ensure that it is safe to fire.

4. Prior to utilizing a firearm for training, all canine handlers shall be instructed on how to safely use the firearm by a firearms instructor.

5. Canine handlers shall be responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of training firearm(s).

B. FIREARM TRAINING AID AUDITS

1. The Patrol Bureau commander or designee shall conduct annual audits of all firearms utilized for training.

2. Any discrepancy found shall be documented in memo form and shall be submitted to the Chief of Police as soon as practicable.

3. An appropriate internal investigation shall be made at the order of the Chief of Police into all reported or suspected discrepancies or violations of procedure involving the use or accounting of firearms used for training purposes.

C. DESTRUCTION OF WEAPON TRAINING AIDS

1. When weapon training aids are no longer needed or useful, the Chief of Police shall authorize the destruction of the items.

2. Destruction of the firearms shall be in compliance with state laws, department policies, and procedures.

D. USE OF FIREARM TRAINING AIDS

1. The canine handler shall have sole responsibility for the proper security and use of the firearm(s) while in their possession.

2. Chain of custody shall reflect the receipt of the firearm training aid(s).

3. Firearm(s) obtained pursuant to a valid court order shall be secured in the gun room within the main evidence room.

4. Canine handlers shall not allow anyone to handle or display firearm training aid(s) except in the course of approved canine training.

5. Firearm training aid(s) shall not be left unsecured or unattended at any time.

6. If at any time, any firearm training aid becomes damaged, lost, or destroyed during training, the canine handler shall notify the Patrol Bureau commander or designee as soon as practicable.

7. All firearm training aids shall be returned to the Property Control Division prior to the end of their shift unless authorized by the Patrol Bureau commander or designee.

E. CHECKING OUT/RETURNING FIREARM TRAINING AIDS

1. Only canine handlers shall be authorized to check out firearm training aids.

2. Firearm training aids returned during normal business hours shall be submitted directly to the Property Control Division. Firearm training aids returned after normal business hours shall be placed in an evidence locker for retrieval the next business day. The canine handler shall enter the locker number, and the time the firearm training aid was secured in the log book in the "Bag and Tag" area.

## 10.05.9 CANINE ACTIVITIES

A. ARTICLE SEARCHES

1. A canine team may be requested if there is a reason to believe that a suspect has discarded evidence by dropping the item in flight or attempting to hide it in a field, wooded area, or other open areas.

2. Article searches are generally conducted in a manner similar to tracking operations.

3. When evidence is found, it shall be turned over to the officer requesting canine assistance.

B. BUILDING SEARCHES

1. When circumstances indicate that an unauthorized person(s) may be hiding in a building or similar structure, the investigating officer shall ensure the establishment of an adequate perimeter around the building.

2. In the event it is determined that an armed and dangerous subject may be hiding in a building, the canine handler shall determine whether the canine shall search on a lead or be released into the building.

3. If a controlled (on lead) search is conducted, the handler may request additional officers to accompany the canine team into the building.

C. CANINE WARNING

1. No canine shall be released into a building without a verbal warning being given to possible occupants.

2. The warning shall identify the canine handler, instructions for surrender, and notification that a trained police canine shall be released if the occupants fail to surrender according to the handler's instructions.

3. The warning shall be given twice prior to releasing a canine into the building.

4. The canine handler shall record the warning using his body worn camera or in-car camera system.

5. The canine handler shall request communications to record the time of the warning notice.

D. PATROL FUNCTIONS

1. Each canine team shall be assigned to regular patrol duties and shall answer all complaints or calls directed to the team as any other patrol unit. However, the canine team shall be responsible for, but not be limited to, the following duties:

   a. Foot patrol of shopping and downtown areas;

   b. Foot patrol of residential areas when the need presents itself, or on order;

   c. Respond to alarms (excluding fires), as requested;

   d. Respond to felony-in-progress calls as required;

   e. Handle any special duties as deemed necessary by the watch commander;

   f. The canine handler's vehicle is not to be used for animal control calls or for the transporting of other animals.

E. NARCOTICS SEARCHES

1. If a request is made for the assistance of the canine team in connection with a search warrant for illegal narcotics, the canine handler should be given as much advance notice as practicable as to the location of the search and the type of narcotics that are expected to be present.

2. Upon execution of a search warrant, the scene is secured and all persons present are being contained to one area, the canine team shall enter and begin the search. As the search progresses, persons present shall be moved to an area already searched by the canine team. As the team has cleared an area or room, officers present shall conduct a secondary search.

3. When there is a request for a vehicle search, the officer at the scene shall not search the vehicle before the canine team arrives. The investigating officer at the scene shall secure the vehicle. While a canine team is searching a vehicle, the occupants shall be moved out of and away from the vehicle to a safe location until the search is completed.

4. The canine handler may decline to conduct a specific canine operation when, in his/her opinion, such an operation is outside the capacity of the dog or would present an unnecessary and unacceptable level of danger to himself/herself, the dog, or others present or for legal reasons.

F. TRACKING OPERATIONS

1. The following factors shall be considered in order to conduct a successful tracking operation:

   a. By eyewitness account or positive inference, the canine handler ~~must~~ needs to be able to determine the path taken by the suspect or person to be tracked, which is free and clear of contamination by other persons.

   b. On a criminal suspect's track, the immediate establishment of a crime scene perimeter may be the single most important factor, which determines success or failure. The investigating officer is responsible for the implementation of the perimeter.

2. When tracking a suspect, the canine team shall be accompanied by at least one other officer who shall keep other units advised of the direction and progress of the track and protect the handler. Other officers ~~should~~ remain out of the area to avoid contamination.

G. SCHOOL SEARCHES

1. If the canine search of a school is conducted, the following procedures should be followed:

   a. REQUIRED COWORKERS AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL

      i. In addition to the canine team, there shall be at least one sergeant and two officers present to assist the canine team.

      ii. One member of the administrative team from the school shall be present at all times.

   b. SERGEANT RESPONSIBILITIES

      i The sergeant who will be present for the search shall complete an operations plan, which shall be sent through the chain of command to the Special Operations Bureau Commander for approval prior to the search.

      ii. The sergeant shall ensure that at least one member of the administrative team from the school is present for the entire duration of the search. The search may not begin or continue if the administrative team member is not present.

iii. The sergeant shall manage the scene and handle all communication between the school staff, the police department, and any other entities with a vested interest in the search.

c. OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

i. One of the officers present will walk ahead of the canine team, to ensure the path directly ahead of the team is clear and safe to proceed.

ii. One of the officers present will walk behind the canine team, ensuring the area directly behind the canine team clear and secure.

## 10.05.10 CANINE USE DOCUMENTATION / USE OF FORCE

A. In instances where a canine is utilized (i.e. narcotics search, tracking) the canine handler shall enter the information into the department approved electronic tracking software prior to the end of their shift.

B. Canine handlers shall be aware that a police officer may use only the amount of force necessary to make an arrest and that the use of the canine under such circumstances constitutes the use of force or the implied use of force. In determining the degree of force to be used, the handle shall take into consideration the totality of existing circumstances such as officer safety and the level of threat to officers and citizens.

C. The canine handler shall also bear in mind, in responding to a request for the canine team, they are responsible for determining whether the use of the canine is justified and feasible. If while executing its duties, the canine bites a suspect, the supervisor shall complete a use of force report as mandated by General Order 07.03 Use of Force.

D. All bites and abrasions shall be photographed. Tears in the clothing of a subject attributed to the canine shall also be photographed. All photographs shall be treated as evidence.

E. The utmost discretion shall be used when releasing a police canine to apprehend a suspect. Before releasing the canine to apprehend a suspect, the canine handler shall determine that the release of the canine is appropriate and within departmental guidelines, that verbal control can be maintained, and that innocent bystanders shall not be endangered. Handlers shall work off leash in the following situations:

1. To protect a citizen or officer from physical injury;

2. To pursue and stop a suspect whom the officer has reasonable grounds to believe has committed a violent felony and may endanger citizens;

3. To search a building to locate a criminal;

F. The canine handler shall immediately notify the watch commander when the canine bites or causes injury to any person, whether on-duty or off, regardless of the location of the incident.

G. When a subject is believed to be a juvenile, extreme caution shall be used to prevent serious injury. The force used shall always conform to statutory and department standards.

## 10.05.11 MUTUAL AID

A. Canine services shall be provided for mutual aid assistance only when authorized by the watch commander.

B. Requests for mutual aid shall be requested through the N.C. Division of Criminal Information (DCI).

C. No canine teams shall be sent on mutual aid requests for crowd control unless ordered by the Chief of Police.

## 10.05.12 SPECIAL CANINE DEMONSTRATIONS

A. All requests for special canine demonstrations shall be screened and approved by the Patrol Bureau commander, or designee.

B. Whenever practicable the canine team shall perform the demonstration during its regular tour of duty.

## 10.05.13 PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

A. Coworkers shall not tease, pet, or feed the canine without the consent of the handler.

B. Coworkers shall refrain from any horseplay, especially with the handler in the canine's presence.

C. Canine handlers shall attempt to prevent their canine from soiling public or private property.

D. Under no circumstances shall the canine be unleashed when authorized for use in crowd control situations.

## 10.05.14 CANINE UNIT UNIFORMS

Officers assigned to canine duties shall follow guidelines set forth in General Order 06.01 Personal Appearance Standards and Equipment.

James S. Hughes

JAMES S. HUGHES
CHIEF OF POLICE