



GENERAL ORDER

**DURHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT
DURHAM, NC**

NUMBER:

4026 R-3

CANINE OPERATIONS

Effective Date: 12/15/1995

Revision Dates: R-1 01/10/2005; R-2 11/30/2011; **R-3 3/13/2026**

INTRODUCTION

The Durham Police Department will utilize the Canine Program as a support function for general law enforcement responsibilities. Unit members should not be assigned as primary call-takers.

All Durham Police Department canines and canine activities will fall under the direction of the Central District Commander regardless of Division assignment.

INTERACTION BETWEEN POLICE PERSONNEL AND CANINES

Police personnel shall refrain from approaching, petting, feeding or agitating the dogs.

Physical contact between anyone and a canine handler could be perceived by the dog as an attack upon the handler and therefore shall be avoided in the presence of the dog.

The dogs are trained to apprehend on command fleeing suspects, or suspects which may be attacking the handler or the dog. Should an officer be confronted by a dog, the best tactic is to stand still, since any sudden movement or attempted flight may cause the dog to attempt apprehension. Under normal circumstances, officers shall not attempt to interfere with or call off a dog which has been given the command to apprehend by the handler. Should the handler become incapacitated and incapable of controlling the dog, another officer at the scene must take action to ensure that excessive force does not occur or that innocent persons do not become injured by the dog.

Should the handler be incapacitated in a motor vehicle accident in the patrol vehicle and the dog refuses access to the handler, the dog can be distracted by one officer while another officer pushes the sliding kennel door closed with a nightstick or other similar object, thus containing the dog in the kennel area.

CANINE HANDLER DUTIES

The principal duty of a canine handler is to serve as a support unit for Uniform Patrol and other Divisions as deemed appropriate. In this capacity, the canine shall be regarded as an item of special equipment. The canine is provided by the department to assist the officer in carrying out their duties more effectively.

Canine handlers are responsible for the safety and security of the dog at all times.

Canine handlers shall not transport prisoners.

REPORTING INJURIES INFLICTED

The canine handler shall immediately notify the on-duty Watch Commander if the canine bites or causes injury to any person other than the canine handler, whether on duty or off. Additionally, should the bite or other injury be inflicted in the line of duty, the handler must notify their immediate supervisor and comply with all requirements described in [General Order 4008, "Use of Force."](#)

CANINE UTILIZATION

The canine team (handler and dog) may respond to crimes in progress, vehicle and foot pursuits, burglaries/alarms where building searches will be conducted and calls for assistance for a canine team. The team will also be available for assignment by DECC as a backup for primary response units. Only in emergency situations should canine teams be assigned traffic accident investigations or calls requiring investigative reports.

COMPENSATORY TIME FOR CANINE HANDLERS

Each canine handler will be compensated for the off-duty care, maintenance and training of their assigned canine. Allowing the assigned handler to remain on duty for ten (10) hours and thirty (30) minutes per work shift rather than the twelve (12) hours and eight (8) minutes per work shift will provide compensation. Work shifts for canine handlers will be as follows:

- Day shift - Starting time will be one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes after the start of their assigned platoons normal shift.
- Night shift - Completion time will be one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes prior to their platoon's normal completion time.

These schedule adjustments will allow the handler:

- Forty-five (45) minutes per calendar day, regardless of duty status, for canine care and maintenance, and for off-duty training of their assigned canine. Twenty-five (25) of those minutes per calendar day must be used for training of their assigned canine.

RETIREMENT OF POLICE CANINES

In the event a police canine can no longer be utilized because of age, health, injury, etc., the dog will be retired, relieving the department of all financial obligations pertaining to care and maintenance of the canine. The dog will first be offered to its most recent handler. If the handler declines to accept the dog, the Canine Sergeant may offer ownership to other department members or place the dog in the county animal shelter in an attempt to locate an adoptive home.

USE OF CANINE TEAMS DURING ON-DUTY HOURS

During regular duty hours, canine teams may be utilized for any operational purpose. If a canine team is on duty, it may respond at the request of the investigating officer. The requesting officer should make the request for canine assistance on the proper police radio channel.

CALL OUT PROCEDURES

If a canine unit is not on duty, the immediate supervisor of the requesting officer shall evaluate the circumstances of the incident and determine if a canine team is warranted. The supervisor may request through the Watch Commander that a canine team be called out. The Watch Commander must then evaluate the circumstances and if warranted, initiate the call out for the canine team through the Canine Sergeant. At the time of the request, the canine handler shall be advised of the nature and location of the incident, the nature of the canine service desired, and the name of the investigating officer in charge of the scene.

Upon arrival of the canine team, the investigating officer will contact the handler and will ensure that the handler is fully aware of the circumstances surrounding the incident and any dangerous conditions that exist. The canine handler shall be in charge of the area in which the canine is to be deployed.

No canine will be used outside the city limits of Durham for any reason without prior approval of the Canine Sergeant or Watch Commander.

USE OF CANINE OFF LEAD / ON LEAD

The canine handler will determine whether a canine will be deployed on lead or off lead in any canine operation. This determination will be made in accordance with guidelines as outlined in the Canine Program Standard Operating Procedures and reflect methodology from approved training.

AREA AND BUILDING SEARCHES

When circumstances indicate that a person may be hiding in an outdoor area or in a building or similar structure, the investigating officer shall ensure the establishment of an adequate perimeter around the building. Upon arrival, the canine handler shall determine whether an attempt to search is feasible.

The canine handler shall decide whether or not and how many back up officers will be utilized in the search based on the particular circumstances of the situation.

No canine shall be released into a building without a warning being given to possible occupants. Such warning shall be given by the handler in a manner likely to be heard and understood by any person present. The warning shall identify the handler, instructions for surrender, and notification that a trained police canine will be released if the occupants fail to surrender according to instructions.

TRACKING OPERATIONS

Several factors must be present to conduct a successful tracking operation. By eyewitness account or positive inference, the handler must 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. On a criminal suspect track, the immediate establishment of a crime scene perimeter is essential. The officer in charge of the scene is responsible for establishing the perimeter.

The canine handler shall determine whether an attempt to track is feasible. Contamination, location, existing weather conditions, existence of a perimeter and amount of time elapsed shall be some of the determining factors.

The canine handler shall decide whether or not and how many back-up officers will be utilized on the track based on the particular circumstances of the situation. Other personnel should remain out of the immediate area to avoid contamination of scent patterns.

CRIMINAL APPREHENSION

The release of a police canine is regarded as a use of force and is appropriate when probable cause exists to believe that a suspect has committed a crime and the use of force is justified to effectuate the arrest.

Under normal circumstances no other police personnel should interfere with a police canine which has been committed to make an apprehension. Once an apprehension of a suspect has been effected by a canine, assisting police personnel should wait for the handler to call the canine off the apprehension and put the canine on lead before handcuffing is attempted.

ARTICLE / EVIDENCE SEARCHES

A canine team may be requested if there is reason to believe that a suspect has discarded an article and/or an instrument of a crime in a particular area. Police personnel should not contaminate the area to be searched by searching it prior to requesting and receiving canine assistance. The handler will determine whether an attempt to search is feasible. Police canines will not be used to search for discarded narcotics.

PUBLIC DISTURBANCES / CROWD CONTROL

Canine units will not be utilized for crowd control at the scene of any peaceful demonstration, picketing or congregation.

NARCOTICS SEARCHES

A canine may be used to detect the presence of hidden narcotics, specifically cocaine, marijuana, heroin and their derivatives. Canines may be used to search buildings, vehicles, packages, luggage, storage containers, lockers and any other area that may be used to conceal contraband. Police personnel should not contaminate the area to be searched by searching the area prior to requesting and receiving canine assistance. The handler will determine whether an attempt to search is feasible. Under no circumstances will a canine be used to search a person or to search for discarded narcotics.

In cases involving the execution of a search warrant, officers should secure the scene and contain all persons present in one area. Once secured, the canine team will enter and begin the search. As the search progresses, persons present will be moved to an area already searched by the team.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Upon request, public canine demonstrations may be performed by a canine team. Requests for demonstrations should be referred to the Canine Unit supervisor or Commander.

ON-DUTY TRAINING OF CANINE TEAMS

Daily training of the canine is strongly recommended and shall be permitted on duty. All canine teams are allotted twelve hours per month for on duty in service training. Each handler is responsible for the ongoing training of their assigned canine to maintain proficiency in all required tasks.


TRAINING AT AN OUTSIDE FACILITY MAY BE ATTENDED DURING A DUTY SHIFT IF PRIOR APPROVAL HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE CANINE SERGEANT.

SELECTION OF CANINE HANDLERS

Handlers will be selected in accordance with [General Order 2014 Assignments & Transfers of Sworn Personnel](#), with the following additional eligibility requirements.

- Attainment of an overall rating of meets or exceeds on the last annual Employee Performance Appraisals immediately preceding the application deadline.
- No disciplinary suspension of 16 hours or more for a period of one year from the date of the disciplinary action to the application deadline.
- Must be able to pass a physical agility test administered prior to the handler selection, must live within a 35-mile radius of Police Headquarters, and
- Residing in a home with ample space and yard to accommodate the canine and its kennel is preferable.

Officers selected for assignment to the Canine Program must also successfully complete initial canine handler training as provided by the Durham Police Department.



PATRICE V. ANDREWS
CHIEF OF POLICE