

	STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE State Form 39870(R)	Reference No. TRA-025
	Subject Canine Training and Utilization	
	Special Instructions Replaces SOC-005 dated March 1, 2015	Effective Date October 20, 2025

I. PURPOSE

Establish guidelines for the utilization and training of Department canines and handlers.

II. POLICY

Department handlers shall maintain control of their canine at all times and meet all certification and recertification requirements. Canines shall be utilized during normal patrol duties, special details, and to assist other agencies as needed.

Handlers shall have final authority for all operational decisions concerning the safety and utilization of their canine. Department canines shall not be utilized or required to operate outside the scope of their training; therefore, certain aspects of this SOP may not apply to all Department canines and their handlers.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Responsibilities:

1. Canines shall be used within the scope of their training for:

- a. Detection of illegal drugs;
- b. Article searches;
- c. Apprehension of criminal suspects;
- d. Location of missing persons;
- e. Crowd control;
- f. Approved public appearances and educational programs;
- g. Explosive protective sweeps; and
- h. Detection of explosives and/or explosive devices;
- i. Detection of electronics.

Note: Some patrol canines, due to age or medical issues, may be restricted or limited to narcotics detection only and relieved of patrol responsibilities upon the recommendation of a veterinarian and with the approval of the applicable district commander.

2. Canines shall not be used:

- a. As decoys or distractions when there is no imminent danger to “human life”; or
- b. The canine shall not be used in an attempt to locate a suspect whose position is unknown in situations involving potentially large numbers of innocent persons (e.g. schools, public buildings, etc.).

3. Responsibilities of the District Duty Officer:

a. Incidents of canine bites or injuries:

- i. Assign a supervisor to respond to the scene;
- ii. Notify the appropriate commander through channels and Operations; and
- iii. In cases of accidental bites, notify the Legal Office.

b. Shall in incidents of property damage require a supervisor to be assigned to investigate the incident.

c. When a canine handler is unable to control the canine due to sudden illness, injury, etc.:

- (i) Contact the nearest patrol canine handler (regardless of department affiliation) to respond to the scene and take immediate control of the canine;
- (ii) If the initial responder is not an ISP canine handler, the nearest ISP canine handler shall be contacted to take possession of the canine;
- (iii) Notify the appropriate commander or designee to provide approved kenneling of the canine until the handler returns to duty or is able to care for the canine; and
- (iv) Notify the Training Division Commander, through channels, of the incident and the location of the canine.

4. Responsibilities of Responding Supervisors

- a. Respond to the scene;
- b. Ensure any injured person has received necessary medical treatment;
- c. Ensure photographs and witness statements have been obtained; and
- d. Provide tort claim forms to any party who has been injured or who's property has been damaged.

B. Selection of Canine Handlers

1. Patrol canines and their handlers shall be assigned to individual districts and will conduct normal operations of patrol enforcement with the assistance of a canine.

2. Explosive Detection Dog (EDD) handler positions shall be opened and assigned to serve the needs of the Department, as outlined each job description.

a. Capitol Police Section (CPS) personnel only, shall be under the direction of the CPS Commander during normal operations. During EDD details the handler shall report to the SOC Commander or designee;

b. EDD field positions shall be under the direction of the SOC commander or a designee.

3. Narcotics canines and their handlers who are assigned to the Special Investigations Command (SIC) shall be under the direction of the Drug Enforcement Section during normal operations.

4. All prospective handlers (regardless of the type of canine) shall attend and successfully complete any basic and specialty training schools as required by the Canine Operations/Training Manual.

5. Candidates for all canine handler positions shall:

- a. Have received a favorable written endorsement from the applicable district or division commander, through channels, to the field enforcement major;
- b. Have met all baseline performance standards on their last evaluation prior to and during the application process for the position;
- c. Be able to work extended hours and deviate (as needed) from a routine schedule;
- d. Be able to work outside the normal geographical area of assignment and be prepared for extended deployment, if required;
- e. Be able to accept assignment with specialty teams and to special details, at the discretion of the applicable commander and with the approval of the Training Commander and the applicable zone commander Enforcement Major;
- f. Have available property at the officer's residence for and agree to, the construction and proper maintenance of a kennel on that property;
- g. Assure acceptance of the canine program by family members;
- h. Understand that assigned commissions will be permanently altered to accommodate the transportation of a canine;
- i. Maintain the required level of veterinary care;
- j. Participate in related public relations programs and demonstrations; and
- k. Successfully complete all monthly training and required certifications.

6. The field enforcement major shall select all handlers upon recommendation from the applicable interview board, with the Superintendent's final approval.

C. Canine Handler Training

1. Department canine handlers shall be properly trained and utilized in accordance with approved training association or organization standards and the standards set forth in the applicable Department Canine Operations/Training Manuals.

D. Canine Retirement

1. All Department canines are and shall remain the property of the Department.

2. Canines must have a minimum of six (6) years of service before being eligible for retirement, except in cases where a documented medical condition exists and a serviceability review deems the canine unfit for service.

1. A veterinarian's evaluation, along with recommendations, through channels, to the Superintendent (to include the Department Canine Trainer, with a cc to the Training Division Commander) shall be considered for canine retirement or serviceability.

2. Handlers should have a minimum of three (3) years' of service with the same canine before being eligible to request to take possession of a retired canine. In cases where a medical condition or serviceability issues cause a canine to retire before the three-year minimum is reached, the current

handler will be given the first opportunity to take possession of the canine.

3. Retirement of a canine and/or transfer of ownership shall occur only with the final approval of the Superintendent.

E. Canine Veterinary Care

1. Handlers agree to provide appropriate veterinary care to their assigned canine, at a minimum, to include:

- a. Annual veterinary examination;
- b. Rabies vaccination (yearly or every three years);
- c. Yearly heartworm testing;
- d. Year-round heartworm preventative;
- e. Flea and tick preventative

2. Handlers should seek veterinary care if their canine is exhibiting any signs of:

- a. Emergency;
- b. Distress;
- c. Injury;
- d. Extended periods of:

- (i) Vomiting;
- (ii) Diarrhea;
- (iii) Blood in stool or urine;
- (iv) Lethargy;
- (v) Lack of appetite; or
- (vi) Refusal to drink water.

3. Handlers may seek veterinary care in other circumstances as needed after seeking approval from the Training Division K9 Coordinator.

4. Handlers shall utilize an ISP recommended veterinarian, unless an emergency necessitates other veterinary care.

5. The Department shall be responsible for veterinary fees for canine care.

F. This procedure is to be used in conjunction with all relevant Department regulations, rules, policies, and procedures.