

16.02.000 K-9 UNIT

16.02.005

INTRODUCTION: 09/92

The K-9 Unit tries to locate suspects and evidence and provides protection or back-up for line deputies. Generally, a K-9 team is applied as a tool to assist Patrol or other units at a crime scene. K-9 also provides psychological and physical back-up when called upon to do so. Every dog in the unit is qualified under State standards as well as King County standards, which are considerably more stringent. In each track, there are many factors working against the K-9 team, and if enough negative factors exist, the suspect(s) may get away. Most of these factors are totally out of the control of the handler and patrol units at the crime scene. This policy assists in understanding the concepts involved in the application of K-9 teams.

16.02.010

K-9 AND PATROL: 09/92

The K-9 Unit was established as a support unit to patrol deputies. Patrol deputies handle the dog's arrests and evidence. K-9 teams (dog and handler) provide a unique tool that can be used to assist patrol when certain conditions are present. An officer might ask, "Can K-9 be used here?" If you feel that the call might turn into a situation where a dog can be of assistance, ask for one to respond. This cuts the time delay and improves the chances of success. It should also key other deputies to respond to assist with perimeters.

K-9 teams are readily available for daytime call-outs, but primarily at night for several reasons:

1. There is less vehicular traffic.
2. Fewer people out on foot.
3. As the air cools, moisture rises in the vegetation to catch and hold the scent.

16.02.015

TRACKING AND SETTING K-9 PERIMETERS: 09/92

Generally, patrol deputies are first to respond to the scene of a K-9 call. But **BEFORE** the K-9 team can begin a track, **the suspect must have committed a crime**. If located, the suspect must be arrested and taken into custody.

While patrol units are en route to the crime scene, the primary unit can begin to set and assign the perimeter. If radio has advised that the suspect has fled, there is usually no reason for more than one (1) unit to make contact at the scene unless necessary. One of the most common mistakes in establishing perimeters is that they are initially set up too small.

Once units are on the perimeter, they should maintain a high degree of visibility. Deputies should use spotlights, overhead lights, flashers, etc.. This will help to keep the suspect to ground and they may think that there are more deputies in the area. When K-9 arrives, the primary unit should assign further perimeter maintenance to another unit and help K-9 establish a starting point. The primary unit must inform the handler of all others who were moving around the starting point. The handler needs to know the exact locations if possible and where the suspect was **last seen**. A clean starting point increases the dog's chance for a decent start. Therefore, deputies should make every effort to keep people out of the area.

If the perimeter units know the dog is working the track in their direction, they should turn their vehicles off until the dog has worked out of the area. The exhaust emissions from a vehicle will make it harder for the dog to smell.

16.02.020

COMMUNICATING: 09/92

Communication between the perimeter units and the handler is essential. Valuable information such as suspect description, direction of track, adjustments to perimeter units, etc., must be made available immediately. Most handlers will not normally close the air unless they feel it is absolutely necessary. Every effort should be made to keep traffic to a minimum. If the track is not "hot" and the handler has worked the area enough to feel that their chance of success has significantly diminished, they will normally secure the perimeter. This allows patrol units to return to normal patrol duties as soon as possible. Typically, however, the handler remains on the scene to do an area search or to double-check the track in the hope of still locating the suspect.

The K-9 team needs the three (3) "C's":

1. **Containment** of the area.
2. **Contamination** kept to a minimum.
3. **Communicating** useful information.

16.02.025

BUILDING SEARCH: 09/92

K-9 units respond to all alarms or whenever suspects are still believed to be hiding inside a building. The dog can cut considerable time it takes to locate a suspect. Because of its scenting ability, the dog decreases the chance of missing the suspect.

Under most circumstances, two patrol units can effectively set up a building perimeter and wait for K-9. If the call is an alarm and K-9 is not too far away, the ideal situation is for the handler to check the perimeter of the building. This decreases the chance of contamination around the crime scene and, if the suspect has fled, this makes it easier for the dog to establish a track.

Once it has been established that entry has been gained, the handler will advise the perimeter units and start a building search. The K-9 deputy may or may not take another deputy into the building with them. This is a handler's decision. Sometimes, it is determined that the suspect(s) left before the patrol unit arrives, but don't assume that all the suspects are gone. On occasion, suspects have been found inside the building, although two or three other suspects were arrested away from the building. It is always prudent to maintain the building perimeter and search the building later, if necessary. Make sure units on the scene do not flush the suspects out of the building before all units are in position to secure the **entire** area. If one unit arrives and spotlights the perimeter before any other units arrive, the suspects will generally run to the other end of the building and, if possible, leave.

After the building has been secured and no suspects have been located, the handler will normally attempt to establish a track away from the building. After a good perimeter is established on the building and if there are still other units available to assist, those other units should rove the immediate neighborhood. This may put suspects to ground who have already left the scene. Also, a suspect vehicle may be located or kept in the area if the suspect feels he will be stopped trying to leave.

16.02.030

SUSPECT CONTACT WITH THE DOG: 09/92

If there is suspect contact with the dog, the patrol supervisor will be notified and involved deputies shall comply with GOM 6.01.000 (Reporting Use of Force).