



# GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

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<b>Chapter:</b> Operations	<b>Section:</b> 409.3
<b>Subject:</b> Specialized Units	<b>Topic:</b> Canine Operations
<b>Accreditation:</b> OPR.01.09	<b>Revised:</b>
<b>Enacted:</b> 07/30/2015	<b>Reaffirmed:</b>
<b>Last Review:</b> 09/21/2021	<b>Review:</b> 03/01/2022

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## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to provide guidelines and policies for the use and operation of agency-owned canines and their handlers.

## II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff to utilize canine handlers and their dogs for specific Sheriff's Office operations and, as time and manpower permit, to provide an added dimension to detection and officer safety.

## III. MISSION

It is the mission of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit to provide police canine support to members of the Sheriff's Office. The Canine Unit consists of teams that contain highly mobile and specially trained police service dogs. The canine teams shall be capable of conducting building and open area searches, evidence, narcotics or explosive searches, as well as tracking criminal suspects and lost persons.

## IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Bite: A wound to the skin by either a scratch or puncture that is caused by a canine's teeth.
- B. Bloodhound: A canine whose sole purpose is the tracking or trailing of suspects or lost persons.
- C. Canine Unit Supervisor: A supervisor designated to oversee sergeant who is responsible for the supervision of the Patrol Canine Teams.
- D. Explosive Detection Canine: A canine whose sole purpose is to detect explosive materials or elements.
- E. Narcotic Detection Canine: A canine whose sole purpose is to detect illegal, controlled substances.
- F. Patrol Canine Team: A Sheriff's deputy and his/her assigned police canine.

- G. Patrol Canine Unit: Section containing deputies and canines.
- H. Patrol Canine/Explosives: A canine that is trained to perform building/area searches, tracking, handler protection, and suspect apprehension as well as detecting explosive materials or elements.
- I. Patrol Canine/Narcotics: A canine that is trained to perform building/area searches, tracking, handler protection, and suspect apprehension as well as detect the presence of illegal, controlled substances.

V. SELECTION OF CANINE HANDLERS

Openings for the position of Canine Handler will be advertised by memorandum. Eligibility and selection for the position of Canine Handler consists of the following:

- A. Certification with the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Criminal Justice Services as a law enforcement officer
- B. At minimum, attain the rank of Deputy First Class and have one year of experience with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Operations Bureau.
- C. Achieve a passing score on a physical agility test
- D. Interview panel
- E. Employment history review
- F. A minimum of 20 documented hours assisting the Canine Unit with training. (Patrol Canine Handler)
- G. Inspection of the deputy's personal residence

VI. TRAINING

- A. Upon selection to the Patrol Canine Unit, the handler and his/her assigned canine must successfully complete a Basic Canine Handler's Course from a county contracted training facility or similar approved training group
- B. All Patrol Canine Teams must also meet certification requirements set forth by a certified canine organization such as North American Police Work Dog Association, Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, Virginia Work Dog Association, U.S. Police Canine Association, etc.
- C. All Patrol Canine Teams will participate in agency sponsored bi-weekly training unless excused by the Canine Unit Supervisor. This training will be documented and

maintained within the Canine Unit. Failure to attend required training or complete training documentation may result in removal from service until completed.

- D. Upon selection to the Explosive Detection Canine Unit, the handler and his/her assigned canine must successfully complete a Basic Canine Handler's Course at the Central Intelligence Agency training facility.
- E. All Explosive Detection Canine teams will participate in bi-weekly Explosive Ordinance Disposal Team training.
- F. All Explosive Detection Canine Teams must certify over a twelve-month period in odor recognition and operational abilities.

## VII. USE OF PATROL CANINE TEAMS

### A. General Use

- 1. Patrol Canine Teams shall only be assigned to general calls for service during emergencies or back up purposes when sector units are unavailable.
- 2. Patrol Canine Teams shall avoid making custodial arrests and shall not transport prisoners.
- 3. Deputies requesting canine assistance must ensure that the request is cancelled once it becomes apparent that the need no longer exists.

### B. Court Use

- 1. Deputies who require the presence of a canine handler for court testimony must have a subpoena issued so that court attendance can be coordinated with the duty schedules.

### C. Operational Use

- 1. Patrol Canine Teams are trained and available for, but not limited to, the following activities: conducting searches for suspects, assisting with arrests of suspects, protection of deputies and others from death or serious injury, tracking suspects, locating lost or missing persons, searching for evidence, or detecting the presence of narcotics.
- 2. Requests for canine assistance during hours when all Patrol Canine Teams are off duty will be routed from the Emergency Communications Center to the Duty Officer.

3. A canine handler best understands the capabilities and limitations of his/her assigned canine, therefore the decision to deploy or not to deploy a canine rests solely with the canine handler or the Sheriff or his/her designee. Prior to deploying a canine a handler must consider lesser use of force options prior to deployment.
4. Building Searches
  - a. Upon the discovery of a possible burglary, the investigating deputy should request the assistance of a Patrol Canine Team to conduct a building search unless he/she has evidence that the building is free of suspects or the case is unfounded. If canine assistance is requested, the investigating deputy should not enter the building but should establish a perimeter around the building.
  - b. While the Patrol Canine Team is inside the building, no one shall enter except at the canine handler's request.
  - c. Before any canine is released to search a building, a canine announcement shall be made. The announcement must be verbal and loud enough for someone inside the building to hear.
    - i. The announcement may need to be repeated for multi-leveled structures. The announcement must include instructions for an individual to make his/her presence known, and the consequences if the person does not comply.
    - ii. This announcement may be omitted if doing so would endanger the Patrol Canine Team, other deputies or citizens.
5. Tracking
  - a. Canines are trained and available to track suspects or missing persons. When requesting a Patrol Canine Team for a track, the requesting deputy should:
    - i. Mark the location where the suspect/missing person was last seen
    - ii. Avoid unnecessary vehicle or foot traffic in the area where the suspect/missing person was last seen
    - iii. Direct other responding deputies to secure the perimeter around the area to prevent the suspect/missing person from fleeing or leaving the area and from allowing others to enter the perimeter.
    - iv. Advise Patrol Canine Team of areas where law enforcement personnel have

walked.

6. Apprehensions

- a. Any suspect apprehended by a Patrol Canine Team shall be turned over to the primary investigation deputy who will make the arrest. If the canine handler is the primary deputy, he/she shall make the arrest and complete the appropriate paperwork.
- b. Prior to deployment for an apprehension, the Patrol Canine Team shall receive verbal communication of the facts surrounding the need for canine assistance to include the possible charges related to the incident.
- c. Utilization of a Patrol Canine Team for apprehension is considered Less-Lethal Force. Accordingly, the use of a Patrol Canine Team for apprehension must be in compliance with General Order 403.1, Use of Force.
- d. When deciding to deploy a canine, considerations should be given to the provisions of *Graham v. Connor (1989)*:
  - i. Severity of the crime
  - ii. Does the suspect pose an immediate threat to deputies and others?
  - iii. Is the suspect actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest?

7. Narcotics Detection

- a. A request for a Narcotics Detection Canine shall be directed to the Emergency Communications Center ("ECC"), which will dispatch the closest on-duty Narcotics Detection Canine Team.
  - i. Requests for a Narcotics Detection Canine during off-duty hours shall be directed to the ECC supervisor, who will refer to the on-call list or request mutual aid from an outside agency.
  - ii. Mutual aid requests for canine assistance when a Patrol Canine Team is on duty shall be directed to the closest available Patrol Canine Team. Upon such request, the ECC staff shall notify the Duty Officer.
  - iii. When a mutual aid request for canine assistance is made and there is no Patrol Canine Team on duty, the ECC staff shall notify the Duty Officer.
  - iv. Requests for a Narcotics Detection Canine Team shall be made in a timely

manner to minimize the delay during an investigative stop.

- b. When a Narcotics Detection Canine Team is requested for a building scan, the following procedures should be followed to maximize safety and effectiveness:
    - i. All persons on the premises should be removed or placed in one room prior to the commencement of the canine scan.
    - ii. Any or all narcotics in plain view should be secured prior to the canine scan.
    - iii. An aggressive alert Narcotics Detection Canine shall not be used on an individual or objects in his/her possession.
    - iv. A Narcotics Detection Canine will not be used in areas deemed unsafe by the canine handler.
    - v. A Narcotics Detection Canine shall not be used in any area or on any premises where the Patrol Canine Team does not have lawful access.
  - c. A Narcotics Detection Canine will not be used for any public exhibition without the expressed authorization of the Canine Unit supervisor.
  - d. Narcotic Detection Canines will not be used for private individuals or agencies unless such services are a part of a law enforcement investigation or authorized by the Sheriff or his/her designee.
8. Explosive Detection
- a. Any bomb threat or request for a bomb scan will be handled by an Explosive Detection Canine. Upon such request, the Emergency Communications Center shall notify the Canine Teams trained in explosive detection for assistance.
    - i. If there is no response from any of the Explosive Canine Teams after 15 minutes, the ECC supervisor should contact the Loudoun County Fire Marshal's Office and if no response, request mutual aid from surrounding jurisdictions.
    - ii. Mutual aid requests for an Explosive Detection Canine shall be directed to the ECC. The ECC staff will send an Explosive Detection Canine group alert and notify the Duty Officer.
    - iii. Mutual aid requests for assistance from an Explosive Detection Canine Unit must be approved by the Duty Officer or in his/her absence, the Assistant Division Commander of the Field Operations Division.

- b. An Explosive Detection Canine will only be used when deemed safe to do so by the canine handler.
    - i. An Explosive Detection Canine will not be used in an area or on any premises where the handler does not have legal access.
    - ii. If a suspicious device or package is located, it shall be the responsibility of the Bomb Squad to clear and dispose of that item. No Explosive Detection Canine handler shall handle or take possession of any suspicious device or package.
  - c. An Explosive Detection Canine will not be used for any public demonstration without the expressed authorization of the Field Operations Division or Assistant Division Commander.
  - d. An Explosive Detection Canine will not be used for private individuals or agencies unless such services are a part of a police investigation or authorized by the Sheriff or his/her designee.
9. Bloodhounds
- a. Any deputy requesting a bloodhound shall first get permission from his/her first line supervisor.
    - i. Bloodhounds are not readily available, and any requests need to be directed to the ECC. ECC staff will contact the bloodhound handler by pager.
    - ii. Bloodhounds will not be used in an area or on any premises where the handler does not have legal access.
  - b. Mutual aid requests for a bloodhound that is received by the ECC requires approval from the Duty Officer. Upon approval, ECC staff will contact the bloodhound handler.
  - c. Bloodhounds will not be used for any public demonstration without the express authorization from the Canine Unit supervisors.
  - d. Bloodhounds will not be provided for use by private individuals or agencies unless such service is to be part of a law enforcement investigation, or authorized by the Sheriff or his/her designee.

## VIII. CANINE EQUIPMENT

- A. Issued equipment for each canine handler includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Tracking harness
  2. Tracking lead (15 foot)
  3. Patrol lead (6 foot)
  4. Muzzle
  5. Correction collar
  6. Water and feed bowls
  7. Remote door openers (one in cruiser, one on handler's duty belt and one on the handler's key chain) to open the vehicle's right rear door.
  8. Electronic collar
- B. Each Patrol Canine Team will be issued a vehicle specially equipped for the transportation of canines. Each vehicle will have a heat detection system and auxiliary fans.
- C. Cruisers will be prominently marked with the designation of "K-9" on the vehicle's side panel.
- D. It is the responsibility of each canine handler to inspect all assigned equipment to ensure it is in working order.

IX. CANINE MEDICAL CARE AND FOOD

A. Veterinary Care

1. Under normal circumstances, all Sheriff's Office canines will see the county contracted veterinarian for all medical needs. The costs associated with medical care are paid for through the Sheriff's Office budget.
2. Except for emergencies, no other veterinarian shall provide medical attention to Sheriff's Office canines.
3. At a minimum, all Sheriff's Office canines will be seen by the county contracted veterinarian on a yearly basis.

B. Food

1. Each canine's diet shall be determined by the handler and the county contracted veterinarian.



2. Dog food is budgeted yearly by the Field Operations Division. On a monthly basis, each Patrol Canine Team shall be provided dog food; brand to be determined by the handler and the county contracted veterinarian, and size of the bag determined by the brand.
3. Each canine handler is responsible for storing his/her canine's food.

X. KENNELING

- A. Each Sheriff's Office canine will be kenneled at the residence of the assigned handler.
  1. No Sheriff's Office canine shall be kenneled in an apartment or condominium. A single-family residence or townhouse is required to safely house the canine and provide adequate space for breaks and exercise.
  2. An outdoor kennel will be provided for the housing of a Sheriff's Office canine at the canine handler's residence. When the canine is kenneled, the kennel shall be secured with a lock.
  3. Explosive Detection Canines shall be housed in the handler's home per Memorandum of Understanding between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Loudoun County Sheriff.
- B. At the time a new handler is selected, or a current handler moves, it is the responsibility of the Canine Unit supervisor to conduct site inspections of all Sheriff's Office canines at the residence of the canine handler. The Canine Unit supervisor will conduct periodic site inspections, at least semiannually, of the handler's home and vehicle to verify the conditions of the equipment conforms to this policy. This inspection may be done at any time without prior notification.
- C. During times when a handler is on leave, the handler has the option of kenneling his/her assigned canine in a county contracted facility at the expense of the Sheriff's Office.
  1. During the time the canine is kenneled, the handler does not receive compensation for the care and maintenance of his/her canine.
  2. If a Sheriff's Office canine is going to be cared for by someone other than the handler or at the approved facility, the Canine Unit supervisor must approve of the location and person caring for the canine. The canine may be kenneled with another agency handler with approval of the Canine Unit supervisor.

XI. REGULATIONS

- A. Interaction between deputies and Canine Units

1. Deputies shall not agitate, approach, attempt to pet, or have any contact with the canine unless directed to do so by the Canine Handler.
2. Police service dogs are trained to apprehend, on command, fleeing suspects or suspects who may be attacking the handler or the canine. Any sudden movement or attempted flight may cause the canine to respond by biting and holding.
3. No deputy other than the Canine Handler shall give a canine any commands or interfere with the actions of the canine.
  - a. If a Canine Handler should become incapacitated or incapable of controlling the canine, a deputy must take action to avoid excessive force or ensure an innocent citizen is not injured.
  - b. If feasible, a deputy should try to contact another Canine Handler or a Humane Law Enforcement Officer to control the canine. Using any level of force against the canine should only be used as the last resort.
4. While on and off duty, the Canine Units shall always maintain control of their dogs. The canine will have no contact with family members, community members, or other pets.
5. Dogs shall not be taken inside any Sheriff's Office building unless authorized by a supervisor.

## XII. DOCUMENTATION

- A. Each Canine Handler is responsible for maintaining detailed records for both training and deployments. A computer program that is specifically designed for canine operations will be provided to each handler.
- B. Whenever a deputy requests canine assistance, he/she shall document the facts of the request in an IBR.
  1. The Canine Handler shall write a canine incident report detailing the facts of any response and the result of any request.
  2. In any case where the canine's action provided evidence to the prosecution of a criminal case, or under the provisions of General Order 403.1, Use of Force, the Canine Handler shall complete an IBR or supplemental IBR.
- C. In the event of a canine bite or injury, the incident will be investigated by the Canine Unit supervisor or in his/her absence, the Division Commander, Field Operations, or his/her designee. Notification will be made to the Duty Officer. The event shall be

investigated and reported in accordance with General Order 403.1, Use of Force and documented in an IBR. The investigation shall include color photographs of the injury before and after treatment. Canine bites or injuries that occur in an off-duty capacity will be investigated and notification made to the Division Commander, Field Operations, and the Duty Officer.

XIII. RETIREMENT OF POLICE SERVICE CANINES

- A. The decision to retire a police service canine will be a collective decision among the canine handlers, the Canine Unit supervisor, Command staff, the trainers, and the veterinarian.
- B. The criteria used for recommending retirement should include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - 1. The canine can no longer perform the duties and functions associated with police work due to illness or injury
  - 2. The canine is unable to maintain certification and meet weekly training requirements.
- C. It is the canine handler's option to purchase the patrol canine from the county for \$1.00. Should the handler decide to purchase the canine, he/she will also agree to sign a waiver releasing the county from liability or responsibility once the canine is retired. The agency may offer the canine to another agency handler should the original handler choose not to purchase the canine.