STRATFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT	Type of Directive: **Policy and Procedure**	Updated: **03-18-2021**
	Title: **K-9 Unit**	No. **9.1**
	Issuing Authority: **Chief Joseph McNeil**	Issued: **03-18-2021**
	Reference:	

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Order is to establish a set of guidelines for the proper management of the K-9 Unit and the proper use of the police service dogs.

POLICY:

This policy applies to all circumstances involving the use of Department K-9's.

DEFINITIONS:

Canine Team: An officer/Handler and his/her assigned police canine.

Patrol Dog: A police Canine trained in the following areas of patrol tactics, tracking, evidence recovery, area searches, building searches, crowd control, handler protection, and criminal apprehension. A patrol dog may also be cross-trained in the area of narcotic detection.

Narcotic/Drug detector Dog: A police canine trained in the area of narcotics detection. The primary function of the canine team is to locate drugs. The use of trained canines for the purpose of drug detection is widely recognized by both state and federal courts throughout the United States. A positive alert by a trained detection dog can be probable cause for both an arrest and the issuance of a search warrant.

PROCEDURES-GENERAL:

Chain of Command

The operations and management of the K-9 unit shall be under the command of the Patrol Division Commander.

A senior K-9 handler will be assigned as administrative K-9 Commander and will:

- Initiate handler selection process as directed by the Chief of Police and/or his designee
- Reports important matters to the Patrol Division Commander
- These duties are in addition to his regular assignment.
- Assist handlers in K-9 selection
- These duties are in addition to his regular assignment.

Patrol dog teams shall be assigned to the uniformed Patrol Division and shall operate as a patrol unit.

Patrol dog handlers will adhere to the chain of command within the patrol division.

Narcotic detection dog handlers will adhere to the chain of command within their assigned division.

Mutual Aid Requests for K-9

Requests by This Department

A K-9 Team from another agency may be requested when no department K-9 is able to respond and one from another agency is readily available.

The shift Commander is authorized to call in an off duty K-9 team and they should be called before seeking a K-9 team from another agency.

Request From Outside Agencies

Requests will be honored when:

- A K-9 team is on duty
- The incident falls within "approved uses of K-9 teams"
- Approved by the shift Commander

Off duty call backs for a K-9 team for another agency will require the approval of the Patrol Division Commander.

Protection of Police K-9

The K-9 handler and other officers shall adhere to the following levels of force when protecting the police K-9.

- The use of less than lethal force may be used to protect the K-9 from assault or attempted assault.
- The use of deadly physical force will not be used to protect the life of the K-9.

Assignments

Each K-9 handler will have his/her canine with them on each tour of duty, and specials unless the canine is sick or injured. In the event the K-9 is sick or injured the K-9 handler will report this fact to the Shift Commander prior to reporting for duty.

Uniform

The K-9 handlers working uniformed assignments with their assigned K-9 will wear the approved K-9 uniform except in the cases of special events where the prescribed uniform of the day will be worn. When not working an assignment where their K-9 is also being deployed or assigned, the officer shall wear the regular class B or C uniform as prescribed.

Reports

A K-9 report will be completed each time a K-9 team is used.

In the case of a K-9 bite or the dog caused injury to any person whether on or off duty the following will apply:

- Medical assistance will be made available as soon as practical if needed.
- The appropriate supervisor will be notified and they will complete an incident report.
- Colored photographs of any injuries should be taken prior to and after medical treatment if possible.
- Written statement should be taken from any witness and the victim.
- A medical records release should be obtained from the subject.
- A separate incident report will be completed.

K-9's in Headquarters

When patrol K-9's is brought into Headquarters they are to be under the supervision of their handlers and at no time will they be allowed to roam loose. Because the narcotics detection K-9's are not trained to be aggressive, the K-9 shall be allowed to remain inside the building at the discretion of the handler and/or the unit supervisor or Division Commander.

Equipment

Specialized K-9 equipment that shall be furnished by the department includes:

- K-9 equipment (collars, leads, harnesses, feed, grooming equipment)
- Veterinary service (emergency medical supplies, drug antidotes)
- Training equipment (protective equipment, training aids)
- Drug dog teams (drugs, acquisition, storage)
- K-9 vehicles (identification, interior modifications)
- Other items deemed necessary to the unit

No canine related equipment, feed or medicine will be purchased without prior approval. K-9 handlers shall be responsible for maintenance and inspection of their assigned equipment.

Vehicles

Patrol dog handlers will use a specially configured patrol vehicle.

In the event the handler's vehicle is dead-lined a spare K-9 vehicle will be utilized. If a K-9 vehicle is unavailable, then a spare patrol car may be provided. First line vehicles should not be used for K-9 assignments, unless no other vehicle is available and must be authorized by the Shift Commander. If off duty use of a K-9 vehicle is authorized by the Chief of Police, only approved K-9 vehicles shall be used for this purpose, unless expressly permitted by the Chief of police on a case by case basis.

K-9 vehicles shall not be used to transport passengers, except as authorized by the shift commander.

K-9 vehicles shall not be used to transport prisoners.

Patrol dog handlers are responsible for the cleanliness and day to day upkeep of their assigned vehicle.

K-9 handlers shall be allowed one half hour at the end of each shift for the maintenance, care and cleaning of all equipment, K-9(s), and assigned vehicles.

Care and Maintenance

Each canine handler shall maintain his canine at his place of residence and shall be responsible that the canine is properly cared for.

K-9's shall be treated by department approved veterinarians with the exception of emergencies.

- K-9 handlers are authorized to immediately take their K-9 to a veterinarian for any illness or injury.
- A supervisor shall be notified

Each canine will receive an annual physical examination to include all required inoculations as well as a heartworm check.

- Copies of all medical records will be forwarded to the patrol captain.

Each handler will be responsible for insuring that the canine has been licensed annually with the Town of Stratford.

Whenever a handler is on extended leave and unable to care for their assigned K-9 arrangements shall be made by the K-9 supervisor.

Ownership

All K-9's are owned by the Town of Stratford.

A handler may apply to take possession of his assigned K-9 when it has been retired from service. A K-9 may be retired or assigned to another handler upon authorization by the Chief of Police.

Conduct and Approaching K-9's

Though a police K-9 is friendly, it should be remembered that it is a working police dog trained to protect its handler and apprehend criminals. Therefore Department Members should use common sense in interacting with these animals and should follow these general rules of conduct:

- Do not tease, provoke, intimidate or agitate a police K-9.
- Do not approach the K-9 without the consent of its handler and shall approach only with the handler being present.
- Do not feed the K-9 without the permission of its handler.
- Do not pet the K-9 unless in the presence of its handler and with the handlers permission.
- Do not hug or lean down closely to the head of the K-9

- Refrain from making physical contact or any threatening gestures or motions toward the handler while in the presence of the K-9.
- Do not give commands to the police K-9 unless there is an emergency or with permission of the handler.
- Should an Officer be confronted by a K-9, the best tactic is to stand still, since any sudden movement or sudden flight may cause the dog to respond by biting and holding.
- Under normal circumstances officers shall not attempt to interfere with or call off a K-9, which has given the command to apprehend by the handler
- Do not approach a prisoner being guarded by a K-9 until the handler says it's safe to do so.

Injured or Sick K-9

If a K-9 becomes sick or injured department members shall remain clear of the K-9 unless otherwise directed by its handler.

The handler, if able, shall determine the extent of the injury and the ability of the K-9 to continue the mission or other appropriate action to be taken regarding the well being of the K-9.

The Shift Commander shall be notified of the injury as soon as possible.

Response to an Injured Handler

If a K-9 Handler becomes injured or incapacitated follow the listed procedures if possible.

- If the K-9 is not secured, a passive approach to the handler is usually accepted by the K-9.
- If they are able to, allow the handler to use verbal commands to control the K-9.
- If the handler is unable to control the K-9, the K-9 may be lured into the K-9 vehicle by opening the vehicles door.
- If the K-9 cannot be secured animal control should be contacted where the utilization of a snare pole may be used.
- A family member or another K-9 handler may respond and assist in securing the K-9.
- K-9 vehicle are equipped with snare poles and should be used if needed to control the K-9.

Role of the Backup Officer

A backup officer's primary responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Remain close to the K-9 handler. The preferred location in an area search is to either side of the team and about ten feet behind them.
- Responsibilities for all communication between the K-9 team, on scene supervisor, perimeter officers, and the communication room.
- Shall not go ahead of the K-9 team at any time.
- Should not become physically involved with any suspect(s) unless requested to do so by the K-9 handler.
- Once instructed to do so, it shall be the responsibly of the back-up officer to search the suspect, and remove the suspect from the scene.

- Shall respond to the K-9 handlers request and instructions while involved in the operation.

PROCEDURES – TRAINING:

Training – General

Upon completing nationally accredited training such as NAPWDA, it is the responsibility of the handler to ensure that training is done on a regular basis to maintain the proficiency and credibility of the K-9 team.

It is the handler's responsibility to ensure that the K-9 maintains its certification.

- Failure to attend training, or maintain certification, will result in the removal of the K-9 from service until recertified.
- In service training will be conducted in accordance with certification standards and guidelines.
- K-9 handlers will coordinate with the Training Division to schedule the training and will be reassigned to accommodate this training.
- Documentation of training courses completed and certification will be forwarded to the Training Division.

On duty training may be authorized under the following conditions:

- Permission will first be obtained from the shift Supervisor.
- The patrol supervisor will then be made aware of both officers involved in the training and the location of the training.
- Officers involved will advise the communications center and call off on the radio when commencing the training and back on when completed.
- Training should be limited to short training sessions (30 minutes).
- Officers will be available for assignments during this training time in cases of emergencies.
- Training record forms will be completed and forwarded to the training division.

In addition to the above training of the narcotic detection dogs will be conducted in accordance with established certification guidelines using actual controlled substances as training aids.

- Narcotic detection forms will be completed monthly by the handler and forwarded to the handlers' division commander.

Acquisition of Narcotic Samples

The police department K-9 team(s) will only utilize narcotic substances obtained from the State of Connecticut Drug laboratory for training purposes.

These narcotics will be obtained using the following procedures:

- The K-9 handler or a designated officer of this department will make arrangements with the State Drug Lab to obtain the necessary substances and will receive the amounts designated.

- Upon receipt of the narcotic substances, the handler or person assigned to pick up the drugs will complete a police department Receipt form.
- The handler or assigned person will also receive from the State Drug Lab a written analysis of the substances and the amounts received which will verify the purity levels of the samples. All substances will be weighed upon acquisition.
- The K-9 Unit Lieutenant will review and confirm the quantity and weight of all narcotic samples obtained from the state lab prior to those samples being placed in the narcotic storage safes.

Storage of Narcotic Samples

All narcotic substances obtained from the State of Connecticut for training purposes will be stored within secured and separate narcotic storage safes.

- These safes will be located in the holding room of the police department.

Access to the narcotic storage safes will be restricted to those persons listed on the State of Connecticut and federal licenses and K-9 handlers.

Each individual narcotic substance will be stored within a separate ammo can in the safe. When Necessary, separate safes are used to prevent cross-contamination of the samples. Marijuana is a substance that can easily contaminate other narcotics located within close proximity. Accordingly, marijuana will be kept in a completely different safe from that of other training narcotics. Samples will be grouped in the following manner:

- Marijuana and hashish
- Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, Heroin MDMA (Methylenedioxymethamphetamine – Ecstasy) and Methamphetamines.

Removal of the Narcotic Samples

Only one combination holder need be present when opening the safe, but any time the safe is opened one other individual or K-9 handler will witness it.

Any samples removed are subject to visual inspection for signs of tampering. These inspections are to be conducted when samples are removed from their secured location by both handler and witness.

All entries into the storage safes will be recorded on the Narcotic Substance Control Log (department log) and shall include:

- Integrity of the seal
- Type of substance removed
- Weight upon removal
- Names and signatures of the person removing the samples and the witness
- Reason for removal
- Time of removal
- Date of removal
- Name of handler (if applicable)

- Location of intended training (if applicable)

While being transported to and from the training site, all narcotic samples must be secured in the trunk in ammo cans.

Upon returning from the training site the narcotics will be immediately removed from the vehicle and secured in the storage safes.

Return of Narcotic Samples

Upon completion of the training exercise or inventory, all narcotic samples are to be returned to the narcotic safe.

- All narcotic samples are to be reweighed and inventoried in the presence of a second handler or Officer.
- The handler and witness will then sign off on the department log, attesting that the samples have been secured and that the safe is closed and locked. (Logs will be kept and secured in safes)

Discrepancies in Narcotic Samples

In the event a discrepancy arises or an incident occurs during training where a training aid is damaged resulting in the loss of all or part of the sample, a supervisor will be immediately notified and an investigation initiated and the detective Division Commander notified.

A designated supervisor to be determined at the time of the incident will do a separate incident report and their findings will be forwarded to the Chief of Police.

Any discrepancies left unresolved after 24 hours will be reported to the DEA on DEA form 106 and a copy will be sent to the Connecticut Drug Control Division within 72 hours of the discovery of the discrepancy.

The weight of the narcotics is the actual weight of the substance. It does not include the packaging material and this should reflect when weighed.

Inventory of Narcotic Samples

On the last day of each calendar month an inventory of the contents of the narcotics storage safes will be conducted by the Detective Division Captain and Lieutenant.

A separate inventory must also be taken every May 1st (or within 4 days) listing the kinds and quantities of the controlled substances on hand.

Records inventories will be forwarded to the Chief’s office on a monthly basis.

Disposal of Narcotic Samples

After a minimum of six (6) months or a maximum of (1) one year from the date that the narcotic samples are obtained from the State Drug Lab, arrangements will be made with the lab for the return and disposal

of the expired samples. The samples will be returned to the lab and new samples obtained. The Stratford Police Department Disposal Form will be completed and forwarded to the Chief of Police.

PROCEDURES – PATROL DOG

Communications Responsibilities

A K-9 Team should be dispatched immediately at the outset of an incident when practical and where possible use of the K-9 may be indicated (missing Juveniles, escaped prisoners, burglaries, etc.) or to all hazardous or violent situations (fights, unruly crowds, building searches, barricaded persons, robberies, etc.)

Utilization

When practical, patrol K-9 teams should not be assigned to a specific beat and should be utilized as a town wide floating unit.

In cases of manpower shortages the Shift Commander may assign K-9 teams to specific patrol areas. The handler will be allowed to pick the assignment based on seniority per established department practice.

K-9(s) shall not be utilized in a manner that would be ineffective and/or inconsistent with the team's abilities and training.

Deployment

K-9 teams may be deployed under the following circumstances:

- Assist with interior building searches
- Assist with area searches
- Assist with evidence recovery and narcotic detection
- Assist in locating of missing persons
- Conduct tracks on suspects who have eluded apprehension
- Assist in crowd control
- To protect the handler, other officers, or citizens injury or death or the imminent threat of injury or death
- Assist in promoting a positive image of law enforcement through various public relations duties determined by the Chief of Police
- Aid other law enforcement agencies when authorized
- Special assignments

The use of Police K-9's constitutes a use of force.

- The utilization of police K-9's is considered less than lethal force and shall conform to the Use of Force policy.
- Each canine handler is responsible for the proper use and control of his/her assigned K-9.

A patrol dog may be used to apprehend an individual if the K-9 handler reasonably believes that the individual has either committed or is about to commit any offense and if any of the following conditions exist.

- There is reasonable belief that the individual poses an immediate threat of violence or serious harm to the public, any officer or him/herself.
- The individual is physically resisting arrest and the use of a patrol dog will help overcome such resistance.
- The individual(s) is believed to be concealed in an area where entry, by other than a K-9, would post a threat to the safety of officers.
- It is recognized that situations may arise which do not fall within the provisions set forth in this policy. In such circumstances a standard of reasonableness shall be used to review the decision to use a patrol dog.
- Absent one or more of the above, mere flight from officers shall not serve as a cause for K-9 apprehension.
- The decision to deploy the narcotic detection dog will be made by the handler.

Prior to the use of a patrol dog the handler shall carefully consider the following in determining to deploy the canine or not:

- The individual's age
- The nature of the suspected offense
- Any potential danger to any other police officers, who may attempt to intervene or assist with the apprehension.
- Any potential danger to the public, which may result from the release of a patrol dog.

Unless it would otherwise increase the risk of injury or escape, a verbal warning followed by a reasonable period of compliance should proceed the release of any police dog.

A supervisor shall be notified as soon as practicable following the deployment of a patrol dog.

When apprehending suspects, the canine shall be commanded to disengage as soon as the suspect is subdued or readily complies with officer direction.

Prior to going off duty, the canine handler shall complete all necessary reports associated with the use of the patrol dog unless otherwise instructed or authorized.

In criminal matters, any track, scent or scent article greater than four (4) to six (6) hours old would probably not be acceptable by the courts, even if the dog were to find the subject. Therefore it is not advisable to request a K-9 team for any track greater than six (6) hours old.

In missing person's cases, patrol dogs can generally track on trails up to twenty-four (24) hours old.

- In cases where the trail is over twenty-four (24) hours old, a bloodhound should be utilized.

Crowd Control

K-9 teams may be utilized in crowd control situations with the following limitations:

- The canine will remain on a lead.
- The canine will not be deployed unless the use of force is justified.
- K-9 teams may be utilized for this purpose, if available.
- The K-9 teams will be assisted by other officers.

Building Searches

Building searches are governed by the following:

- The building perimeter shall be secured
- When a building search is anticipated, a preliminary search by officers shall not be conducted.
- The following steps in preparation for the K-9 search should be taken:
- Evacuate all tenants, workers or others from the facility.
- ii. Request that all air conditioning, heating or air-blowing systems be shut off so as not to interfere with the K-9's scent.
- d. Upon entrance to the building, all exits should be secured and communications limited to that of a tactical nature.
- e. The canine should not be used to search facilities that contain substances potentially harmful to the animal unless overriding the risk to human life is present.
- f. Before commencing the search, the handler or other appropriate personal should announce the intended release of the canine and repeat the announcement.
- A reasonable amount of time shall be allowed for the suspect to respond.
- The warning shall be repeated on each level of all multi level structures.
- Where there is reasonable belief that the suspect speaks a language other than English, an officer or other individual should be summoned to the scene if available and practical to make the announcement in the suspects' language.

Tracking

Canines may be used to track missing persons or criminal suspects or to locate evidence that is believed to have been abandoned or hidden in a specified area. When such searches are to be conducted the following preparations should be made:

- Identify the location where the person was last known to have been
- Shut off engines of vehicles in the area
- Avoid vehicle or foot movements in the area where the subject was last seen.
- Secure the perimeter of the area to be searched
- Protect all items of clothing that will be used for scent from being handled.
- A Patrol vehicle will follow the K-9 team, when possible, to secure suspects or transport victims.

PROCEDURES – NARCOTIC DOG

General Use of the Narcotic Detection Dog

Assistance from a narcotic detection dog team may be requested from any officer or detective through the communications center.

Requests for a narcotic detection dog will be made in a timely manner so as to reduce the downtime of the investigative stop.

If the officers basis for suspicion grants authorization, the narcotic detection dog may be used to:

- Search vehicles, buildings, parcels, luggage, areas or other items deemed necessary.
- Assist in obtaining a search warrant by using the dog to support probable cause.
- Assist in the search of narcotics during a search warrant service.
- Assist in drug education programs and other public relations activities at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

The decision to deploy the narcotic detection dog will be made by the handler.

The narcotic detection dog will not be used to search a person.

Public Facilities and Places

Canines may not be used to sniff luggage or related personal items in the physical possession of or close proximity to an individual in a public facility or place unless:

- There is reasonable suspicion that the personal possession contains illegal drugs or evidence of a crime, and
- The time required to conduct the sniff is limited in duration.

Canines may used to sniff luggage or other personal effects of an individual on either a random or selective basis if the items are not in the possession of the owner.

Whenever possible, exploratory sniffing in public facilities should be conducted with the advance knowledge of the facility manager.

- It should be conducted without interference or annoyance to the public or interruption of facility operations.

When used for building searches, the following procedure should be followed:

- All persons on the premises should be removed or placed in one room prior to the dog search commencing.
- All plain view drugs should be secured prior to the dog search and the handler be notified of where the drugs were removed from.

Canine searches of the exterior of residences either individual dwellings or common areas of multiple dwellings are not permitted without a search warrant or as otherwise permitted by law.

The use in schools is limited to situations where there is reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal drugs are being sold, used, and/or consumed on the premises.

- Where reasonable possible, the school's principal or designated authority should be contacted in advance of the search.

Canine drug sniffs of motor vehicles may be conducted at the handler's discretion within the confines of the law.

PROCEDURES – SELECTION PROCESS

Handler Selection

A Police Officer requesting assignment as a canine handler must submit a written request through the chain of command to the Chief of Police

Patrol dog handlers will be selected from the rank of Patrolman or Detective and upon selection will be assigned to the Patrol or Detective Division.

Single purpose drug detector dog handlers will be selected from the rank of Patrolman or Detective and may be assigned to any division within the department.

Applicants for the position of a K-9 handler must have the following minimum qualifications:

- Completed his/her probationary period and be appointed as a regular officer.
- Not exhibit abusive use of sick time.
- Must not have sustained a complaint for excessive force.
- Proficient report writing and record keeping skills.
- Exhibit a calm professional manner in dealing with stressful situations.
- Posses a genuine interest in canines and a strong desire to work with canines.
- The applicant's spouse/co-habitants must be able to fully accept the program and the handler's commitment to the program.
- Co-habitants must not have allergies connected to animals.
- Be willing and able to provide the canine with suitable living quarters at his/her home and to properly care for the animals' daily needs.
- A (3 year) commitment to the program shall be made.
- Be willing to work a variety of shifts per the collective bargaining agreement.

K-9 Selection

Must be twelve to twenty four months old at the start of training.

Must pass a physical examination by a department approved veterinarian which may include X-rays to determine the existing hip configurations