



Lake Worth Police Department

Policy 7.06 – Canine Operations & Deployment

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Approved By: *J.T. Manoushagian*
Chief of Police

I. POLICY

A properly trained canine team is a valuable force multiplier to law enforcement personnel. It is the policy of this agency that the canine unit be utilized within these guidelines to prevent, control, and detect criminal activity using legally and tactically sound methods.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the operation, training, certification, and deployment of the Lake Worth Police Department's canine unit.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Handler: A specially trained sworn officer selected by the Chief of Police and qualified by a trainer to care for and utilize a police service dog (PSD) for law enforcement or investigative functions. [Def. Texas Penal Code 38.151(a)(2)]

B. Trainer: A canine handler who has completed a canine trainer's course and is currently certified as a canine trainer. If applicable, the trainer will be designated in writing by the Chief of Police and will be responsible for the collective training of all canine teams assigned to the canine unit.

C. Canine (K-9): A canine animal that is certified to perform basic and specialized patrol/law enforcement functions, including but not limited to tracking, suspect/evidence searches, narcotics detection, and suspect apprehensions. [Def. Texas Penal Code 38.151(a)(3)]

D. Canine Team: The canine handler and the assigned canine acting together to perform law enforcement or investigative functions.

E. Certified: A canine team certified by at least one of the following national organizations annually: United States Police Canine Association (USPCA), National Police Canine Association (NPCA), National Narcotic Detector Dog Association (NNDA), American Working Dog Association (AWDA), North American Police Work Dog Association (NAPWDA).

1. Multiple or alternate certifications may be obtained in addition to, or in place of the certifications above if approved by the Chief of

Police.

F. Deployment: When a handler makes use of the assigned canine on duty in an official capacity.

G. Apprehension: When a handler, making use of the assigned canine on duty in an official capacity, assists in locating either suspects or evidence. An apprehension may be, but does not require, an actual physical apprehension of a suspect by a canine.

H. Community Relations: Social and physical contact with citizens.

I. Criminal Interdiction: The interruption of criminal activity, ongoing or imminent, by consistent proactive enforcement operations.

J. K-9 UNIT – A specialized unit within the Field Operations Division that consists of canine handlers, canine supervisor(s), and specially trained support staff (decoys).

IV: GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose and duties of the canine team shall include but not be limited to the following:

A. Tracking and apprehension of individuals lawfully sought by the police.

B. The search of buildings or areas for suspected criminals.

C. Search and rescue of lost and missing persons.

D. Criminal interdiction.

E. Detection of illegal narcotics.

F. Locating evidence that has been abandoned or hidden.

G. Department training presentations.

H. Community relations.

I. Handler protection.

J. Off-duty assignments/ Call-outs

1. While off duty, the canine team will be available to respond to requests of assistance from other officers, provided those officers approve the request through their respective supervisors.
2. The handler reserves the right and has the discretion to interpret the totality of the circumstances prior to responding to a request for assistance. The handler will determine if a response is necessary and if so, take appropriate action.

K. Record keeping.

V. CANINE DEPLOYMENT AND APPLICATION

A. The decision to deploy or apply the canine in any given situation shall be solely that of the canine handler. He or she will be the only one capable and trained to read and/ or understand changes in his or her canine's behavior that would affect its application and/ or deployment.

B. The following reflects general guidelines for the deployment of the canine team:

1. All instances involving the deployment of a canine shall be within departmental guidelines in addition to federal, state and local statutes.
2. The canine team may deploy in, but shall not be limited to, the following situations:
 - a. Building searches where there is a possibility of a suspect hidden inside or, because of a building or location's size, a search using officers on foot would be impractical due to the time needed to conduct the search.
 - b. Searches/ tracks of open areas for criminal suspects who are actively eluding capture and pose an immediate risk to the safety of officers or citizens.
 - c. Searches/ tracks for possible suspects or evidence in a given area.
 - d. Searches for articles of evidence (weapons, narcotics, etc.) or other property that may be of value in a criminal case.
 - e. Searches for lost or missing persons (Search and rescue).
 - f. Tactical situations as approved by the canine unit supervisor.

3. Whenever the canine handler determines that a response to assist another agency is necessary, especially in a call-out situation, he or she will notify the K-9 unit supervisor of the response.

C. The canine team shall not be used for the following situations:

1. To search for other animals.
2. To control a crowd, with the exception of situations where it is immediately imperative to prevent death or serious bodily injury to officers and/or individuals.
3. Any situation where a strong potential exists for the discrediting of the Lake Worth Police Department and/or its canine unit.
4. Be assigned a call that leaves the canine unsupervised for an extended period of time or causes the canine team to be unavailable for an extended period of time.

VI. GENERAL EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

A. No member of the agency will touch, handle or pet the canine unless given permission by the handler.

B. Personnel shall not tease, agitate, or harass the canine.

C. Members of the agency shall refrain from horseplay with other personnel or the handler when the canine is present. Under no circumstances should any aggressive gestures be made at any time towards the handler.

D. If a working canine approaches any officer during a deployment, or at any time the canine is in performance of his or her duties, the officer shall remain still.

E. Officers or employees shall not address the canine in a "baby talk" manner.

F. All personnel should be aware that failure to follow any of the above guidelines could result in serious bodily injury.

VII. OFFICER GUIDELINES

A. Officers involved with a canine deployment shall be governed by the following:

1. Officers at a scene shall contain the area to the extent possible to prevent escape of the suspect(s) and maintain their perimeter security until notified the search has been concluded.

a. When setting a perimeter around an area where a canine is to be deployed, the on scene supervisor or senior officer should consult with the responding canine handler to determine if a lighted or unlighted perimeter should be set.

2. Officers shall refrain from unnecessary conversation, stay clear of doors and windows, and shall not enter the search area unless instructed by the handler or on scene supervisor.

3. When the canine team enters a building or search area, other officers will routinely be asked to accompany the canine team to form a search team. The accompanying officer's responsibility is to provide cover to the canine team and should, where applicable, consider deploying a patrol rifle/shotgun. The search team will always operate under the direct guidance of the canine handler regardless of rank.

4. Officers should avoid illuminating the canine team with spotlights and/or flashlights.

5. If an officer is requested to accompany the canine unit during a field or building search, he or she shall take a position to the rear of the handler and carefully follow all instructions given by the handler.

6. Officer interference with a canine during deployment may result in injury to the officer(s). In the event an officer comes between a canine and the handler or other person/object, he or she should stand as still as possible and make no overt movements.

7. When applicable, perimeter officers shall maintain a deployment or staging area for the canine team. Said area shall be restricted from public access.

8. Officers shall avoid contaminating a search area prior to the completion of the canine's search. Officers should avoid touching any discarded evidence, as it may be used to develop a scent trail.

9. If officers must enter a search area or building prior to the canine team's search, they will make certain all officers are out of the area prior to the canine team's search. Officers shall also advise the handler of any articles, substances, etc. the officer feels may be detrimental in the dog's ability to be deployed in that given situation. Officers shall make the

handler aware of any area that has been or could have possibly been contaminated.

10. In all situations where an actual physical apprehension of a suspect occurs, all officers who witnessed the apprehension or were accompanying the handler during the apprehension shall complete a detailed report outlining the circumstances surrounding the apprehension as well as the apprehension itself.

VIII. CANINE HANDLER GUIDELINES AND CONDUCT (TBP 7.35)

A. Record Keeping

1. It will be the responsibility of each handler to individually maintain accurate and up-to-date records in the following areas:

a. Training Records

b. Deployment Records

c. Medical/ Health Records

d. Summary Reports.

i. Each handler will submit an annual report summarizing the activities of the team. The report shall include call for service numbers and reference seizures and apprehensions the canine team was involved in. The annual report shall be submitted to the canine unit supervisor. The supervisor shall prepare an annual report outlining the entire units' activities and submit it to the Commander of the Field Operations Division no later than January 30th of each calendar year.

B. Canine Maintenance and Upkeep

1. It is the handler's responsibility to ensure the basic grooming and hygiene needs of their assigned canine(s) are maintained at all times. This includes but it not limited to:

a. Regular bathing (Shampooing, dipping, conditioning, etc.)

b. Brushing/ Combing

c. Toenail maintenance

d. Ear cleaning

2. Advanced care and maintenance, such as dental cleaning and medical procedures should be coordinated through the canine unit supervisor as necessary.

C. Kennel Maintenance and Upkeep

1. It will be the responsibility of each handler to maintain and constantly monitor the cleanliness and habitability of their assigned canine's kennel area. Habitability requirements include but are not limited to:

- a. Shelter that allows the canine to be free from direct sunlight and weather
- b. An ample amount of fresh clean water
- c. A floor free of feces and urine

2. It will be the responsibility of the canine unit supervisor to inspect each kennel on a random basis to ensure they are hygienic and being maintained in accordance with this policy.

D. Vehicle Maintenance and Upkeep

1. Canine vehicles naturally accrue more interior dirt and debris than other patrol vehicles. Therefore, they require more interior maintenance than a normal patrol vehicle. It will be the responsibility of the handler to ensure that the interior of their patrol vehicle, including the canine's kennel area, is clean and maintained in a professional manner.

2. It will be the responsibility of the canine unit supervisor to inspect each canine vehicle on a regular basis to ensure it is being maintained in accordance with this policy.

E. Physical Fitness / Assessments

1. The physical readiness of a canine handler is paramount and will ultimately assist the handler in being as successful as possible in the performance of his or her duties. The requirements below are intended to assess the handler's ability to perform actual physical tasks that are commonly associated with the duties of being a canine handler. All handlers must meet and maintain the following minimum physical readiness requirements, outlined in Attachment A.

2. Each handler's physical readiness will be assessed a minimum of two (2) times per calendar year. The commander of the Field Operations Division as well as the canine unit supervisor will supervise the physical

assessment. Each handler's performance will be recorded and kept in his or her division file. Participation in the assessment is mandatory. A medical waiver may be obtained upon presentation of a valid doctor's note. Medical documentation must be presented prior to the physical assessment.

3. Should a handler fail to meet the minimum standards outlined above, he or she will have until the next regularly scheduled assessment to become compliant with this directive. In the event that a second failure is recorded, the handler will be referred to an administrative review board to evaluate his or her continued assignment to the canine unit. In the event that a handler is not able to participate in two (2) consecutive physical assessments due to medical waiver, he or she will also be referred to an administrative review board.

4. In addition to the mandatory biannual assessments, non-mandatory unit physical training sessions may also be scheduled. Attendance to these sessions is not required; however, participation is encouraged in order to maintain the handler's physical readiness between assessments. Handlers are also encouraged to pursue physical training options outside of the department.

IX. USE OF FORCE GUIDELINES

A. When circumstances permit, it is an officer's responsibility to first exhaust every reasonable means of employing the minimum amount of force, including his or her physical presence and verbal skills, before escalating the amount of force used. General use of force guidelines can be found in LWPDP Policy 6.01 – Use of Force.

B. In a situation where it is appropriate for non-deadly force to be used, specifically a canine, the following guidelines shall be adhered to:

1. Based on the totality of the information available to the canine handler at the time, the handler shall ensure that the suspect(s) whom the force is to be used has committed, is currently committing, or is about to commit a felonious crime, or other offenses described herein.

2. At no time will a canine be used to apprehend a suspect who has or is currently committing a misdemeanor crime unless it is believed that the suspect poses a significant risk to the public or other officers. (Ex. A known suspect with a violent or dangerous history, a suspect believed to be armed with a weapon, etc.)

a. In situations where a suspect, even a suspect who is believed to have committed a misdemeanor crime, is found in an area where

officers cannot physically access him or her, (such as a crawl space, attic, under a vehicle, etc.) and going into that area would put the officers at significant risk. A canine may be deployed to apprehend the suspect if the suspect refuses surrender.

3. If, during the canine's pursuit, a suspect surrenders in a manner that is apparent to the officer that he or she no longer poses a threat or is no longer fleeing, the officer shall make every attempt to call the canine off and abort the use of force.

C. Announcements.

1. Prior to releasing a canine to apprehend a suspect, the handler shall make every effort to warn the suspect of the impending apprehension by giving the following announcements. The announcements themselves do not have to be recited verbatim however, the general message of the announcement shall be clearly conveyed.

a. English. If it is evident that the suspect speaks English, the following announcement shall be used.

i. "LAKE WORTH CANINE UNIT. SURRENDER NOW OR I WILL RELEASE MY DOG AND YOU WILL BE BITTEN."

b. Spanish. If it is unknown what language the suspect speaks or if it is evident that the suspect does not speak English, then the following announcement may be used in conjunction with an English warning.

i. "UNIDAD CANINA LAKE WORTH. RINDETE AHORA O SOLTARE MI PERRO Y TE MORDERA."

c. In the event that no announcement is given prior to releasing the canine, the handler shall fully document the circumstances surrounding the deployment and the reasons why no announcement was given.

D. Use of force review.

1. In the event that a canine is used to apprehend a suspect, the handler will complete a detailed report outlining the apprehension along with a use of force report and submit it to the canine unit supervisor for review. Following the supervisor's approval, the report shall then be forwarded to the commander of the Field Operations Division for final approval. In addition to the normal documentation that accompanies any use of force report, a canine apprehension report shall include the following items:

- a. Photographs of the injury and, if possible, the diagnosis and medical description of the suspect's injury, if any were sustained.
 - b. Photographs of the environment where the apprehension took place.
 - c. Witness statements from all witnesses (including officers).
2. In addition to any digital records that may have been created, all use of force reports involving a canine apprehension will also be maintained in hard copy form. It is the responsibility of the canine unit supervisor to maintain detailed records of all use of force reports for a minimum of 5 years.
3. When determining or examining the reasonableness of the force used, reviewing officials should refer to the doctrine established in *Graham v. Connor* (1989).

X. PUBLIC RELATIONS

- A. All public relations demonstrations must have final approval from the Chief of Police or his or her designee.
- B. All outgoing information about the canine unit shall be first approved by the Chief of Police or his or her designee.
- C. The K-9 unit supervisor or senior handler should be consulted prior to the release of any information regarding the K-9 unit to ensure the information contained within the release adheres to the standards set forth by this policy as well as the national standards associated with the specific K-9 Team's certification.

XI. OTHER AGENCY RESPONSES / CALL-OUTS

- A. Pre-planned responses.
 1. The canine unit may respond to incidents outside the City Limits of Lake Worth under the following guidelines:
 - a. The Chief of Police or his or her designee must approve all requests.
 - b. Pre-planned requests for assistance shall also be approved by the Chief of Police or his or her designee.

2. The requesting agency may be expected to share proceeds seized when said items were seized with the assistance of the canine team.
3. The agency being assisted by the canine unit may be expected to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Lake Worth Police Department.
4. The canine handler will be advised of the request and any special requirements.
5. The canine handler shall have the opportunity to speak with the requesting agency/ officer and assess the totality of the circumstances prior to responding or deploying.

B. Call-outs and Assistance.

1. Communications Guidelines.

- a. When contacted by an officer or agency regarding availability of the canine team, communications (dispatch) shall not advise any individual over the phone that the canine team is, or is not, on duty unless the dispatcher knows the caller to be an officer. Additionally, the dispatcher shall not advise if the canine team is, or is not, available regardless of the caller's status as a peace officer.
- b. If the canine team is requested, the dispatcher receiving the call will contact the handler on duty or on-call and inform him or her of the request. The handler can then directly communicate with the person or agency requesting the team to determine if a response is necessary.
- c. In the event that the primary on-call canine handler is unavailable or unreachable, the dispatcher should then contact the secondary on-call canine handler followed by the canine unit supervisor.

2. Handler Guidelines – Narcotics.

- a. Upon receiving a request for assistance, the canine handler shall ensure that the officer requesting the assistance is able to provide sufficient and articulable facts or circumstances that lead the officer to conclude that criminal activity is afoot. (Reasonable suspicion).

- b. If reasonable suspicion exists, and the handler believes that a canine response is appropriate, then the handler will advise the requesting officer of any and all procedures to follow prior to the team's arrival. The handler should also, when able, provide the requesting officer with an estimated time of arrival (ETA).
- c. The ultimate decision to actually deploy the canine at the scene is solely that of the handler.
- d. Should the requesting officer not agree with the handler's decision, the handler may attempt to explain his or her decision to the officer and should if possible, offer alternative suggestions. Any complaints or questions should be directed to the canine unit supervisor should they arise.

3. Handler Guidelines – Tracking/ Apprehension

- a. Upon receiving a request for assistance, the canine handler shall obtain as much information as possible about the circumstances surrounding the request.
- b. Canines employed by this department utilize ground disturbance as their primary means of scent discrimination during a track. If the handler learns the search area has not been properly secured or has been contaminated, then the canine may not be useful and therefore the handler may choose not to respond.
- c. A canine team certified in tracking but not apprehension shall only respond to incidents where search and rescue is the primary mission and there is no threat of a dangerous confrontation.
- d. A canine team certified in patrol apprehension/ tracking shall respond to incidents where the physical apprehension of a suspect may be necessary and where dangers exist that put officer's or citizen's lives at risk.

XII. IN-SERVICE TRAINING / CERTIFICATION (TBP 7.35)

- A. The canine handler will be allotted a minimum of sixteen (16) hours per month for training while on duty and shall be coordinated by the canine supervisor.
- B. Training should take place at a minimum of two times per month and should encompass the full spectrum of the canine's certified skill set. When practical, all training should be supervised by a certified canine trainer.

C. Each K-9 team shall certify annually without exception in the areas they are expected to perform. (Ex: Patrol, Narcotics Detection, Tracking, etc.)

D. Should the canine team fail to annually certify with a national organization as prescribed herein, the use of the canine team shall be immediately suspended. Utilizing the appropriate chain of command, notification shall be made to the Chief of Police immediately upon failure and a board of appropriate supervisors and administrators convened to determine if any disciplinary action is warranted. If the board finds that the failure to certify was a result of the handler's negligence to properly train and prepare the canine to certify, then appropriate disciplinary action shall be recommended and forwarded to the Chief of Police or his designee for action.

XIII. WORK HOURS AND COMPENSATION FOR CANINE MAINTENANCE

A. It is understood the canine handler will spend a certain amount of time each day for routine animal care and maintenance. The national standard and accepted time for said duties is thirty (30) minutes per day. Therefore, thirty (30) minutes will be the accepted time by the Lake Worth Police Department.

B. The standard for the canine handler will be a rotating schedule consisting of four (4) ten (10) hour days per week, with three (3) scheduled days off. The canine handler will utilize the stated thirty (30) minutes for canine care during their scheduled on-duty paid time four (4) days each week.

C. Any additional time accrued by the canine handler due to working holidays, a special event, or an afterhours "call-out" will be compensated at the standard rate as detailed by the City of Lake Worth PARM.

D. All other time required for canine training, certifications, veterinary appointments, etc., shall be conducted during the canine handler's routine scheduled ten (10) hour workday.

E. Canine handlers will be designated as either "primary" or "secondary" on-call and will be compensated in accordance with the City of Lake Worth PARM for the time spent while off duty carrying for their assigned canine.

XIV. VEHICLE PURSUITS

A. If a canine officer initiates a motor vehicle pursuit, said officer should relinquish the primary pursuit position to the assisting law enforcement units as soon as practicable. The canine unit will be allowed to remain as a secondary unit for the remainder of the motor vehicle pursuit.

B. Because vehicle pursuits often end with a subject(s) fleeing on foot, a canine team which is certified in patrol/ apprehension and tracking will, if available

and on duty, respond to assist with all Lake Worth PD initiated vehicle pursuits.

C. Requests for assistance from other agencies involved in a vehicle pursuit will be evaluated using the current LWPDP Policy 7.15 – Vehicle Pursuits.

XV. INJURY TO CANINE

A. In the event the canine is seriously injured either on or off duty, the canine unit supervisor should be notified immediately, and he or she will then advise of the appropriate action to be taken.

1. The canine unit supervisor shall notify the chain of command in all instances where a canine is seriously injured.

B. Minor injuries should be treated by the handler with appropriate first aid measures. Following initial first aid treatment, the handler should then notify the canine unit supervisor in a timely manner.

XVI. HANDLER TERMINATION / RESIGNATION

A. In the event that a canine handler chooses to leave the Lake Worth Police Department, and his or her canine partner is still a viable asset to the K-9 Unit, then the canine will be reassigned to a new handler. The canine supervisor will be responsible for determining the viability of the canine.

B. If the canine is near the end of his or her working life and reassigning the canine to a new handler would be neither cost effective nor practical, then the retirement of the canine should be considered.

C. In the event that a canine handler is relieved from his or her duties as a canine handler or terminated from the Lake Worth Police Department, the canine unit supervisor shall be tasked with evaluating the canine and making an official recommendation as to whether or not the canine should be reassigned or retired. Under no circumstances will a canine handler or former canine handler who has been removed from the unit or the department be afforded the opportunity to adopt a retired canine.

XVII. RETIREMENT OF CANINE

A. The canine's health and overall well-being should be evaluated annually. When it is determined the canine should be retired from active service, the assigned handler should have first option to be given permanent care and ownership of the canine.

B. If the handler is unwilling or unable to adopt the canine, it will be the responsibility of the canine unit supervisor to recommend an appropriate adoptive home for the canine or arrange for other means of care via the chain of command.

XVIII. ELIGIBILITY FOR CANINE HANDLERS

A. In order to be eligible for the canine handler position, the following minimum requirements must be met:

1. Hold a current Basic Peace Officer license issued by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.
2. Have at least two years of full time law enforcement experience.
3. Not currently facing any administrative or disciplinary action.
4. Have received a minimum of a satisfactory rating on the most recent yearly evaluation.
5. Not be on any type of probation or remedial training.

B. Canine handler candidates should know and understand that due to the unique nature of the canine handler position, he or she will be subject to rotating shifts, rotating days off, and call-outs while off duty.

C. Canine handler candidates must be able to show that an adequate area exists for the proper housing and kenneling of a canine at their residence. Agency canines will not be permitted to be kenneled in apartments, town homes, or other small areas that do not allow for open-air outdoor living for the canine. An evaluation of the adequacy of kenneling facilities will be conducted at the place the agency canine is to be housed prior to the appointment of a canine handler.

D. The canine handler will be subject to an agreement with the City of Lake Worth regarding compensation as required by Federal Labor Standards Act.

XIX. RESPONSIBILITY

A. All members of this agency shall know and comply with all aspects of this policy.

B. All division commanders and supervisory personnel are responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions and intent of this directive.

K-9 HANDLER PHYSICAL FITNESS AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
(Attachment A)

Male Canine Handler			
Age Ranges:	Sit-Ups:	Push-Ups:	1.5 Mile Run:
20 – 24 YOA	58	51	17:00
25 – 29 YOA	54	49	17:00
30 – 34 YOA	50	47	17:00
35 – 39 YOA	48	45	17:00
40 – 44 YOA	45	43	17:00
45 – 49 YOA	43	42	17:00
50+ YOA	40	40	17:00
Female Canine Handler			
Age Ranges:	Sit-Ups:	Push-Ups:	1.5 Mile Run:
20 – 24 YOA	54	36	17:00
25 – 29 YOA	50	35	17:00
30 – 34 YOA	46	33	17:00
35 – 39 YOA	44	31	17:00
40 – 44 YOA	41	29	17:00
45 – 49 YOA	39	27	17:00
50+ YOA	36	26	17:00
*The time allotted to accomplish the sit-up and push-up portion of the assessment will be two (2) minutes.			