

TAKOMA PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT - GENERAL ORDERS



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AUTHORITY: Chief Antonio DeVaul	Last Review Date April 20, 2022	TOTAL PAGES: 23

01. Purpose: To establish the operational guidelines on the use and deployment of the department’s canine teams. Additionally, this policy will provide guidance on the use of canine teams under mutual aid agreements with other jurisdictions.

02. Policy: Canine teams support patrol operations and assist in the apprehension of criminals, the detection of CDS, locating evidence, and the tracking of persons. Canines are primarily utilized as a locating tool, capable of searching for items or people and apprehending suspects while providing additional safety for officers. Whenever possible, a Takoma Park Police canine team will be made available to other jurisdictions pursuant to mutual aid agreements but shall only be deployed in circumstances expressly permitted in this General Order.

03. Definitions:

Apprehension: When a canine team is involved in an arrest an apprehension is defined as follows:

- **Seizure:** When a canine makes physical contact with a subject by the canine’s mouth regardless of physical injury.
- **Non-Seizure:** When a canine’s presence alone is instrumental in the arrest of a subject.

Contact: Any touching of a person by a canine, including, but not limited to, nudging, pawing, biting (including subject’s clothing), regardless of physical injury; contact does not include playful or non-aggressive behavior.

Canine Handler: An officer who has been certified by a canine trainer to deploy and control a canine.

Canine Team: A handler and his or her assigned canine that has been trained and certified to perform patrol and/or detection functions.

Deployment: Canine utilized with the intent to assist in a specific law enforcement purpose.

Detection: The deployment of a canine team for the primary purpose of using the canine’s sense of smell to detect items such as CDS or explosives.

Imminent Danger: Danger that is pending, although not necessarily immediate or instantaneous

Injury: Physical contact between a person and a canine that results in a wound or puncture to the body.

K9Track Program: A cloud-based software application developed specifically for the management of public safety canine programs.

Search: The use of a canine's senses (sight, sound, and/or smell) for criminal apprehension, detection, or locating articles.

Shift Supervisor: The Patrol Sergeant or Corporal, in the absence of the Sergeant

On-Scene Supervisor: Highest ranking officer on scene in the absence of the shift supervisor.

Requesting Officer: The officer requesting the assistance of a canine team.

Track: The use of a canine's senses, predominately the sense of smell, in an attempt to locate an individual.

Usage Report: A report located in the K9Track reporting system that is generated every time a canine is deployed for an official law enforcement purpose.

Watch Commander: Assigned On-Call Commander, rank of Lieutenant or higher.

04. Duties and Responsibilities

A. Takoma Park Police canine teams are assigned to the Patrol Division. The teams are supervised by their shift supervisor, under the general supervision of the Patrol Commander, who is responsible for the oversight of the Canine Unit. Due to staffing constraints, the canine handler generally functions as a patrol officer and is assigned to a patrol squad. To ensure availability of the canine team and when sufficient staffing is available, canine teams shall not be assigned to calls for service as the primary unit and shall assist officers with in-progress calls and as a backup officer when appropriate. However, when staffing shortages exist, canine teams may be assigned general calls for service.

B. Canines may be utilized for, but not limited to, the following:

1. Tracking suspects or lost persons
2. Searching buildings, fields, and wooded areas for suspects
3. Searching crime scenes for evidence
4. Apprehending fleeing suspects
5. Searching for hidden narcotics
6. High-risk arrest situations

C. Canines are particularly effective in incidents of burglary where the suspect is believed to be still inside the building or has just fled. Searches by canines are considerably safer, quicker, and more thorough than those conducted by officers.

D. The canine team also assists patrol units with alarm calls at commercial establishments and as a backup team.

E. Canine teams may also assist patrol units with the detection of narcotics in buildings, vehicles, and open areas.

F. Safety must be the primary concern of the canine handler. The canine handler must be in complete control of their dog at all times. The handler is solely responsible for the actions of the dog and will practice safety and control at home as well as on duty.

G. If the canine handler is injured and cannot maintain control of their dog, the shift supervisor will contact another agency and request the services of a trained canine handler.

H. The canine handler is responsible for providing guidance/instruction for working with canine teams to sworn members of the department annually and recorded in K9Track.

05. Deployment

A. The primary function of a properly trained canine team is to provide law enforcement with an enhanced ability to locate people, contraband, and evidence. In order to deploy the canine, the handler must have information which would lead a reasonable and prudent officer to believe that a criminal offense has occurred, or the use of the canine is warranted and appropriate for minor crimes or non-criminal incidents (missing persons, CDS, and articles of evidence, etc.). The decision to utilize a canine team shall be in accordance with this and all department policies and reviewed considering information reasonably available to the handler at the time the decision to deploy is made. Once deployed, all on-scene personnel shall adhere to the canine handler's direction regarding the track and scene.

Deployment for criminal apprehension shall be at the sole discretion of the canine handler. If conflict arises between the on-scene supervisor and the canine handler regarding the deployment of a canine, or when a shift supervisor's request for a canine team is in conflict with this policy, the handler shall not deploy the canine and shall immediately notify the Watch Commander.

When a canine team has been requested or is responding to an incident, it is the responsibility of the officer or supervisor handling the incident to cancel the responding canine team if they are no longer needed.

B: When a canine team arrives on the scene, the handler will be briefed by the requesting officer on the following:

1. The type of crime,
2. Whether or not criminal charges will be placed; officers must advise the canine handler if the suspect is wanted only for investigation,
3. Number of officers on the scene,
4. The existence of a perimeter,
5. Other persons in the area, if known.

C. Announcements- Canine handlers will issue a verbal warning in a clear and loud voice based on their assessment of the situation. The announcement will include the following:

1. Identify themselves as a police officer,
2. State exactly what actions the suspect(s) should take,
3. Identify the consequences if they do not comply:

An acceptable form of the canine warning would be: ***“Police canine, speak to me now or I will release my dog. He/She will bite you when he/she finds you”***.

4. Canine handlers will wait a reasonable amount of time after the warning, to allow a suspect an opportunity to peacefully surrender. The time is dictated by the search area and the probability that the intended recipient of the message heard the announcement. Handlers should give additional announcements when progressing through the search area beyond reasonable earshot distance of the original warning (ascending and descending floors, heavy machinery areas, large search areas, etc.).
5. If an announcement is not given due to articulable exceptional circumstances, that would suggest it would expose the canine handler, other officers, or bystanders to a substantial risk of serious injury or death, or other exigent circumstances exists, those circumstances must be clearly articulated by the canine handler justifying such in the required reports.

D. Deployment of officers on scene will be coordinated between the canine handler and the on-scene supervisor. Officers should be advised when the canine team enters the search area over the radio. The on-scene supervisor and the canine handler will make every reasonable effort to ensure no officer or members of the public enter the search area once the canine search is started.

1. When a suspect has fled the scene of a crime and a canine team is enroute, the officers should not pursue unless a reasonable chance of apprehension exists.
2. If the pursuing officer loses sight of the suspect, the pursuit should be immediately terminated, a perimeter should be established, and officers should wait for the canine team's arrival.
3. The officer involved in the initial pursuit should note where the suspect was last observed and the direction of travel.

E. The Canine Handler may select a patrol officer to assist him as back-up on the track. The back-up officer is responsible for:

1. Taking a position to the rear of the canine handler and following all instructions of the handler.

2. Refraining from unnecessary conversations, stay clear of an doors or windows, and shall not enter the search area unless instructed to do so be the canine handler.
3. Avoiding illumination of the canine team with flashlights, headlights, or spotlights.
4. Providing location updates of the track over the radio.
5. Re-positioning the perimeter at the canine handler's direction.
6. Providing cover for the canine team.
7. Placing suspects in-custody/handcuffing (if a canine team makes apprehension without backup, officers on the perimeter may be required to assist with handcuffing the suspect).

F. A canine team search may be conducted for subjects that do not pose an immediate threat, such as: lost or missing person, suicidal persons, or when in the opinion of the handler it is in the best interest of the department and/or the community. The following procedures will be followed:

1. The canine will remain on lead.
2. The canine will not be released on a fleeing subject.
3. Once the subject has been located the canine will be kept at a safe distance to prevent the canine from contacting the subject(s). When possible, a cover officer will accompany the handler during these searches and will take the subject into custody, if located.

G. Instances Where Seizures are Permitted:

1. The suspect poses a risk of imminent danger to officers or others.
2. The suspect is actively eluding officers after having committed a serious crime of violence that may include, but is not limited to: Felony Assault, Murder, Attempted Murder, Rape, Robbery, Kidnapping, and Carjacking.
3. Other reasonable alternatives to apprehend the subject have been exhausted, or would clearly be ineffective under the circumstances.

H. Situations for Which Canine Deployment may be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

1. Capture of non-compliant suspects who are armed or reasonably believed to be armed or pose a risk of imminent danger to officers or others.
2. Where deployment of a canine would maximize officer safety.
3. Building searches when the suspect is reasonably believed to be armed, suspected of violent offenses, and/or known to be violent.
4. Missing persons.
5. Detection searches.

I. Situations for Which Canine Deployment may not be Appropriate:

1. Apprehend individuals who have only committed traffic offenses.

2. Searches for known juvenile offenders (unless the individual is reasonably believed to have committed a crime of violence, is armed with a dangerous weapon, or poses a risk of imminent danger to officers or others).
3. Persons known or reasonably believed to have limited mental capacity (unless the individual is reasonably believed to have committed a crime of violence, is armed with a dangerous weapon, or poses a risk of imminent danger to officers or others).

J. Building Searches:

1. Building searches shall not be conducted unless the owner, occupant, or other responsible party has been contacted and verifies that no one is authorized to be in the building. Model homes can be searched if:
 - a. There are signs of forced entry.
 - b. There is property value inside other than major appliances.
 - c. Contact is made with the owner or responsible party to verify that no one is authorized to be in the model home.
 - d. Abandoned properties shall not be searched when renovation tools are the only property of value inside.

2. School Searches:

- a. Before entering a school with the canine, the handler shall give a loud verbal canine warning from the exterior.
- b. When practicable, an attempt should be made for dispatch to contact County School Security to determine if anyone is authorized to be in the building and to obtain any additional information regarding the school.
- c. Once inside the school, the canine handler shall give a second loud verbal warning. The handler will wait a reasonable amount of time after the second warning to give innocent persons the opportunity to leave the school and/or allow the suspects to surrender.
- d. After searching a County school, the handler will ensure dispatch makes notification to School Security.

3. Hazardous Conditions:

A canine handler has the authority to decline the deployment of their canine in any area due to hazardous conditions that could jeopardize their safety (e.g. extremely neglected property, hoarder conditions, or uninhabitable due to mold)

K. Narcotics Detection:

1. Vehicle Scans:

- a. Narcotic detection teams will respond to requests for vehicle scans in a timely fashion.
- b. The primary function of the team is to determine if probable cause exists to search the target vehicle based on an exterior canine sniff.
- c. Canine handlers will contact the requesting officer and ensure that the vehicle is unoccupied, the engine is turned off and the doors and windows closed. Vehicle occupants will be staged at least one full car length away from the suspect vehicle.
- d. Canine handlers will request the immediate adjacent travel lane be blocked to provide a margin of safety to the team as they search.
- e. Once the exterior of the vehicle is searched the canine will be secured regardless of the outcome. The handler will not immediately deploy their canine into an unsearched vehicle interior under any circumstances.
- f. The canine handler will communicate the results of the search to the requesting officer. If the search resulted in a positive indication, the vehicle will be searched by on-scene patrol officers.
- g. Once the hand search is completed and the interior of the vehicle has been rendered safe, the handler may elect to deploy the canine to search the interior of the vehicle.

2. Article Detection

- a. When the potential for an article search arises during an incident, a request for a canine team should be made as soon as practical.
- b. The requesting officer or on scene supervisor should attempt to ascertain if any hazards (environmental, biological, structural, etc.) are present in the area where the canine team is to search and advise the canine handler prior to deployment.
- c. If an officer accompanies the canine team during the search, the officer will follow all directions given by the handler relating to the search.

3. Other

- a. Canine team may be called to search structures, parcels, and open areas for narcotics.
- b. Considerations will be given to the likelihood of direct access to narcotics in these searches.
- c. The handler will scan interior areas visually and conduct a walk through before the canine is deployed to search.

L. Explosive Detector Deployment:

1. Bomb Threats

- a. Explosive device threats will be mitigated in coordination with Montgomery County Fire Explosive Investigations Office.
- b. When assigned an explosive detection or bomb threat search the handler must view all threats as serious and potentially dangerous to the team, public safety personnel, civilians and property.
- c. Upon arrival the canine handler will contact the supervisor in charge and obtain all information involving the suspected explosive device or bomb threat, to include general location, area to be searched, and detonation time if known.
- d. The canine handler will request the on-scene supervisor to establish a communications liaison between the search area and dispatch, and if possible secure the area.
- e. The communications liaison will advise dispatch when the search is going to commence and instruct them not to communicate with the canine team on the radio. The handler must enter the area keeping in mind that they can monitor the radio but cannot transmit.
- f. If the total area cannot be searched before the detonation time, advise the supervisor of that fact and request dispatch to assign additional Canine Explosive Detection Teams, if available, to assist.
- g. If no other teams are available, the canine handler will search as much of the area as possible, leaving enough time to evacuate no less than thirty (30) minutes before detonation time.
- h. When a search cannot be started or completed thirty (30) minutes before detonation time, the team should wait thirty (30) minutes after the intended detonation time before conducting the search.
- i. When no detonation time is given, the handler should take the necessary time to prepare the canine and commence the search.
- j. The canine team must search the requested area as thoroughly as possible when presented with difficult or abnormal situations.
- k. If the threat is related to a vehicle, only the exterior may be searched. Canine teams will not enter the interior or cab portion of any vehicle unless directed to do so by a member of the Montgomery County Explosives Investigations Officer.
- l. If the canine indicates at any point during the search that an explosive odor is present, the handler must leave the immediate area and confer with the MCFRS Bomb Technician.
- m. The handler must advise the Bomb Technician of the description and location of the area in which the canine indicated.
- n. After the Bomb Technician renders the indicated area safe, the canine team must continue the search using the same procedure for any additional positive indications.
- o. When the search has been completed or suspended, the handler must notify the on-scene supervisor and provide them with the search results.

p. At the completion of the call, handlers will complete and submit a usage report detailing their activities.

2. Explosive Detector Deployments: Protective Sweeps

a. The canine unit will provide explosive detector teams to conduct protective sweeps on request. When a protective sweep is requested, a canine supervisor will be notified.

b. The size of the search area will determine the number of teams assigned to the detail.

c. If a canine alert to the odor of an explosive during a protective sweep, the handler will follow the protocol established in 05 Deployments L (1)L through 05 Deployment L (1) P.

3. Explosive Detector Deployments: Suspicious Packages

a. Any object that has been deemed suspicious by the canine handler or a Montgomery County Explosives Investigations Officer, will be treated as a live explosive. Handlers will not approach or deploy their canine to sniff in the immediate area of the object.

b. Handlers will remain to assist with secondary device scans.

c. Handlers will defer to the on-scene Bomb Technician before engaging in any search activity.

M. Canine as a Locating Tool

1. Canine teams may be utilized to search for individuals as a locating tool in circumstances where it would not be permissible to utilize them as a use of force (e.g. missing persons, misdemeanor crimes, non-incarcerable traffic offenses, etc.). Handlers will consider factors such as the time of day, lighting conditions, terrain, weather conditions, the welfare of the subject of the search, fellow officers, and the community at large. If deployed under these circumstances, the canine handler will proceed in the following manner:

2. Canine handlers will issue a canine warning prior to the start of all searches and tracks.

3. Canine warnings will be repeated as the deployment progresses beyond reasonable earshot distance of the original warning.

4. Canine handlers will maintain their canine on lead and adjust the length of the lead to reduce the likelihood of accidental or unintended contact as conditions dictate.

5. The canine will not be released to apprehend a fleeing subject when the canine is being used solely as a locating tool.

6. The canine handler will take at least one backup officer on all deployments involving person searches unless there exists an exigent reason to search alone.

7. When the subject/suspect is located, the canine handler will take immediate positive physical control of their canine and maintain a safe distance to avoid accidental contact with the subject.

8. The canine handler or backup officer will verbally warn the subject and afford them the reasonable opportunity to surrender peacefully. If the suspect does not surrender, the backup officer will operate under the department's use of force policy to effectively take the suspect into custody.

N. Canine as a Use of Force Option

1. When a canine handler is preparing to deploy their canine for apprehension, they must comply with the department's use of force policy. Force situations are dynamic and require an officer to continually assess the subject's actions to ensure an objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional response. Officers may initiate and transition to levels or types of force, including attempts to de-escalate, in relation to the amount of resistance offered by the subject. Canine deployments are inherently fast evolving and have the potential to escalate in threat severity, type of crime, and flight efforts. In the event that the canine force is applied, the Canine handler will articulate the facts demonstrating the escalation which justified the force. Circumstances that influence the level of force by the officer include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. The severity of the crime at issue,
- b. Whether the suspect(s) pose an immediate threat to the safety of officers or others, and
- c. Whether the suspect is actively resisting or attempting to evade arrest by flight.
- d. Canine handlers will also take into consideration the age of the suspect

2. Canine handlers will issue a canine warning unless there are articulable exceptional circumstances that would suggest it would expose the canine handler, other officers, or bystanders to a substantial risk of serious injury or death, or other exigent circumstances exist.

3. The canine handler will maintain their canine on lead until the decision is made to release the canine to apprehend the suspect.

4. The canine handler will take at least one back-up officer on all deployments involving person searches unless there exists an exigent reason to search alone.

5. When the suspect is located, the canine handler will afford the suspect(s) a reasonable opportunity to surrender if it is possible to do so without creating unnecessary risk to themselves or others.

6. When the suspect is located, and the suspect is compliant, the backup officer will take the subject into custody.

7. In situations where the canine handler is searching a confined space (e.g. buildings or fenced in areas) for a suspect, the search may be conducted off the lead. When conducting the search off lead the canine handler will:

- a. Issue a canine warning before releasing the canine off lead.
- b. Make reasonable efforts to ensure the safety of bystanders.
- c. The canine handler should maintain visual contact with the canine.

- d. Some conditions may dictate minimal use of illumination. In these instances, handlers should attempt to obtain thermal and/or night vision capabilities before deploying for a search.
- e. The handler will ensure the canine is wearing an electronic remote collar and that the collar is working properly, especially when off lead.
- f. Once a canine is released or commanded to apprehend a suspect by seizure, the canine handler must terminate canine force through the use of verbal commands or if necessary to physically remove the canine as soon as compliance is gained, and it is safe to do so.
- g. It is the canine handler's responsibility to control their canine (the canine is a tool/protective instrument/use of force). The handler is responsible for determining the appropriate use and level of force to be used. The use of a canine is considered a use of force, but is **not** considered deadly force.

06. Mutual Aid

A. If a Takoma Park Canine team is not available, a shift supervisor may request the assistance of a canine team from an outside agency.

1. If an outside agency's canine team deploys in contradiction of this policy, the on-scene supervisor will ensure that he or she advises the outside agency's canine team that they are in violation of our policy, and
2. This notification shall be made to the shift supervisor and documented in the incident report.

B. Mutual aid requests or call-outs under this section shall be authorized under the following circumstances:

1. The use of a canine is judged to be essential for officer safety.
2. A canine is needed to locate and assist in the apprehension of a suspect still believed to be within the boundaries of the City, or under active pursuit by Takoma Park officers.
3. To assist with building, vehicle, missing person, and narcotics searches.

C. Mutual aid requests shall be for any signatory agency of the COG Mutual Aid Plan, which may include, but are not limited to:

- Montgomery County Police
- Maryland National Capital Park Police
- Maryland State Police
- Montgomery County Sheriff's Department
- Prince George's County Police
- Hyattsville City Police
- Greenbelt City Police

D. The following considerations should be made when making a mutual aid request.

1. Distance the canine team is travelling
2. Type of crime
3. Time of day
4. Weather
5. Amount of foot traffic

E. If a request is made and there are no canine teams available, the shift supervisor will decide whether to wait for an available canine team or begin the search without a canine. Factors such as officer safety, likelihood that the suspect is hiding inside, type and size of the building or area, number of officers on the scene, should be considered.

F. When officers on the scene of any incident are unsure if the canine can be helpful, they should request their assistance and allow the canine handler to make the decision.

G. All Mutual Aid related apprehensions or seizures by allied agency canine teams will be documented. The apprehension or seizure will be recorded on an incident report and Command Summary. All reports from the requested canine team will be requested by the Shift Supervisor and all notification will be made to the Watch Commander. If a seizure occurs, the Chief of Police will be notified via the Chain of Command.

H. If a Takoma Park Police canine team assists an allied agency under a Mutual Aid all required paperwork, notifications, and response set forth under section **07 Seizure Procedures and Notifications & 14 Reporting Requirements and Statistical Reporting** will be followed.

07. Seizure Procedures and Notifications:

A. Canine Handler's Responsibilities: The canine handler shall immediately notify their shift supervisor and Watch Commander of the following:

1. Canine deployments
2. Canine related contact and/or injuries
3. Canine related seizure (intentional/unintentional)
4. If an individual is injured or alleges injury from a canine, the handler shall:
 - a. Provide medical attention as soon as practical. At minimum, the individual will be seen by MCFRS personnel.
 - b. Ensure that all injuries sustained photographed and documented in all required reporting system.
 - c. Ensure that all required reports will be completed prior to the end of the canine handler's tour of duty (Md. Code PS § 3-514). The canine handler will complete a statement and provide a copy to the processing/arresting officer detailing the

circumstances of the arrest and actions taken by the canine team to affect the apprehension.

B. Arresting Officer's Responsibilities: If a canine apprehension results in an injury, the arresting officer will be responsible for the transport if they are not transported by MCFRS to a medical facility for treatment. The arresting officer shall be responsible for the custody of the prisoner and the charging document. All required reports relate to a canine apprehension shall be completed prior to the conclusion of the arresting officer's shift.

C. Shift Supervisors Responsibilities: The shift supervisor of the canine team shall respond to the scene of all deployments, apprehensions, contact between the canine and the suspect/subject, or allegations of an inappropriate use of force involving a canine handler. The shift supervisor shall immediately notify the Watch Commander of the incident. The shift supervisor shall ensure that the injured person is transported to a medical facility for treatment, photographs of all injuries are taken prior to treatment, all evidence related to the incident is collected, and witnesses are interviewed. The shift supervisor shall also ensure all required reports are completed prior to the end of their tour of duty and all BWC and Fleet recordings are upload to Evidence.com.

D. Watch Commander's Responsibilities: The Watch Commander shall respond to the scene of all canine seizures and is responsible for oversight of the post incident investigation, as well as, the medical treatment and processing of the prisoner. The purpose of the Watch Commander's response is to determine whether the seizure was made in conformance with policy, applicable laws, and to ensure proper evidence collection and scene documentation. Additionally, the Watch Commander shall immediately notify the Chief of Police via the Chain of Command of all seizures including those made under Mutual Aid requests (including seizures made by an allied agencies canine team at the request of Takoma Park PD).

08. Canine Handlers Responsibilities for Canine Contact in a non-deployment capacity:

A. The canine handler will ensure that any individual injured or complaining of injury because of contact with a canine is provide with medical attention.

B. The shift supervisor shall respond to the scene of all non-deployment canine contacts.

C. The canine handler, shift supervisor, and Watch Commander will make all required notifications (see section **07A Seizure Procedures and Notifications**).

D. All injuries sustained by an individual because of a canine contact will be photographed.

E. All required documentation and entries (Usage Report, BlueTeam) will be completed prior to the end of the canine handler's tour of duty.

F. The Watch Commander shall respond to the scene of all canine contacts in a non-deployment capacity when serious injury is reported. The Watch Commander is responsible for oversight of the post incident investigation, as well as, ensuring medical treatment for the injured individual in

rendered. The purpose of the Watch Commander's response is to determine whether the contact was made in conformance with policy, applicable laws, and to ensure proper evidence collection and scene documentation. Additionally, the Watch Commander shall notify the Chief of Police via the Chain of Command of all contacts from a non-deployment capacity with members of the public.

G. The canine handler must make immediate notification to his supervisor of any injuries sustained by Takoma Park Police Department members, the supervisor will notify the Patrol Commander who will ensure a first report of injury is completed and medical treatment is obtained if required.

H. Any canine contact made with members of the Takoma Park Police Department resulting in injury will be documented in an interdepartmental memorandum to the Patrol Commander and maintained in K9Track.

09. Canine Team Restrictions

A. Canine handlers will not transport prisoners when the canine is kenneled in the vehicle.

B. Canine teams **shall not** be used for crowd control.

C. Canine teams will not be deployed to search for animals

D. A canine **shall not** be used to search an individual for narcotics.

10. Canine Handler Qualifications/Selection

A. Minimum Qualification

1. Applicant must be a Private First Class or higher with at least 3 years of law enforcement experience,
2. Own or rent a home capable of accommodating a 6' x 12' kennel, and,
3. Demonstrate the ability to provide for 24/7 care and maintenance of a canine as needed.

B. Selection Process for Canine Handler Position

1. Memorandum of interest from qualified employee, should include why you are best qualified for the position and list any specialized training in relation to canine, you have received.
2. Supervisor endorsement.
3. Panel interview to include at least one subject matter expert.
4. The panel will complete a:
 - a. Memo of recommendation and forward it to the Chief of Police, or
 - b. The panel may not recommend a candidate(s) to be select from the candidates or may decide that none of the candidates be selected.
5. The Chief of Police, or his designee, will make the final selection

11. Canine Selection/Training/Certification

A. All canine and handler training will conform to the standards established by the Montgomery County Police Department's Canine Training Section.

1. Canine teams will attend basic obedience training, patrol canine tactics, and narcotics detection with the Montgomery County Police Department, Canine Section.
2. Upon certification, canine teams will receive an additional ten hours of training a month for maintenance training and another ten hours a month for scent detection training.
3. All training records will be kept in K9Track and available for review by the Patrol Commander who shall approve all training notes.

B. Canine handlers will immediately notify the Patrol Commander via the Chain of Command of failing to pass the standards during a certification test.

1. Canine teams that fail re-certification will have no more than 30 days to remediate and pass the certification test.
2. If a canine fails to pass the scheduled certification test within 30-day time period, that canine will be deactivated.

C. Selection of a New Canine

1. The newly selected canine handler or existing handler (if it is a replacement dog) will work with the Patrol Commander and a Montgomery County Police, Canine Section Trainer or another departmentally approved canine trainer to select a new dog.
2. Once a canine is identified as appropriate for procurement, a memorandum will be forwarded to the Chief of Police to include the vendor's proposed purchase agreement and canine specifications.

D. All canine teams designated for patrol function shall receive training through the Montgomery County Police Department, Canine Section.

1. All new canine teams shall attend, successfully complete and demonstrate proficiency in all training requirements as recommended by Montgomery County Police, Canine Section and as required by certification.
2. Each patrol canine will be trained at a minimum and show proficiency in basic obedience, suspect apprehension to include a verbal recall and a verbal bite release, tracking, building and area search, evidence search, agility and any other training determined to be in line with best practices and certification requirements.
3. The canine handler will be trained to safely deploy and care for their assigned canine in accordance with departmental policy and applicable law.

E. Maintenance Training- The TPPD Canine Unit will strive to comply with or exceed accepted industry best practices.

1. The canine team will comply with or exceed industry best practices which are currently 16 activities/hours per month of maintenance training.

2. At least 10 hours of the required 16 activities/hours of training per month will be scheduled as supervised maintenance training with the Montgomery County Police Canine Section.
3. Obtain annual certifications in their respective discipline; the Patrol Commander will attend all annual certifications.
4. At least 10 hours of maintenance training for detection disciplines will be conducted once every 4 weeks.
5. Any remaining hours needed to comply with the 16 hours per month (specific discipline or general training) minimum will be completed by the handler during normal duty hours and documented as unsupervised maintenance training. The Montgomery County Police training Sergeant may stipulate the activities or skills addressed during the unsupervised training.
6. The Patrol Commander will maintain records of all training received by the canine team in the K9Track Program, as well as all certifications held by the canine team.
7. If during canine training the canine team is notified that its services are needed for an incident, if possible, training will be suspended, and the canine team will respond.
8. It is the responsibility of each canine handler to inform the Montgomery County Police Training sergeant and the Patrol Commander via the Chain of Command of any problems they may be experiencing with their canine. The training sergeant will work with the handler to resolve the issue and will enter documentation into K9Track regarding the issue and outcome of training.

F. Maintenance Training Documentation

1. Maintenance training notes will be detailed and accurately reflect the exercise performance and progress of each canine team.
2. Supervised maintenance training notes will be completed in the K9Track program jointly by the Montgomery County Police Canine Section training coordinator and each canine handler assigned to the training day. Completed training notes will be reviewed and approved by the Patrol Commander.
3. Canine handlers are required to complete their maintenance training notes, both supervised and unsupervised, in a timely fashion. Notes will be submitted for approval no later than 2 working days after the training date.

G. Annual Certification/Registration

1. The Patrol Commander will be responsible for the canine registration to include:
 - a. The Maryland State Police Licensure Division
 - b. The City of Takoma Park
2. Patrol Dog Certifications for each discipline and completed according to the current applicable requirements, policy and laws.

3. The handler is responsible for maintaining certifications for each discipline and producing the document for court or other administrative proceedings. Copy of each certificate will be retained by the Patrol Commander and entered into K9Track.
4. Any canine who fails any certification will have no more than 30 days to remediate and pass the certification test. If a canine fails to pass the scheduled certification test within 30-day time period, that canine will be deactivated. The canine handler's supervisor will make an immediate notification to the Patrol Commander who will determine if further training will be conducted or if the dog will be removed from service.

12. Housing and Basic Care:

A. TPPD canines live with their assigned canine handlers at the handler's primary residence. The canine is the sole property of Takoma Park Police Department.

1. Canine handlers are expected to treat their canine in a humane fashion. Any officer who mistreats, abuses, or mishandles their dog in any way will be subject to disciplinary action and possible removal of the animal.
2. When off duty, the canine shall be housed in the kennel provided by the city unless under the direct control and supervision of the assigned canine handler. In the event of extreme weather, the canine may be sheltered inside the canine handler's residence and contained in an approved crate or kennel. Each canine handler is responsible for the actions of their canine at all times.
3. City provided housing for the canine will be subject to an on-site annual inspection by the Patrol Commander or Shift Supervisor. After an agreed upon inspection date and time is established, the handler will make sure that the person completing the inspection has access to the property.
4. No dog or animal, other than the city owned canine will be placed in or tied to the kennel.
5. Canine handlers will feed their assigned canine(s) to maintain optimum health and working weight. The canine handler's supervisor will monitor body condition and weight during regular maintenance training sessions. The city will provide or approve all dog food offered to the department canines.
6. Canines will have access to fresh and clean water at all times.
7. Canine handlers will dispense all required preventative medications (e.g. heartworm and flea and tick products) and supplements as directed by the department approved veterinarian to their assigned canine.

8. Canine handlers will physically inspect their dog daily for injury, sores, illness, and parasites. Any injury, illness or condition not requiring veterinary treatment will be reported to the officer's supervisor during regular canine handler's normal work hours and documented on an interoffice memorandum in K9Track.
9. Canine handlers will groom their canine regularly to remove dead hair, dirt and debris. The canine will be bathed as necessary to ensure good hygiene.
10. Canine handlers will not use TPPD canines for breeding purposes.
11. Canine handlers will not allow members of the public or minor children (under the age of 18) to feed their assigned canine.
12. Canine handlers will ensure that the canine is wearing a police ID collar at all times when the canine is away from the canine handler's primary residence.

B. Canine Boarding/Contracted Vendors

1. When a canine handler is on vacation and away from their home, the canine will be housed as an appropriate boarding facility authorized and under contract with the City of Takoma Park.
2. The canine handler will advise the Patrol Commander of the dates and location where the canine is being boarded.
3. All boarding invoices will be submitted electronically as soon as possible to the Administrative Services Commander to enter and file.
4. Canine handlers will provide the boarding facility with a supply of dog food sufficient to the feed the canine for the duration of the boarding as well as medications and supplements as prescribed.

C. Veterinary Care

1. It is the policy of the canine unit to maintain all department owned canines in optimum health and working form. The City of Takoma Park is responsible for veterinary expenses incurred for department owned canines.
2. Canine handlers will schedule their assigned canine for an annual physical with the veterinarian under contract. Notice will be provided via email to the Patrol Commander via the Chain of Command to include the date and time of the appointment. If an appointment is cancelled, the officer will provide a reason to the Patrol Commander for the cancellation.

3. For regular or emergency medical care occurring during normal business hours, canine handlers will use a veterinarian under contract.
4. If an injury, illness, or condition occurred after normal business hours and delaying care would significantly affect the health of the canine, treatment may be provided by an emergency veterinarian hospital.
5. In the event of an emergency, the health and wellbeing of the canine take priority. Notification to the canine handler's supervisor will be made as soon as practical but no later than 1 hour after arrival at the treating facility.
6. In the event that the canine is referred to, or requires the services of, a veterinary specialist, the canine handler must receive authorization from the Patrol Commander before making an appointment.
7. Canine handlers will notify the Patrol Commander via the Chain of Command at the completion of all veterinary visits and provide the following information:
 - a. Diagnosis
 - b. Treatments administered
 - c. Procedures recommended or completed
 - d. Medications administered or prescribed
 - e. Any follow up requirements

13. Canine Retirement

- A.** The decision to retire a department owned canine is the responsibility of the Chief of Police or his designee. Input from the affected canine handler, Patrol Commander, and veterinary recommendations shall be considered when making this decision. The standard criteria are provided below but is not as exhaustive list. Any issue that permanently affects the operational capacity of a canine may trigger a retirement.
- B.** The maximum service age for a patrol canine is 10 years. Any extension beyond maximum service age must be approved by the Chief of Police or their designee.
- C.** Any canine sustaining injury or illness that compromises their ability to perform their duties will be evaluated for retirement.

- D.** Any canine failing to perform to minimum certification standards may be considered for retirement. Any canine that displays failures during deployments may be considered for retirement.
- E.** Other issues, condition, or circumstances that render the canine ineffective or unsuitable for continued service may trigger a consideration for retirement. Other issues, conditions, or circumstances that affect the handler may trigger a retirement for the handler's assigned canine.
- F.** When a canine has been deemed "retired", the canine handler shall first be afforded the opportunity to adopt the canine. Depending on the circumstance the department reserves the right to deny the ability for the handler to adopt the dog.
- G.** Effective July 1, 2021, Maryland Senate Bill 156 authorized reimbursement to individuals who take possession of police service dogs, as specified, for reasonable and necessary veterinary treatment.
- H.** The bill establishes limits on the amount of reimbursement and allows State and local law enforcement agencies to accept donations to meet the requirements.

14. Reporting Requirements and Statistical Reporting:

A. The post incident documentation of a canine deployment requires the justification for all field deployments and/or applications of force, the collection of witness statements, photographs, evidence, and related reports. All canine seizures will be recorded in BlueTeam by the canine handler's supervisor and routed to the Patrol Lieutenant with copies sent to the Operations Captain, Support Services Captain, and Deputy Chief for review. All canine deployments regardless of a seizure or canine contact will be recorded in a Usage Report, Incident Report, Command Information Summary Report, Use of Force Memorandum (if a seizure or canine contact occurs), and Shift Report prior to the end of the officer's and supervisor's tour of duty. All seizures shall be documented in accordance with the departments use of force policy and reporting procedures specified in this policy.

B. To ensure compliance with Departmental regulations, statistic shall be maintained in K9Track Program on the following items:

1. All Deployments
2. Usage reports
3. Training reports and statistics
4. Tracks
5. Apprehensions including seizures, non-seizures, and canine contacts
 - a. Intentional and
 - b. Unintentional

6. Demonstrations
7. Searches including article, area, building and vehicle
8. Narcotic searches including finds and amount seized
9. Injuries to canine and/or handler
10. Humanitarian searches
11. Perimeter support
12. Veterinarian, vaccinations, equipment and supplies expenditures
13. Rendering of Mutual Aid

B. The Patrol Commander shall forward the required reports and statistics to the Operations Bureau Commander. The Operations Bureau Commander shall prepare quarterly and annual reports for the Chief of Police on the canine teams' statistics. These statistics shall include the number of deployments, call outs, apprehensions, seizures, injuries involving canine and/or handler, amounts and types of contraband recovered, training hours and cost associated with veterinarian visits, equipment and supplies.

15. Issued Canine Equipment and Uniforms

- A.** The issued uniform for canine handlers will be a two-piece black (BDU) utility shirt and pants. The following regulations will govern the wearing of the BDU uniform:
1. Canine handlers will wear the uniform of the day, unless otherwise directed.
 2. The uniform will be worn in accordance with current department requirements.
 3. The BDU uniform pants will be bloused. The uniform of the day for canine handlers will be black (BDU) utility uniform with a black undershirt.
 4. A subdued "K9" patch will be issued for use only on the subdued, black BDU duty uniform.
 5. No subdued "K9" patch will be placed on any uniform that has normal, colored patches including the Class A.
 6. The subdued patch may be worn on black nylon sweaters and black duty uniform jackets.
 7. Upon transfer from the Canine Unit, officers are no longer permitted to wear the unit canine patch.
 8. Canine handlers will be issued the following specialized equipment.
 - a. Glock 17 9mm semi-automatic handgun (light mounted if qualified)
 - b. Thigh Rig/Holster
 - c. 15ft Nylon Leash
 - d. 20 ft Nylon Leash
 - e. 30 ft Nylon Leash
 - f. 6 ft Leather Leash
 - g. Harness
 - h. Pinch Collar
 - i. Cobra-lock Leather Collar

- j. Remote Electric Collar & Transmitter
- k. Water Bowl
- l. Food Bowl
- m. Grooming Brush
- n. Tug Toy
- o. Ball on Rope
- p. Waist Lead
- q. Muzzle
- r. First Aid Bag
- s. Soft Sleeve

16. Vehicles- Vehicles assigned to canine handlers will be operated in accordance with the current PPV policy (G.O. 426). Canine fleet vehicles will be maintained by each individual assigned officer.

Canine vehicles will be equipped with side and rear window tint and equipped with an appropriate container to house the canine.

Canine vehicles will be equipped with a remote monitoring system. Canine handlers are required to test this system weekly (manufacturer recommendation). And the test outcome recorded in K9Track. Malfunctioning units will be immediately reported to their supervisor.

Canine vehicles will be kept in a clean and sanitary condition. Vehicles will be inspected monthly in accordance with General Order 311.

Canine handlers will ensure that the remote monitoring system is activated, and the canine has adequate ventilation any time the canine is in the vehicle. Handlers will not depend solely on the remote monitoring system and will physically monitor their vehicle at least every ½ hour to avoid injury or death to the canine in the event of a mechanical failure. Canines will not be left unattended in vehicles with an inoperable or malfunctioning system.

Canine handlers will secure the vehicle kennel door to prevent the canine from gaining access to the passenger compartment when the vehicle is unattended.

Canine handlers will lock all doors of the vehicle anytime it is left unattended.