# **DUBLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

#### SECTION: M-005 POLICE SERVICE DOGS

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#### N/A

# **I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline mandates relating to the use of Law Enforcement service dogs.

**II. POLICY**

The Dublin Police Department recognizes the value of law enforcement service dogs as a part of the overall law enforcement operation. Canines are used for several purposes including prevention and detection of crime, tracking persons (criminal and non-criminal), narcotic detection, community policing, and all other services as directed by this agency. The use of drug-detecting canines, in some instances may be deemed unreasonable. In recognizing the rights of citizens, the policy of this agency is to ensure that canine use is balanced against the rights of all persons.

All members of this agency, regardless of their assignment, may make requests for canine service through the supervisor of the canine unit or his /her designee. This does not preclude the use of another agency’s canine which is more readily available to provide service when a delay may threaten public safety or in the case of narcotics detection delay may prolong the stop of the individual in such a way that the delay may be deemed unreasonable.

**III. PROCEDURE**

A. General Operational Procedures:

1. Handlers shall be available for re-call as determined by the Chief of Police or their designee.

2. Members who are selected for a position as a canine handler have the responsibility of caring for their assigned canine. During such handling and care:

(a). All handlers are to ensure that the general health, hygiene, and care of their assigned canine are properly maintained and that periodic veterinary exams are provided in accordance with appropriate schedules.

(b). All handlers will groom their canines as needed.

(c). Handlers shall conduct daily physical examinations of their canine when practical to determine any injuries, health issues, ticks, or flea infestations.

(d). An agency supervisor, designated by the Chief of Police, may visit the handler’s home to inspect health, sanitation, and security conditions for the canine. The visit will be scheduled with the handler.

(e). In cases of extended absence, or scheduled leave, of the canine handler where the handler is unable to provide the basic care for the canine, the canine may be kenneled at a facility approved by the Chief of Police or their designee.

(f). Any changes in the living status of the handler that may affect the health, welfare, safety, or security of the canine or others coming into contact with the canine shall be reported to the Chief of Police.

3. The handler shall be permitted to use the department-issued vehicle for the transportation, for the care and maintenance, of the canine.

B. Response to Requests for Canines:

1. Upon arrival at a request for service, the canine handler shall be responsible for determining if the circumstances of the event justify the use of a canine.

2. The handler will make the final determination on the deployment of the canine. A supervisor responsible for the overall event may direct that a canine not be deployed, however, the supervisor shall not order deployment where the handler determines that such deployment is inappropriate.

3. A canine handler shall not knowingly deploy their canine beyond the capabilities of the canine team’s (handler and dog) training and certification.

C. Canine Deployment as Response to Resistance:

**The Dublin Police Department shall not utilize the canine as a response to resistance.**

*Note: This policy will not preclude officers from using any available resource(s) in self-defense or in the defense of another from physical assault which is likely to cause great bodily harm or death.*

D. Evidence Searches:

1. Canines may be utilized in an attempt to recover discarded items related to crime which may be needed as evidence for criminal prosecution.

2. In cases where a canine is to be utilized, first responding officers shall be instructed to immediately set up a perimeter around the area to be searched. Officers should be instructed to stay out of the area so as to avoid cross-contamination of the suspect’s scent thereby diminishing the effectiveness of the canine.

3. First responders should be specifically instructed not to enter the area.

4. First responders shall exhaust all reasonable efforts to determine if innocent persons, including officers, are within the area to be searched.

5. All searches will be systematically conducted as determined by the handler.

6. The handler will decide if the search will be conducted on-lead or off-lead, based on the particular circumstances of the search.

E. Open Field Searches

1. Open field searches may be conducted when it is believed that a suspect has fled into a field or wooded area when the following two criteria are met:

(a) The officer(s) have probable cause to arrest the subject for a criminal offense.

(b) The seriousness of the offense suspected at the time the canine is used.

(c) Whether the subject poses a threat to the officer or others.

(d) Is the subject actively resisting or attempting to evade arrest by flight?

2. In cases where a canine is to be utilized, first responding officers shall be instructed to immediately set up a perimeter that minimizes the ability of the subject to escape but also keeps officers on the outside of the area to be searched so as to avoid cross-contamination of the suspect’s scent thereby diminishing the effectiveness of the canine.

(a). First responders should be specifically instructed not to enter the area to be searched.

(b). First responders shall exhaust all reasonable efforts to determine if innocent persons, including officers, are within the area to be searched.

(c). All searches will be systematically conducted as determined by the handler.

(d). Searches will be conducted on-lead unless the safety of the canine would be jeopardized, and/or tactics would dictate otherwise as determined by the handler.

F. Tracking

1. Tracking is utilized in a multitude of law enforcement events including missing persons, suspects who have fled, lost children, etc.

2. The initial responding officers shall be directed to immediately establish a perimeter.

3. First responders should be specifically instructed not to enter the area to be searched to avoid cross-contamination of scent which may diminish the effectiveness of the canine unless emergency circumstances dictate otherwise;

4. First responders shall exhaust all reasonable efforts to determine if innocent persons, including officers, are within the area to be searched;

5. Tracking shall be conducted on lead at a sufficient length to be determined by the canine’s handler. The handler will also determine whether or not a backup member officer will be utilized on the track based on the particular circumstances of the event.

6. Announcements should be used when dealing with a lost or missing person including calling out the person’s name and advising that the canine is looking for them.

G. Scent Searches:

1. To the extent that such specialized trained canines are available, canines may be used for conducting scent searches for such items as:

(a) Explosives

(b) Cadavers

(c) Narcotics

(d) Accelerants (Fires Cases)

2. All searches will be systematically conducted as determined by the handler.

3. The handler will decide if the search will be conducted on-lead or off-lead, based on the particular circumstances of the search.

4. Motor Vehicle Narcotics sniffs-These searches will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of this agency’s motor vehicle search policy and the following:

(a) The handler shall determine that the area where the vehicle is located is safe for canine deployment taking into account the safety of the officers, the canine, the occupants of the vehicle, and the motoring public.

(b) The handler shall ensure that all occupants are removed from the vehicle to a tactically safe location prior to the exterior narcotics sniff.

(c) The handler shall ensure that the canine is controlled during the sniff so as to ensure that the dog has no ability to obtain physical access to the interior of the vehicle.

H. Community Relations/Demonstrations:

1. All requests for canine demonstrations shall be directed to the officer in charge of the Canine Unit who shall then seek approval of the Chief of Police or their designee (which may be the unit commander) for approval to conduct the demonstration.

2. Handlers conducting demonstrations shall ensure that their appearance as well as that of the canine and the equipment utilized reflects professionally upon the agency. The presentation must be professional and conducted in a manner that reflects the agency’s professionalism.

3. Handlers shall maintain control of the canine at all times.

4. Audience participation shall be restricted, and any contact with the canine shall be at the discretion of the handler who is in the best position to know the canine’s reaction to others. The audience shall be instructed that law enforcement canines are working dogs and can be dangerous due to their specialized training.

5. Handlers shall not roughhouse, tease, or agitate the canine unless such conduct has been expressly authorized by the Chief of Police for purposes of the demonstration.

E. Emergency Circumstances:

1. In a circumstance where the canine handler suffers a personal injury while on duty, the handler shall, if physically capable, request emergency medical assistance as needed, as well as the presence of necessary support officers and a supervisor. If physically able to do so, the handler shall ensure that his or her canine is properly attended to and secured. If available, another handler shall be called to the scene to assist in securing the injured handler’s canine. If another handler is not available, an officer or supervisor who is most familiar with the particular canine shall be called to the scene to assist in securing the canine.

2. In the event that a handler sustains an incapacitating injury, the supervisor, or other available officer, shall ensure by all means necessary that the handler safely receives emergency medical treatment and transport to an appropriate medical facility. The supervisor, or where no supervisor is available, an officer will then take the necessary steps to secure the handler’s canine.

(a). An unsecured canine and a seriously injured handler present an emergency that must be addressed with operational dispatch. In order to safely secure the canine, the supervisor, or where no supervisor is available an officer, who is most familiar with the particular canine shall respond to the scene and render assistance.

(b). If the canine is still in the handler’s vehicle, and if the vehicle is operable, the supervisor should attempt to enter the vehicle or seek another handler to enter the vehicle and close the partition between the front and rear seat if the partition is open and then transport the canine utilizing the handler’s vehicle to a safe location.

(c). If the canine is not in the handler’s vehicle and the vehicle is operable, the supervisor, another handler, or another officer may attempt to secure the canine by driving the handler’s vehicle close to the canine and opening the rear door. This may prompt the canine to enter the rear of the vehicle as a matter of routine. In the event the canine enters the vehicle, the canine can then be transported to a safe location in the handler’s vehicle.

(d). In extreme situations, the supervisor, another handler, or where neither is available, another officer may secure the canine by use of a snare pole or request the assistance of the closest animal control officer.

F. Medical Care Following a Canine Use of Force:

1. A canine has the potential to injure persons in a number of ways. The injury may occur during a criminal apprehension when the canine bites the subject. Injury may also occur when a canine knocks a person to the ground. These contacts may be intentional or unintentional.

2. When an in-custody suspect has been bitten by a canine, the handler or another officer on scene shall render aid. In the case of a bite wound, the subject shall be transported to the nearest hospital for medical evaluation and treatment. If the in-custody suspect refuses treatment that refusal shall be documented in the police report.

3. When a canine injures any person, who is not in custody, the handler will render aid and request a medical response by an EMT. If the injured person refuses medical treatment by the EMT it shall be documented in the police report.

4. A supervisor will be notified when an injury occurs and will respond to the scene. Photographs of the injuries will be taken and preserved. An investigation shall be initiated by the supervisor.

5. Where the injury is the result of intentional use of force, the Department Response to Resistance form will be completed and an after-action review conducted in accordance with the Department’s Response to Resistance policy

G. Veterinary Care: All non-emergency veterinary care shall be coordinated by the Chief of Police through a pre-approved veterinary facility. In an emergency, an effort shall be made to bring the canine to the pre-approved facility, however, where such an effort will jeopardize the life of the canine, the handler shall take steps necessary to get the canine to the most urgent facility.

1. All records of medical treatment shall be maintained by the canine handler and filed within an agency file, stored at the agency for such records.

2. In the event that a canine is deemed unsafe, the team will be immediately taken out of service. As soon as operationally feasible, the canine shall be evaluated by the pre-approved veterinary facility. If the canine is deemed no longer suitable for service the canine shall be retired.

H. Certification and Training:

1. All canines and handlers assigned by this agency shall, at a minimum, meet all certification requirements as required by the State of Georgia.

2. Training: All canines and handlers assigned by this agency shall, at a minimum, be trained in accordance with the training provided by the State of Georgia.

I. Documentation of Canine Usage:

1. All canine deployments shall be documented in agency reports of events. This shall include events where a suspect submits upon warning of the canine’s presence.

2. All canine usage related to response to resistance shall be the subject of a response to resistance report which includes all required documentation.