



SUBJECT: CANINE UNIT	POLICY NO: 620.1-620.5
DISTRIBUTION: Patrol and Detention	NO. PAGES: 8
EFFECTIVE DATE: November 16, 2022 REVISION DATE: October 1, 2027	
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: None	

620.1 PURPOSE:


The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the deployment of Yuma County Sheriff's Office ("Office") narcotic detection canines, the responsibilities of Office canine handlers, security and safety, and prohibited practices.

620.2 POLICY:

Canines will be used in accordance with the procedures set forth in this policy. Unless specifically prohibited in this policy, canines may perform any duties that they are certified to perform. Office canines and canine handlers are trained and certified through the United States Border Patrol (USBP).

620.3 DEFINITIONS:


- A. Approved Canine Training:** Basic canine handler training provided by certified canine instructors, in which students/canines are trained and certified under the training philosophy and minimum standards that are accepted and approved by USBP.
- B. Bite Incident:** Any incident in which an Office canine inflicts or is alleged to have inflicted physical injury by biting a person other than a canine handler or a canine instructor.
- C. Canine Deployment (Deployment):** The movement of a canine team to a field location, operation, or scene, for the specified activity or duty of that team.
- D. Canine Handler:** A Deputy or Detention Officer who is assigned the collateral duty to handle an Office canine and has satisfactorily completed USBP approved canine handler training and possesses current certification with an assigned canine.
- E. Canine Team:** A canine handler and a canine that have satisfactorily completed the training and certification process together and are assigned to field operations.

Approved by: 
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff
Date: November 16, 2022

- F. **Certification:** The process of reviewing an Office canine and/or a canine handler and validating the fact that the canine and/or the canine handler has the ability to meet the minimum standards of competence required to be met in an operational capacity.
- G. **Decertification:** The removal of a canine team from enforcement activities due to the failure to meet minimum training or certification requirements.
- H. **Detection Canine:** Any canine the Office has received, approved, accepted and certified for training or field use in the detection of targeted odors, controlled substances, etc.
- I. **Maintenance Training:** Official on-duty time devoted to maintaining/enhancing a canine team's proficiency.
- J. **Recertification:** The process of reaffirming that a canine and/or canine handler has demonstrated the ability to meet minimum standards of competence for operations required by USBP.
- K. **Remedial Training:** Official on-duty time devoted exclusively to addressing and correcting deficiencies in a canine team
- L. **Scope of Training:** The curriculum of training received by the canine team from qualified canine instructors.

620.4 PROCEDURE

- A. **Canine Handler Responsibilities** - The general duties of a canine handler consist of, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Upon arrival of the canine team at a scene, the Officer in control will furnish information about the situation to the canine handler. The final decision shall be the responsibility of the canine handler to determine whether the circumstances justify the legal use and deployment of the canine.
 - 2. Supervisors shall not order a canine handler to use a canine in a manner that violates any portion of this policy.
 - 3. The use of the canine will be limited to the scope of training received by the canine team and will be consistent with Office policies and procedures.
 - 4. Canine handlers will be subject to callouts at any time.
- B. **Training**
 - 1. Each Office canine team will conduct maintenance training for a minimum of sixteen (16) hours per month.
 - 2. Failure to meet the minimum training requirements may result in canine team decertification.

Approved by: 
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff
Date: November 16, 2022


3. A decertified canine team may be required to complete forty (40) hours of remedial canine training and a recertification test in order to be used in an enforcement capacity.

C. Recertification

1. All active Office canines and canine handlers must be recertified at least annually by a USBP canine instructor.
2. In the event an Office canine team fails to recertify because of noted handler deficiencies, the canine team will receive up to forty (40) hours of remedial training conducted by a canine instructor.
 - a. Upon completion of the remedial training, the canine team will be retested by a different canine instructor than the one who administered the first exam.
 - b. Failure to recertify during the second attempt because of noted handler deficiencies will result in a team separation.
3. If failure occurs due to canine deficiencies, the USBP canine instructor will notify the National Canine Program Manager. The National Canine Program Manager will determine the appropriate corrective actions.

D. Kenneling


1. Whenever practicable, Office canines shall be kenneled with their handlers. However, Office canines may be kenneled away from their handlers where deemed essential by the Sheriff or their designee.
2. The Office canine shall be kenneled in an Office issued kennel while at the canine handler's residence.
 - a. The kennel must be approved to meet USBP standards.
 - b. The kennel shall be secured with a lock when the canine handler is not present.
 - c. The canine handler is the only person authorized to feed, care, and maintain the Office canine at the canine handler's residence.
 - d. The canine handler may allow the Office canine to socialize with members of the household or visitors for short periods under the direct supervision of the canine handler.
 - e. The canine supervisor will be responsible for conducting at-home orientation for household members of all current and newly assigned canine handlers to discuss the parameters of this policy and the expectations of the agency while canine is residing in the home. Should the dynamics of the handler's household change, the canine supervisor shall conduct an at-home orientation for new household members.

Approved by: 
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff
Date: November 16, 2022

3. Canines may be kenneled at an Office approved commercial facility, if approved by the Sheriff or their designee.
4. If the canine handler is off duty or out of town for an extended period, the Office canine may temporarily be housed with another Office or USBP canine handler.
5. A USBP certified canine instructor will conduct periodic kennel inspections at an employee's residence, provided the canine is kenneled at home. During periodic inspections, the canine handler must be present.
6. Canine handlers will inspect canine equipment and request replacement of worn or defective equipment.
7. Canines will remain secured in the Office issued kennel when handlers are not in the immediate area.
 - a. Breaks outside of the kennel will be monitored by the canine handler at all times.
 - b. At no time will the canine be loose without the canine handler being present.
8. The canine is a police service dog and shall be recognized as such. It is not a family pet and shall not be allowed to have unlimited access to the canine handler's residence. At no time shall a canine be taken on day trips, vacations, or transported in personally owned vehicles.

E. Operational Handling Criteria

1. Canines will be deployed in accordance with their current canine training and in accordance with the handler's judgment for the specific deployment, inclusive of the handler's operational environmental considerations.
2. Canine teams may conduct searches of dwellings and curtilage only pursuant to a warrant unless a warrant exception applies.
3. Canine teams may search passenger compartments of vehicles and common carriers only after all reasonable measures have been taken to remove passengers known to be in the passenger area or have departed from the passenger area.
 - a. The canine handler will obtain the consent of the common carrier, or its agent, or a warrant exception applies.
4. Detection canines will generally be deployed on-leash for operational security. Exceptions may be made in the following circumstances in which the handler determines that off-leash deployment may be safe and appropriate:

Approved by: 
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff
Date: November 16, 2022

- a. Interior vehicle searches;
- b. Interior building searches;
- c. Open field searches;
- d. Special circumstances as determined by the canine handler.

F. Canine Vehicles:


1. While in an Office assigned canine vehicle, the canine will be isolated from the driver's area and will be secured in a proper manner.
2. The canine areas in the vehicles will be free of unsecured items.
3. Canine vehicles will not be used to transport persons in custody except in exigent circumstances.
4. Canine handlers will inspect their canine equipment and request replacement of worn or defective equipment.
5. The use of a canine vehicle for other than canine transport requires prior approval by the Sheriff or their designee.

G. Canine Injury:

1. The canine handler shall be responsible for the health and welfare of the Office canine.
2. In case of any injury causing a temporary or an extended incapacitation of the Office canine, the canine handler will report the incident to their immediate supervisor as soon as practical.
3. The canine handler will arrange for a veterinary examination as soon as possible. Veterinary results and recommendations will be forwarded to the Bureau Commander as soon as practical.
4. In the event of a temporary incapacitation of the Office canine requiring at-home observation and care, and upon the recommendation of a veterinarian, the canine handler may be allowed to perform their normal assigned shift at their residence or alternate worksite to care for the assigned canine with concurrence from the Bureau Commander.

H. Bite Incident:

1. Any incident in which an Office canine bites a certified canine handler or canine instructor, during normal rewarding practices or training exercises, will not be reported as a bite incident.
2. The canine handler will report any bite incident to their immediate supervisor.
3. Medical treatment will be offered to any injured party without exception.
4. Yuma County Risk Management shall be notified of all bite incidents.

Approved by: 
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff
Date: November 16, 2022

5. The canine handler will ensure that all bites and injuries and alleged bites and injuries are photographed immediately following first aid treatment and documented in a Case Report.
6. Any Office canine involved in a bite incident must be immediately removed from service pending determination of the reason for the bite.

I. Missing Canine:

1. If it is determined an Office canine is missing, the canine handler will promptly search the immediate area of last contact. If the canine is not recovered within thirty (30) minutes, the canine handler will immediately notify their immediate supervisor.
2. The handler will provide the location of the disappearance and any immediate, pertinent information that may lead to the recovery of the canine.
 - a. Arrange for and coordinate an area search using all available on-duty personnel.
 - b. Notify local law enforcement and animal control agencies of the loss and furnish a photograph and description of the canine.
 - c. Ensure that if the canine is not located, the canine handler and/or other employees conduct a daily physical check of all local animal control office(s) for an appropriate period.
 - d. Only trained canine personnel will recover the canine, unless immediate aid or action is required.


J. Canine Death:

1. Upon the death of an Office canine, the canine handler will notify their immediate supervisor.
2. An investigation as to the circumstances of the canine's death will be conducted.
3. The canine's remains will be buried or cremated and disposed of appropriately.

K. Acquisition - All Office canine selections and acquisitions will normally be attained through the USBP Canine Training Program procurement protocol.

L. Canine Handler Selection:

1. Deputies and Detention Officers who have completed their probationary period are eligible to serve as Office canine handlers.

Approved by: 
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff
Date: November 16, 2022


2. In order for a Deputy or Detention Officer to be able to participate in the canine program, their residence must have adequate security and space as approved by the USBP sector canine coordinator for placement and reasonable delivery/installation of a USBP approved kennel.
3. The selection process and any additional minimum qualifications will be set forth by the Bureau Commander.

M. Canine Retirement:

1. Upon retirement of an Office canine, the canine handler will be given the opportunity to take ownership of the canine.
2. In the event the canine handler declines ownership of the canine, the canine will be available for adoption through other means as approved by the Sheriff or their designee.

N. Prohibited Practices:


1. Violation of a prohibited practice may result in the termination of the assignment as an Office canine handle.
2. The following precautions for public contact must be adhered to without exception:
 - a. At no time should the Office canine be left unattended with infants or small children;
 - b. The canine handler should never perform any public demonstration off-leash;
 - c. During any contact with the public, the handler should always be aware of and control the dog's head;
 - d. The handler should never allow the dog to jump on any person;
 - e. The handler should never leave the dog unattended and chained or tied to an object.
3. Office canines will be used for narcotics detection purposes only.
 - a. Canine handlers will not knowingly allow any other person to agitate the canine or administer aggression training.
 - b. Canine handlers will not use their canines, or knowingly allow them to be used, to intimidate any person.
4. Canine teams will not conduct personal searches of persons or conduct school searches for drug enforcement purposes.
5. Searches for other agencies or private concerns will not be conducted without supervisory approval.

Approved by: 
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff
Date: November 16, 2022

6. Canine handlers will not knowingly allow their Office canines to be used for breeding purposes.
7. Canine handlers will not leave an Office canine unattended in any vehicle for a length of time that will cause either discomfort or injury to the animal.
8. Canine handlers will not leave an Office canine unattended in a kennel for a length of time that will cause either discomfort or injury to the animal.
9. Office canines will not be taken into public buildings unless required for official duties or as otherwise necessary.
10. Canine handlers' family members will not care for, handle, or feed Office canines in the absence of the handler.
11. In the event the canine handler is gone for more than a ~~twenty~~four (24) hour period, the canine handler will ensure that the canine is kenneled in accordance with section D of this policy.
12. Canine handlers will take reasonable measures to ensure that their canines are not detrimental to their family's safety, safety of others, or the safety of other animals.

620.5 AMENDMENT:

This policy is subject to amendment, revision and/or rescission as required.

Approved by: 
Leon N. Wilmot, Sheriff
Date: November 16, 2022