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## PATROL

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### K-9 UNIT

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**Purpose:** This directive aims to establish policy and procedures for the use of department K-9 teams, an inspection of K-9 housing facilities, handler evaluation, and K-9 reassignment.

**Policy Statement:** The department's goal is to use the unique abilities of properly trained police dogs to supplement law enforcement services to the public. Duties include tactical response and support, building searches, tracking, narcotics detection, explosive detection, and a high visibility deterrent. Highly trained and well-supervised handlers operate strictly with law enforcement's highest ethical standards and safety practices during canine deployments.

**Summary of Changes:** Number 10 (Canine Qualifications and Selection) was added to the policy.

#### Procedure:

##### 1. K-9 Unit Operations

- 1.1 The use of K-9 teams is authorized for the following purposes: [CALEA 41.1.5a]
  - 1.1.1 Tracking suspects or missing persons, locating lost or abandoned articles, or hidden instruments of a crime.
  - 1.1.2 Searching buildings where a possible break-in is indicated or where a suspect may be hiding, provided such structures are believed to be clear of innocent people.
  - 1.1.3 To apprehend resisting or fleeing suspects,
  - 1.1.4 Protecting police officers or other persons from injury or death, or
  - 1.1.5 Assisting in the service of narcotics search warrants and other narcotic-related activities.
- 1.2 Any use of the K-9 teams not specifically authorized above will **not** commence without prior approval of the K-9 Unit Supervisor or an on-duty supervisor.
- 1.3 K-9 teams will **not** be used for the following: [CALEA 41.1.5a]
  - 1.3.1 K-9 teams will not conduct demonstrations without prior approval from the Patrol Division Commander.
  - 1.3.2 Off-leash searches of schools or other areas where it is believed the person(s) being searched for are juveniles. Additionally, K-9s will not be used when dealing with individuals that lack the mental capacity to understand their actions unless the situation they have created suggests a probability of violence.
  - 1.3.3 K-9 teams will not conduct searches of people for contraband.
  - 1.3.4 A K-9 will not be used to sniff a vehicle after a traffic stop without reasonable suspicion or consent. However, this does not preclude using a K-9 team for an unobtrusive vehicle sniff if the violator has not been released.
  - 1.3.5 An off-lead search of a business in which no forced entry has been found.
- 1.4 K-9 handlers will document all duty-related activity on the handler's training/deployment record. Handlers will complete an incident report or supplemental report if the usage results in an arrest, seizure, apprehension, etc. K-9 handlers will forward a copy of the report to the K-9 Unit Supervisor. [CALEA 41.1.5i]
- 1.5 There will be no teasing, petting, or feeding of any K-9 by any person without the expressed consent of the handler. K-9 handlers will report any such activities immediately to the on-duty supervisor.
- 1.6 To aid and assist the operations of the K-9 Unit, officers will follow the following conditions concerning building searches:
  - 1.6.1 The initial officer arriving on the scene will decide from the physical evidence if a K-9 can assist.
  - 1.6.2 If the K-9 team is called to assist at the scene, the initial responding officer will not enter the building to be searched but will secure the perimeter and allow no one to enter until the arrival of the K-9 team.
  - 1.6.3 At least two (2) officers will accompany a handler inside a building during a search. The officers are responsible for room-to-room security when the handler looks for changes in the dog's behavior.
  - 1.6.4 In the event an apprehension is made at the scene, custody of the person apprehended will be the responsibility of the primary officer.

- 1.7 To aid and assist the operations of the K-9 Unit regarding area searches, officers will follow the following conditions:
- 1.7.1 When an area search for a person is requested, and the K-9 team is called to the scene, the officer will protect the area where the suspect was last observed.
  - 1.7.2 When a K-9 is being used on a track, no more than two (2) officers will accompany the handler. Their responsibilities are to assist the handler and to provide security.

## **2. Responsibilities**

- 2.1 K-9 handlers will be responsible for the K-9's actions unless acting upon a direct order.
- 2.2 K-9 handlers will immediately notify an on-duty supervisor when their K-9 bites or causes injury to any person, whether on or off-duty, regardless of the incident's location.
- 2.3 Written reports of K-9 bites or other injuries inflicted because of K-9 aggression will be submitted by K-9 handlers as follows:
  - 2.3.1 Incidents occurring on or off-duty, inside or outside the City of North Little Rock, will be reported on an incident report or supplemental report form.
  - 2.3.2 Bites or injuries from K-9 aggression occurring in other jurisdictions will also be reported to that jurisdiction's law enforcement agency. The K-9 officer will complete a general report with this agency and include the other jurisdiction's report number.
  - 2.3.3 Incidents of injury resulting from K-9 aggression will be investigated following Policy Directive 11-2 (*Reporting Response to Resistance*).
- 2.4 K-9 handlers will present their K-9 to the department's veterinarian for examination at least once (1) a year.
- 2.5 K-9 handlers will maintain a kennel that is both secure and sanitary at their place of residence.
- 2.6 If, upon inspection by the K-9 Unit Supervisor, the kennel is in unacceptable condition, the supervisor will advise the handler of the deficiencies.
  - 2.6.1 The handler will be given five (5) days to correct the condition of the kennel.
  - 2.6.2 At the expiration of the five (5) days, the supervisor will again inspect the kennel.
  - 2.6.3 If the deficiencies still exist, the supervisor will reevaluate the officer's position as a K-9 handler.
- 2.7 If a K-9 handler cannot perform their duties for an extended period, the supervisor will decide the possibility of reassignment for the K-9.
- 2.8 K-9 handlers will report all injuries and illnesses suffered by their K-9 to the K-9 Unit Supervisor. They will be responsible for seeking proper medical attention for the animal.
- 2.9 K-9 handlers will immediately report all emergency illnesses, and injuries to the department used veterinarian. Non-emergency cases will be reported to the veterinarian as soon as possible. [CALEA 41.1.5g]
- 2.10 Upon the death of a K-9, the assigned handler will take the following action:
  - 2.10.1 Immediately notify the K-9 Unit Supervisor of the death.
  - 2.10.2 Immediately contact the veterinarian to determine whether a necropsy is necessary and, if so, where the officer should take the K-9.
  - 2.10.3 If the K-9's death resulted from a line of duty injury, off-duty accident, or cannot be attributed to a veterinarian-diagnosed illness or disease, a supervisor will notify the Investigation Division. The location will be treated like any other crime scene until processed.
- 2.11 K-9 handlers will do all agitation or training under the direct supervision of trained personnel or the designated trainer.
- 2.12 K-9s will not be physically abused.
- 2.13 K-9 handlers and supervisors are subject to drug testing at the discretion of any supervisor or Division Commander.

## **3. K-9 Supervisors**

- 3.1 The K-9 Unit Supervisor will see that each K-9 handler is furnished a kennel at the handler's residence. The supervisor will inspect each kennel to ensure it meets all security and sanitary requirements.
- 3.2 Additionally, the K-9 Unit Supervisor will inspect a handler's kennel when:
  - 3.2.1 The veterinarian feels that a K-9's poor condition is the result of poor kenneling conditions,
  - 3.2.2 A handler moves to a new location,
  - 3.2.3 A handler receives a new K-9, or
  - 3.2.4 Complaints are received from neighbors or other citizens.
- 3.3 The K-9 Unit Supervisor and K-9 trainer are responsible for the following:
  - 3.3.1 Apprising other officials of K-9 team activities and abilities,
  - 3.3.2 Monitoring all equipment assigned to the K-9 Unit,
  - 3.3.3 Assisting handlers with any K-9-related problems, and

3.3.4 Maintaining statistical evaluation information.

3.4 Upon implementing any personnel action that permanently removes an officer from the duties of a K-9 handler, the K-9 Unit Supervisor will evaluate the officer's K-9 to determine whether the dog should be reassigned or retired from service.

#### **4. Training**

4.1 The canine and K-9 handlers will be trained as a team in an introductory course of instruction for the intended use of the canine, e.g., patrol tactics, bomb detection, drug detection, etc., and certified before being placed in operational status. [CALEA 41.1.5b, d]

4.1.1 K-9 teams will be re-certified on an annual basis. [CALEA 41.1.5e]

4.1.2 K-9 teams will be required to train eight hours, twice monthly. [CALEA 41.1.5d]

4.2 The K-9 Unit Supervisor will maintain training records on all K-9 teams and forward K-9 training reports to the K-9 officers' Division Commander. Any K-9 team that goes beyond 12 weeks without receiving the required in-service training will be considered uncertified for street duty.

4.2.1 The K-9 Unit's Supervisor will maintain training records for the duration of a K-9 team's working relationship. Any change to the team, such as assigning a new handler to the K-9, will void the previous training records. [CALEA 41.1.5f]

4.3 The K-9 Unit Supervisor and the trainer will be responsible for:

4.3.1 Ensuring that all K-9 teams are scheduled for in-service training, and

4.3.2 Monitoring K-9 teams and scheduling retraining in areas as needed.

4.3.3 Routinely inspect the certified scent used for training possessed by the K-9 officers to ensure adequate training supplies.

#### **5. Division, Unit, and Shift Commanders**

5.1 Division, unit and shift commanders will consult with the handlers before directing the tactical use of K-9 teams. In instances where the capability of an individual K-9 is a significant consideration, they will be guided by the handler's opinion on the ability of the K-9 to perform the required task.

5.2 If the Narcotics Unit K-9 is unavailable, Narcotics Unit Supervisors will arrange for the assistance of other departmental K-9 teams before serving a search warrant for narcotics.

5.3 Requests for the use of departmental K-9 teams for assistance in areas outside the City of North Little Rock will be approved by one of the following:

5.3.1 The K-9 Unit Supervisor,

5.3.2 Division Commander, or

5.3.3 The on-duty supervisor.

5.4 A training log will be made by the K-9 officer, detailing the circumstances and results of using the K-9 outside the City of North Little Rock. The handler will forward a copy of the report to the K-9 Unit Supervisor and the Division Commander.

5.4.1 When possible, one North Little Rock Patrol Officer should accompany a K-9 Unit when assisting another agency during an area search. A SWAT officer, if available, should assist, considering all team members are trained to operate with the K-9 teams and understand roles and responsibilities. This procedure is unnecessary when an outside agency request is solely for narcotics searches.

5.5 A shift/unit commander will ensure that any person bitten or injured by a K-9 is given immediate medical attention.

5.6 Shift supervisors will ensure a statement is taken from any person bitten or injured by a K-9. In addition, a supervisor will take photographs of the injury before the person is released from custody.

5.7 If a handler is incapacitated, an on-duty supervisor will see that another handler and the K-9 Unit Supervisor are notified to come and secure the K-9.

5.7.1 A K-9 snare pole will be kept in each K-9 vehicle to control the K-9 until another handler or the K-9 supervisor arrives at the scene to secure the animal.

5.7.2 If a delay further endangers the handler's life, officers at the scene will use whatever means necessary to secure the K-9, bearing in mind that they must justify their actions.

5.7.3 Because controlling the K-9 is complicated, and anyone who tries to secure the K-9 may be bitten, officers must take caution with whatever action is decided.

5.7.4 Destruction of the K-9 will be considered only as a last resort. The K-9 Unit Supervisor will be notified as soon as possible if a situation of this nature should develop.

## **6. Work Schedule**

6.1 The work schedule will consist of a 40-hour workweek of which handlers will devote 36 hours to police duties. The remaining 4 hours are intended to compensate the officers for dog-related care, which handlers cannot reasonably perform during the 36 hours of police duties.

## **7. Canine Vehicles**

7.1 Patrol officers assigned a police dog are issued a unit modified to accommodate the animal. However, in all other respects, canine vehicles are standard police units of the type used by general police officers. Consequently, no unique training is required to operate the vehicle.

7.2 All K-9 vehicles must be equipped with a remote door opener and a temperature warning and release system (Hot Dog System).

## **8. Equipment [CALEA 41.1.5h]**

8.1 Canine handlers will be provided with the following items to utilize and care for department canines:

8.1.1 Leash and collar;

8.1.2 Training lead;

8.1.3 Muzzle;

8.1.4 Training aids;

8.1.5 Grooming supplies; and

8.1.6 Food supplies.

8.1.7 Any other equipment identified as critical to the unit's success with approval from the Division Commander.

## **9. Handler Qualifications and Selection**

9.1 Requirements to be a K-9 officer include but are not limited to the following: [41.1.5c]

9.1.1 Have a minimum of two years of law enforcement experience with the department;

9.1.2 Pass a K-9 Unit physical abilities test;

9.1.3 Reside within thirty-five (35) miles from department headquarters or their assigned area, whichever is farthest, and at a residence suitable for the installation of a kennel;

9.1.4 Is considered a member in good standing at the department;

9.1.5 Pass an oral interview or other testing process required by the Chief of Police; and

9.1.6 Commit to remaining the canine's handler for the remainder of the animal's working life.

## **10. Canine Qualification and Selection**

10.1 Canines purchased from commercial vendors must be certified healthy and physically fit by the vendor/breeder for police service.

10.1.1 The commercial vendor shall present all relevant medical records certifying the animal's health and fitness at the time of purchase. [CALEA 41.1.5b]

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