



RICHMOND POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER



Subject: POLICE CANINE UTILIZATION		Chapter 7	Number 10	Pages 9
References: CALEA Standards: 41.1.5a	Related Orders: 01- 01, OM 11-01	Effective Date: 09/29/2026 Revised by: Review Prv. Rev. Date: 05/25/2023		
<i>If any provision of this General Order conflicts with any collective bargaining article, the collective bargaining agreement shall govern.</i>				
Chief of Police: 				

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish the procedures and guidelines governing the use of trained Police Canine Teams.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGE

This policy is due for triennial review. Changes have been added to differentiate between narcotic canines. Additional notes on documenting canine bites have been listed. New language is denoted in bold and italicized text.

III. POLICY

It is the policy of the Richmond Police Department to utilize trained police service canines and sworn police officers trained as canine handlers for the prevention and detection of narcotics, criminal activities, the apprehension of suspects in serious offenses, tracking, general evidence gathering, building searches and the protection of police officers and citizens from serious injury or death.

[CALEA 41.1.5a]

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this General Order. Failure to comply will result in appropriate corrective action. Responsibility rests with the Division Commander to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated.

This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as **creating** a higher standard of safety or case in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

V. DEFINITIONS

- A. POLICE SERVICE CANINE – Any canine utilized by the Department.
- B. PATROL CANINE – Police service canine trained/certified to search buildings, articles, areas, track suspects, and assist in the apprehension of suspect(s).
- C. NARCOTIC DETECTOR CANINE – Police service canine trained/certified to search and alert/respond to the odor of illegal substances.
- D. EXPLOSIVES/WEAPONS DETECTOR CANINE – Police service canine trained/certified to search and alert on certain odors of explosive substances.
- E. WEAPON/SMOKELESS DETECTOR CANINE – Police service canine trained/certified to search and alert the odor of smokeless powder.
- F. BLOODHOUND – Police service canine trained/certified to trail a specific person after being scented to the individual.
- G. SCENT ARTICLE – An item used by the bloodhound team to get the smell of a specific individual that would allow the bloodhound to obtain their specific scent prior to starting a trail in search of the specific individual.

VI. PROCEDURE

[CALEA 41.1.5a]

A. Proper Utilization of Patrol Canine Teams:

The utilization of Patrol Canine Teams is authorized without supervisory approval in the following situations:

1. Dispatch – To respond on all alarm calls, insecure buildings, burglary in-progress calls and any assist calls that are dispatched.
2. Tracking Operations – In felony and violent or potentially violent misdemeanor situations, to locate suspects, missing persons, stolen/abandoned property and instruments of a crime. During tracking operations, officers should avoid excessive noise, walking around and the use of flashlights while the canine is tracking. Doing this can decrease officer safety and possibly contaminate the area.
3. Building Searches – To search buildings believed burglarized and buildings utilized by a felony suspect to escape police apprehension.
 - a) Police officers shall not search a building if a Patrol Canine Team is available. The area may become inadvertently contaminated. Utilizing the patrol canine team to conduct building searches minimizes the probability of injury to an officer.
 - b) The patrol canine handler must be reasonably certain that the building being searched is clear of innocent persons.

- c) The patrol canine may not be used “off lead” where there may be a small child, mentally incompetent person, or physically incapacitated person present, or where there may be hazards to the canine (broken glass, dangerous chemicals, etc.).
- 4. Search and Seizure – Patrol canines may be utilized to locate evidence during a search. The evidence may be seized when all legal requirements for such search and seizure have been met.

NOTE: The use of a narcotic detector canine is neither a search nor seizure under the 4th Amendment of the United States Constitution. The detection of the drugs by the canine may, however, supply the necessary probable cause for the search. The United States Supreme Court has held that the 4th Amendment does not require reasonable articulable suspicion to justify using a narcotic detector dog to sniff a vehicle during a lawful traffic stop. Illinois v. Caballes, 543 U.S. 405 (2005).

- 5. Felony Arrest – The patrol canine may be utilized to affect the arrest of any person the patrol canine handler has probable cause to believe has just committed, is committing or is attempting to commit a serious or violent offense, and it reasonably appears that the use of other means would result in serious injury to the officer, suspect or other persons.
 - a) If no other means of apprehension appear possible, the patrol canine may be used to affect the arrest or apprehend any fleeing suspect feloniously assaulting or attempting to assault the patrol canine handler, other police officers or other persons.
 - b) The patrol canine may be used to affect the arrest or apprehension of any suspect who is armed or believed to be armed and poses an immediate threat to any police officer or citizen.
- 6. Misdemeanor Situations – When requested, a patrol canine handler will respond, evaluate the situation and determine if the use of the patrol canine is appropriate. No aggressive use of the canine will be permitted in misdemeanor situations, unless the canine handler has evaluated the severity of the crime and determined the suspect to be an immediate threat to other police officers or citizens.

NOTE: In all instances or circumstances where the police patrol canine is used to affect an apprehension, only that degree of force necessary may be used. The canine must be called off, or otherwise restrained, as soon as the suspect is in custody or no longer poses a serious threat.

B. Proper Utilization of Narcotic Detector Canine Teams:

[CALEA 41.1.5a]

- 1. The Canine Unit has **two** types of narcotic detector canines – ***Single Purpose and Dual Purpose*** Passive Response.
 - a) ***Single Purpose*** Passive Response – The passive response narcotic detector canine responds to the odor of an illegal narcotic by alerting. The areas of utilization for the passive response narcotic detector canine are: couriers

(people), buildings, vehicles, planes, ships, storage facilities, and any other area where illegal narcotics can be hidden.

NOTE: The canine will sniff a vehicle's interior upon canine handler discretion.

- b) ***Dual Purpose Passive Response – A dual purpose canine is certified in Patrol and Narcotics, and as such, may not be utilized as a courier canine. All other areas listed above may be searched by a Dual Purpose narcotic canine. Extra precaution shall be used when utilizing a Dual Purpose narcotic canine to ensure the canine does not come into direct contact with citizens while being utilized in its narcotic canine capacity.***

- 2. Narcotic detector canines should never come in direct contact with any illegal substance. In open areas, caution shall be used where drugs are usually quickly cast aside to avoid arrest; the canine could easily bite into and/or ingest the drug before the handler is aware of the detection, which could result in the death of the canine.

NOTE: Narcotic detector canines may be used to search open fields based on the advice of the handler.

C. Proper Utilization of Explosive/Weapons Canine Team: [CALEA 41.1.5a]

- 1. The explosive/weapons detector canine is trained in the detection of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
- 2. The explosive/weapons detector canine can be utilized to search the exterior of vehicles, mail, parcels, cargo, freight, luggage, public transportation vehicles, buildings, lockers and open areas.

NOTE: The explosive/weapons detector canine cannot be utilized to establish probable cause for a search warrant strictly based upon a positive alert by the canine. The substances that this canine is trained to detect are LEGAL to possess in most situations.

- 3. The Explosive/Weapons Detector Team will be utilized to search for explosive devices at the scene of a bomb threat.
 - a) The explosive technicians will be called when the Explosive/Weapons Detector Team locates a device.
 - b) The explosive technicians must be called in situations relating to suspicious packages.

NOTE: The Watch Commander or ranking officer on the scene will notify ***the Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response (DECPR)*** to have the Explosive Ordnance Unit (EOU) and explosive/weapons

detector canine called out for all suspect packages and explosive incident scenes where an initial detonation has occurred. EOU personnel along with the explosive/weapons detector canine will check for the presence of secondary devices, unexploded material and assist with post-blast investigation. For reasons of security and to reduce radio traffic on the scene, this communication should be made by telephone only. ***See Operating Manual, 11-01, Bomb Squad Manual for additional information.***

- c) An explosive technician will respond to all bomb threats or explosive-related incidents with the Explosive/Weapons Detector Team.
 - 4. The Explosive/Weapons Detector Team can be utilized at crime scenes involving the use of firearms. The canine's ability will enhance the time and efficiency of the search for trace firearm evidence.
 - 5. The Explosive/Weapons Detector Team will be utilized to search schools and other institutions for firearms.
- D. Proper Utilization of the Weapons/Smokeless Canine Team: [CALEA 41.1.5a]
- 1. The weapons/smokeless detector canine is trained in the detection of [REDACTED] only.
 - 2. The weapons/smokeless detector canine can be utilized to search the exterior of vehicles, mail, parcels, cargo, freight, luggage, public transportation vehicles, buildings, lockers and open areas.
 - 3. The Weapons/Smokeless Detector Team can be utilized at crime scenes involving the use of firearms. The canine's ability will enhance the time and efficiency of the search for trace firearm evidence.

NOTE: The weapons/smokeless detector canine cannot be utilized to establish probable cause for a search warrant strictly based upon a positive alert by the canine. The substances that this canine is trained to detect are LEGAL to possess in most situations.

- E. Proper Utilization of the Bloodhound Team: [CALEA 41.1.5a]
- 1. Trailing Operations – Bloodhounds can be used in felony, misdemeanor and missing person situations, to locate a specific suspect or missing person when there is a scent article available which is known to have been worn or have been in the possession of the suspect or missing person.
 - 2. The Bloodhound Team is trained in trailing only and is not suitable for use in any other endeavor or task. The Bloodhound Team cannot be used for building searches for suspects or crowd control. The bloodhound has absolutely no patrol training.

NOTE: The Bloodhound Team, while trailing a violent or potentially violent party, must be accompanied by a cover officer(s) and/or a Patrol Canine Team depending on the particular situation.

- F. Use of Police Canine Teams in Special Circumstances:

Some circumstances warrant special consideration prior to the utilization of a Patrol Canine Team. These incidents shall be evaluated and the order to use the patrol canine shall be made by a supervisor. These circumstances may be, but are not limited to, the following:

1. To detect and subdue a barricaded subject who may pose a serious threat to life and/or property.
2. If a canine handler is ordered by any supervisor to perform duties in conflict with prescribed training techniques, rules, regulations or directives, the canine handler shall immediately bring the conflict to the attention of the issuing supervisor. The ***Officer-in-Charge*** (OIC) of the Canine Unit shall be notified of the conflict as soon as possible.

G. Requests for Use of Police Canine Teams:

1. Outside of the City:
 - a) All requests for use of a police service canine outside of the City must be approved by the OIC of the Canine Unit. If the OIC of the Canine Unit is not on-duty at the time of the request, the Watch Commander on duty at the time may approve the request. Full and immediate consideration shall be given to all requests.
 - b) All canine teams, when authorized to provide service to jurisdictions outside of the City, shall be governed by the same rules, regulations and directives of the Richmond Police Department, as if performing that same service within the City.
2. During normal business hours and after business hours within City Limits:

Officers needing the service of a police service canine shall have the ***DECPR*** check the Canine Unit line-up.

Note: Any request made must specify what type of search is needed to receive the proper canine team.

H. Responsibilities of Canine Handlers at the Scene of a Crime or Other Incident:

1. Canine handlers shall be responsible for the tactical use of their police service canine unless otherwise directed by a police supervisor. Canine handlers are reminded of the sometimes inflammatory nature of the mere presence of police service canines.
2. The canine handler shall act in accordance with state, federal and local laws, Department training, rules and regulations and directives in the handling and deployment of the canine. The canine handler must be fully prepared to justify his/her actions and the actions of the police service canine.
3. When a Patrol Canine Team arrives on the scene where other officers are present and are having difficulty controlling the situation, the patrol canine handler shall not

intervene with the patrol canine unless it appears necessary to prevent injury to the officers or citizens.

4. Patrol canine handlers shall keep their patrol canine on lead and under control at all times while on-duty except when justifiable situations arise, as directed in this order.
5. When the use of the police service canine is imminent, it shall be the responsibility of the canine handler to announce him/herself, so other officers and citizens will be aware of the presence of the canine team.
6. Before releasing a canine for the purpose of locating a suspect, the handler shall call a warning to the effect that the police canine will be released if the person does not make himself or herself visible and come forward. Verbal notice will be given at least two (2) times prior to the release of the canine (based on the situation), giving the suspect reasonable time to surrender. These canine warnings will not be given when the handler has reason to believe the suspect(s) is/are armed with a firearm **or other weapon likely to cause serious harm.**

I. Reporting of Police Service Canine Bites:

1. Canine handlers shall immediately notify the OIC of the Canine Unit and the Watch Commander when their Police Service Canine actually or allegedly bites an individual, whether the bite results in injury or property damage or not, whether on-duty or off-duty and regardless of the location of the incident.
2. In incidents of Police Service Canine bites to an individual, the canine handler and/or the police supervisor present shall encourage the individual to seek medical attention and shall render any reasonable assistance. The canine handler shall complete the PD-004, Canine Bite Report, and all other reports that are required for canine bites to individuals in custody. The police supervisor shall also complete the same required reports with photographs of the subject's injuries. In the event a Police Service Canine bites a citizen who was not the suspect of the crime in which the canine was deployed, the PD-004 shall still be completed. **If** the person bitten by the canine does not wish to give their name, be photographed, and/or seek medical attention, **officers** shall **note this information** in detail on the form.
3. In incidents of Police Service Canine bites to any individual **whether** in custody or not, **if** to be arrested, the individual shall be transported to a treating medical facility's emergency room for treatment. The following shall be compiled by the OIC of the Canine Unit **or on-duty supervisor**, with the assistance of the canine handler:
 - a) Three (3) copies of the PD-035, Use of Force Report, one (1) copy submitted to the Major of Support Services, one (1) copy submitted to the Internal Affairs Division and one (1) copy submitted to the OIC of the Canine Unit.
 - b) A PD-118, **Complaint Officer** Statement Form shall be completed by any police officer who witnessed the bite. A PD-118 shall also be completed for instances where there are witnesses and/or persons who were on the perimeter who heard the canine warnings.

- c) The canine supervisor ***or on-duty supervisor*** shall take digital photographs of the injuries sustained and the original photographs shall be e-mailed with the PD-004, Canine Bite Report to the Internal Affairs Division. Printed copies of the digital photographs shall be attached to the additional PD-004 forms.
- d) Photographs must be taken even if there are no visible signs of injury to a complainant.
- e) All required reports are to be submitted prior to the end of the handler's tour of duty. ***In the event the Canine Unit supervisor is unable to respond, the on-duty supervisor shall complete the PD-035. If the on-duty supervisor is unable to make a determination due to the specialized nature of a patrol canine bite, the on-duty supervisor will forward the packet to the Canine Unit supervisor and/or SOD Tactical Lieutenant. The Canine Unit Supervisor and/or SOD Tactical Lieutenant will review all documents and Body-Worn Camera (BWC) footage and make a determination. This determination may be attached to the PD-035.***

J. Injured Canine Handler Procedures:

The close bond that exists between police canines and their handlers can result in the canine preventing anyone from approaching to assist the injured canine handler.

- 1. Do not approach the canine handler or attempt to render first aid, if the canine has adopted a protective stance, unless death of the handler is imminent.
- 2. In the event the canine handler's death is imminent, officers should make every attempt to rescue the officer, without injury to the canine if possible.
- 3. Assisting officers should call for medical assistance for the fallen canine handler.
- 4. Assisting officers should allow the canine handler to maintain control of the dog.
- 5. Attempt to locate an on duty canine handler already working or from another department to assist in controlling the dog.

K. Injured Canine Procedures:

- 1. If the canine is injured during deployment, the handler will determine the canine's ability to continue with the mission at hand. The OIC of the Canine Unit shall be notified of all canine injuries.
- 2. If the canine is injured while off-duty, it will be the handler's responsibility to seek appropriate medical care for the canine.

L. Death of Canine:

- 1. In the event of the death of a department canine:

- a) The canine's handler will complete the PD-118 *with* the circumstances of the canine's death;
- b) The OIC of the Canine Unit will conduct an investigation of the incident; and,
- c) A necropsy, if indicated, will be performed by a qualified veterinarian. The postmortem report will be included in the case file of the incident. If it is determined that the death was the result of a criminal act, appropriate steps will be taken to bring charges against the perpetrator.

M. Reporting of Canines Activities:

- 1. The Richmond Canine unit utilizes the [REDACTED] as its primary means of record keeping for training and deployments. Members of the Canine Unit will maintain and print out hard copies of training notes for their assigned canine as backups. In the event [REDACTED] is *temporarily* inaccessible, the following Canine Unit reports and forms can be utilized until the information can be entered into [REDACTED]. Once [REDACTED] is accessible, the information must be entered in a timely manner.
 - a) K9-01, Utility Canine Report
 - b) K9-02, Narcotic Detector Utilization Report
 - c) K9-04, Bloodhound Utilization Report
- 2. All Police Canine Teams (handlers and dogs) shall receive 30 hours of re-training per month.

VII. FORMS

- A. PD-004, Canine Bite Report
- B. PD-035, Use of Force Report
- C. K9-01, Utility Canine Report
- D. K9-02, Narcotic Detector Utilization Report
- E. ***PD-003, Crime Scene Contamination Report***
- F. K9-04, Bloodhound Utilization Reports
- G. PD-118, Complaint Officer Statement Form