

PALM BEACH GARDENS POLICE DEPARTMENT		
CANINE UNIT FUNCTION		
POLICY AND PROCEDURE 3.2.4		
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PURPOSE: To establish the function and deployment of a canine unit. This policy and procedure establishes guidelines for canines as a use of force.

ASSIGNED TO: Patrol Operations Bureau

POLICY: It is the policy of this department to deploy canine units for use in criminal apprehension, search for suspect(s), evidence detection, and for promoting favorable public relations. Canine “bite” usage is limited to instances where the use of such force shall be in accordance with federal and state law, legal guidelines and this policy and procedure.

PROCEDURES

1.RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CANINE UNIT

- a. The canine unit is available on a twenty-four (24) hour on-call basis. If a canine unit is needed and one is not on shift, it is the responsibility of the on-duty supervisor to authorize the call-out.
- b. The K-9 handler is responsible for the housing, care, maintenance and arranging for any veterinary needs of their assigned canine and all equipment assigned to the position.
- c. The K-9 handler is responsible for the usage and control of their assigned canine. If the handler should become disabled and/or unable to function as a handler (injuries, etc.) another department K-9 handler will be called in to control the canine.
- d. When a canine vehicle is parked at a scene or at the station, officers are not to go near the vehicle without the knowledge and consent of the handler. In addition, when a canine unit is in the field, other officers are to stay clear of the unit unless directed to act by the handler.
- e. After a search has been completed, the canine handler will report to the supervisor or the officer in charge of the scene the results of the search before anyone leaves their assigned position on the perimeter.

2.RESPONSIBILITY OF PATROL SUPERVISORS

- a. The decision to use a canine unit should be made as soon as possible.
- b. The officer in charge at the scene must notify the on-duty supervisor when circumstances indicate the need for a canine unit to respond.

- c. The supervisor must solicit any and all known information of the incident to determine the need for a canine unit to respond. If the circumstance is a request to assist a neighboring agency that does not have a canine unit, the supervisor must also approve the call out of a canine unit.
- d. The on-scene supervisor may call a canine unit to a scene, and may determine that the canine unit will be of value and will be used. However, the final decision to use the canine is up to the canine handler.

3.LAW ENFORCEMENT K-9 APPLICATIONS

In all situations, when the canine is on the bite, the canine will be removed from the bite as soon as the handler perceives that the suspect is no longer a threat.

The K-9 can be deployed for the following:

- a. Locating Criminal Suspects:
 - i. Area search within a perimeter area can be performed when it is believed that a suspect is contained within that area and a starting point for a trail cannot be located.
- b. Area Search Off Lead - Off lead area searches will be conducted only when the handler has a reasonable belief that the suspect presents a threat of serious bodily injury or death to the handler, other officers, or civilians.
- c. Area Search On Lead - An on lead search will be conducted when searching for suspects that have committed misdemeanor crimes.
- d. Locating Lost Persons:
 - i. The canine will be worked on lead when searching for lost or missing persons.
- f. Building Searches:
 - i. Absent exigent circumstances a minimum of two (2) announcements should be given prior to all building searches. The announcement will consist of: "This is the Palm Beach Gardens Police Department Canine Unit. I am giving you the opportunity to surrender yourself before I release a police dog which will bite you, identify yourself now."
 - ii. There will be an interval of at least thirty (30) seconds between each announcement and the release of the canine.
 - iii. When searching multi-level buildings, the announcement should be made on each floor or in each new area as the search progresses.
 - iv. Building searches will be conducted off lead when a handler has specific reasonable grounds to believe that the suspect presents a threat of serious bodily injury or death to the handler, other officers or civilians.
- g. Narcotics and explosives searches.
- h. Evidence searches.
- i. Crowd control: The K-9 shall not be utilized without authorization of a supervisor.
- j. Any other use approved by a supervisor.

4.OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

- a. Deployment and Use
 - i. The K-9 unit shall be deployed providing optimal response throughout Palm Beach Gardens Police jurisdiction.
 - ii. Request from outside agencies shall be forwarded to the on duty supervisor for consideration.
- b. Responsibilities of Patrol Officers and Supervisors:
 - i. It shall be the responsibility of the first officer arriving at an incident to evaluate possible use of a K-9 unit. Request for a K-9 unit must be made through the shift supervisor.
 - ii. The first officer to arrive at an incident should attempt to establish a perimeter and minimize contamination of air or ground scent unless precluded by the need for medical assistance, immediate apprehension or other factors.

- iii. Upon arrival the K-9 handler shall evaluate the facts concerning the incident and determine the type of crime before utilizing the canine. A Patrol Bureau supervisor should also respond to the scene.
- iv. When a K-9 unit tracks a suspect, an additional officer may be assigned to accompany the handler.
- v. Use of K-9's during an apprehension will be classified as an application of reasonable force; therefore, the handler will use good judgment when the possibility exists that an injury will be sustained by the suspect.
- vi. The handler will not use the K-9 in a bite situation for any "non-violent" misdemeanors. This does not include incident of assault upon an officer at the time of apprehension, such as a suspect resisting arrest, or those incidents where the canine is assaulted and is defending itself.
- c. Whenever a police canine apprehends and bites any person, the following procedures shall be followed:
 - i. The K-9 handler shall ensure that proper medical attention is administered to anyone injured by their canine.
 - ii. All injuries shall be examined by the K-9 handler and documented in a "Response to Resistance" report. The K-9 handler will notify the shift supervisor.
 - iii. All injuries sustained shall be examined and attended to by a physician at a medical facility.
 - iv. The injuries will be photographed and documented in the officer's offense report and use of force report. The K-9 handler will complete and forward a copy of the reports to the Chief of Police via chain of command.
- d. Public Relations Exhibitions:
 - i. Canine demonstrations and public exhibition requests shall be directed to and coordinated by the K-9 Supervisor. Unauthorized exhibitions shall not be conducted by police K-9 units.

5.TRAINING

- a. Completion of a minimum of basic canine training course shall be required before K-9 units are deployed for official law enforcement use unless otherwise determined by the Chief of Police.
- b. Total control, dual personality and proficiency in obedience, agility, search, apprehension and training shall be demonstrated prior to official assignment and use of K-9 units.
- c. In-service training will be conducted on a routine basis to maintain canine's proficiency unless otherwise directed by the K-9 unit supervisor.
- d. Each K-9 unit will complete an annual certification evaluation.
- e. All K-9 training records will be forwarded to the training division

6.RECORDS KEEPING

- a. The Internal Affairs authority, unless otherwise directed by the Chief of Police, shall record each incident where a canine is used.
 - i. The Chief of Police will review all use of force reports regarding the use of canines.
- b. Each handler will keep and maintain a "K-9 Log" book and will enter all pertinent information relative to their dog and its activities.
 - i. The K-9 log will be kept up to date and be available for supervisory review upon request.
 - ii. The log will include training records, performance records, and changes in the dog's demeanor or eating habits and other pertinent facts.
 - iii. The K-9 log is the property of the department, and shall be turned over to the department at the time the canine is retired from service.
- c. All medical and health records for each individual dog will be maintained by the canine dog's veterinarian.

7.EQUIPMENT USED IN CANINE RESPONSE

- a. The following equipment may be used in varied situations responded to by the canine unit to include, but not be, limited to:
- i. K-9 Patrol Harness;
 - ii. Agitation Harness;
 - iii. Nylon and Pinch collars;
 - iv. Nylon Leads, 6 ft., 12 ft., and 15 ft.;
 - v. Officers (K-9 handlers) assigned to the K-9 unit will wear the approved department issued tactical uniform and equipment.

GLOSSARY

Canine (K-9) - A dog which has been procured and specifically trained to execute a number of specific task which make use of canine speed, agility and sense of smell for law enforcement purposes.

Canine (K-9) Officer (Handler) - An officer specifically trained in the care, handling, and training of a dog for law enforcement use.

Canine (K-9) Unit - An assigned handler and their law enforcement trained dog.

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