

**LANCASTER POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL**

Effective Date August 19, 2015		Amended Date August 11, 2022		Directive 6.02.1	
Subject Police Canine Teams					
Reference			Approved Chief of Police		
Distribution All Personnel City Manager City Attorney		TPCA Best Practices Recognition Program Reference 7.35		Review Date June 3, 2019	Pages 8

This Operations Directive is for internal use only and does not enhance an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as a creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this Operations Directive, if proven, may only form the basis for a complaint by this Department, and only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

SECTION 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the Lancaster Police Department's policy regarding the management and tactical deployment of Police Canine Teams for operational purposes.

SECTION 2 POLICY

Because of their superior senses of smell and hearing and their physical capabilities, the trained police service dog is a valuable supplement to the Lancaster Police Department. However, utilization of police service dogs requires adherence to procedures that properly control their use-of-force potential and that channel their specialized capabilities into legally acceptable crime prevention and control activities.

SECTION 3 DEFINITIONS

- A. **Police Canine Team:** A Police Officer and their assigned police canine.
- B. **Deployment:** When a handler makes use of his assigned canine in an official capacity.

SECTION 4 PROCEDURES

A. ASSIGNMENT OF POLICE CANINE TEAMS

- 1. The Police Canine Teams shall be assigned duties by the Chief of Police that enhance the department.
- 2. Police Canine Teams should not be assigned to calls that will take them out of service for extended periods of time unless absolutely necessary.
- 3. A Police Canine Team shall neither be assigned a specific beat nor dispatched as primary units to low priority non in-progress calls unless needs dictate otherwise.

B. INTERACTION OF POLICE SERVICE CANINE WITH OFFICERS / PUBLIC

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1. No member of the public shall be allowed to "pet" or interact with a Police Service Canine without the permission of the handler. If the handler allows interaction from the public, they will be in immediate proximity and have the canine short leashed.
2. Lancaster Police Department personnel are also required to have the handler's permission to interact with the canine and shall not engage in any type of "horse play" that would agitate the animal unless directed by the handler during training.
3. Police Department employees shall not feed the canine any type of food or treats unless the handler gives the employee permission.

C. SELECTION OF POLICE SERVICE CANINE HANDLERS

1. The following are the suggested qualifications for Lancaster Texas Police Officers who apply for the assignment of Police Canine Handler:
 - a. reside in an adequately fenced, gated, single-family, residence;
 - b. live within fifteen (15) minutes travel time from the Lancaster, Texas city limits;
 - c. agree to be assigned to the position for a minimum of three (3) years providing that the canine remains in service;
 - d. have three (3) years' experience with the Lancaster Police Department;
 - e. be in good physical condition; able to withstand jogging for long distances and maneuver through dense wooded areas, cross creeks and ditches, and work outdoors in inclement weather conditions;
 - f. must be able to lift and carry the weight of the average police service dog (80-100 pounds);
 - g. demonstrate character traits such as, maturity, patience, initiative, flexibility, dependability, enthusiasm and a high work ethic;
 - h. must have an above average attendance record;
 - i. agree to work flexible hours and be on call;
 - j. ability to successfully complete a prescribed canine handler course.

D. HANDLER COMMAND RESPONSIBILITY

1. Only the assigned handler will be allowed to command the police canine.
2. Should the assigned handler be injured or otherwise unable to command the canine, another canine handler from this or another agency, a family member of the handler, or animal control should be contacted to take control of the canine. All reasonable steps should be taken to prevent injury to the police canine unless the injuries to the handler are life threatening.

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E. UNIT SUPERVISION

1. The police canine handler shall report to a supervisor of a higher rank as determined by the Chief of Police. The handler will keep their supervisor informed of training and deployments with a monthly report. The handler will report any emergencies or problems to this supervisor at the first available time.

F. HANDLER AVAILABILITY AND COMPENSATION

1. The handler shall be available for call-out under conditions specified by this policy or as needed by the department.
2. The Police Service Canine handler shall be compensated for time spent in the care, feeding, grooming, and other needs of the dog as provided in the Fair Labor Standards Act. The compensation shall be prescribed in the agreement between the Chief of Police and each handler.

G. VEHICLE

1. The canine unit will be kept clean, inside and out, and its equipment functioning at all times. Making sure the vehicle is available for routine vehicle maintenance and equipment update or repairs is the responsibility of the handler.
2. It will also be the responsibility of the handler to ensure that all narcotic drug training aides are removed from the unit prior to extend servicing of the vehicle.
3. While on duty, the unit's kennel will be equipped with fresh water for the canine at all times. The vehicle temperature alert system will always be activated and the temperature settings will be adjusted as weather dictates. The handler shall be responsible for testing the system per the manufactures instructions.
4. In the event that the handler's vehicle is down for an extended period of time, the handler's duties will be prescribed to him by his supervisor.

H. EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

1. Maintenance and upkeep of the training equipment will be the responsibility of the handler. When equipment needs to be replaced the handler will notify their supervisor.

I. TRAINING

1. Training will be a minimum of sixteen (16) hours per month.
2. Training will consist of activities that ensure the Police Canine Team's ability to annually achieve certification in a reputable national police canine organization. The training will consist of simulated scenarios that prepare and maintain the animal's ability to function in on duty situations

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that include but are not limited to vehicle and structure narcotic searches, tracking, article and building searches, and live gun fire situations.

3. All training, whether on specified training days or any other time, will be documented fully and meticulously on the unit's approved training software. The reports shall include type of training, dates, times, locations, and the Police Canine Team's performance. All training will be reported monthly to the handler's supervisor.
4. Handlers should not subject the canine to any type of training that could severely injure the animal.
5. If the Police Canine Team fails to certify through a reputable national police canine organization the team will not be deployed in the field until such certification is achieved. A report of this should be generated, investigated, and filed with the handler's supervisor.

J. NARCOTIC TRAINING AIDS

- a. Narcotic training aids are required to effectively train and maintain narcotic detecting canines. Further, narcotics can also be an effective training aid during training sessions for law enforcement personnel and public.
- b. The Texas Health and Safety Code provides that any Chief of Police, or a designee thereof may, at their discretion, provide narcotics for training purposes. (TEXAS HSC 481.159 (i)):
 1. To any duly authorize peace officer narcotic detection canine trainer who is working under the direction of a law enforcement agency.
 2. Provided the narcotics are no longer needed as criminal evidence.
- c. Due to the responsibilities and liabilities involved with possessing readily usable amounts of narcotics and the ever-present danger of accidental ingestion of the substances by the canine, the following procedure shall be strictly followed.
 1. All necessary narcotic training samples shall be acquired from the Lancaster Police Departments evidence/property room personnel. All narcotic training samples shall be weighed and tested prior to dispensing to the canine handler.
 2. The weight and test results shall be recorded and maintained by the property/evidence room personnel.
 3. All narcotic training samples shall be inspected, weighed and tested quarterly. The results of the quarterly testing shall be recorded and maintained by the canine handler and the property/evidence room personnel.
 4. All narcotic training samples shall be stored in a locked and non-readily accessible area at all times, except during training. There are no exceptions

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to this procedure. Training samples shall not be carried to the canine handler's home.

5. Any unusable narcotic training samples shall be returned to the Property Room.
6. All narcotic training samples shall be returned to the locked non-readily accessible area upon the conclusion of the training that day and before going off duty.

K. HOUSING, NUTRITION, AND MEDICAL CARE OF THE CANINE

1. The Police Canine will be kept at the handler's home when off duty unless kenneling at an approved canine facility is required. The animal's home kennel shall be no smaller than 5' wide x 10' long x 6' high and constructed of chain-link or stronger material with a concrete floor. It shall be kept clean and in functioning condition by the handler. The canine's at-home kennel will be located so that the canine will be covered by as much shade as possible in the summer months. If no shade is available, shade cloths will be installed. The kennel will allow the animal access to a dog house for shelter.
2. The handler's back yard shall be surrounded by a fence that prevents the canine's escape and prevents unwelcome persons from entering. The canine should only be allowed to run free in the backyard if the handler or a family member that the dog has bonded to is present. Handlers and/or bonded family members shall monitor any interactions between the Police Canine and any other pets. When visitors are at the handler's home, the handler and/or bonded family members shall exercise direct control over the Police Canine or restrict the Police Canine's access to the visitors.
3. Any changes in the living status of the handler which may affect the lodging or environment of the Police Canine shall be reported to the handler's supervisor immediately and in writing.
4. The Police Canine will only eat the food that is recommended by a veterinarian or the canine vendor. This will generally be a high protein, high fat, and higher priced food to accommodate the animals' lifestyle. The handler will strictly adhere to the amounts suggested by the food manufacturer or the veterinarian.
5. The handler will keep the Police Service Canine physically fit and of good hygiene. The canine will be brushed and his eyes cleaned on a regular basis. His teeth will be brushed and ears cleaned on a regular basis. He/she will be bathed at least twice per month, and once per week during the summer months. The handler will inspect the canine regularly for any abnormalities.
6. The handler will ensure that the canine is not subjected to any type of environment that could pose as a health risk.
7. The designated Police Service Canine veterinarian shall render all medical attention, except during an emergency. The handler will be responsible for ensuring that the Police Service Canine makes his regularly scheduled appointments at the designated veterinarian for routine tests and vaccinations, as well as any needed medical attention. The handler will seek the services of the

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veterinarian and notify their supervisor at the onset of any physical behavior change, injury, or external abnormality.

8. The designated veterinarian shall render emergency medical treatment if available. In instances that the Police Canine Team is out of town or the designated veterinarian is not available, the closest veterinarian who can adequately perform the services needed shall be used. The handler shall notify their supervisor as soon as possible when emergency medical care is required.

L. POLICE SERVICE DOGS IN PUBLIC AREAS

1. All Police Service Canine shall be kept on a leash when in areas that allow access to the public. Exceptions would include specific police operations for which the Police Service Canines are trained. Police Service Canines shall not be left unattended in any area to which the public may have access. When the Police Service Canine unit is left unattended, all windows and doors of the canine unit shall be secured.

M. POLICE CANINE TEAM CALL OUT

1. Police Canine Teams shall be available for call outs while off duty whenever possible.
2. Call out requests for incidents inside the City of Lancaster shall be made by on scene police personnel directly whenever possible. The person making the request should be able to provide all the details about the incident that the canine is being requested for. The canine handler will evaluate the request and determine if a canine call out is warranted.
3. Requests from outside agencies will be passed from Lancaster Communications to the canine handler. Communications should get all pertinent information about the incident and a call back number for an officer that is on scene. The canine handler will decide if the situation warrants a call out and should take into account the type of incident. The Lancaster Police Department will try to assist any agency whenever reasonably possible. The canine handler is required to notify the on duty supervisor prior to assisting outside agencies.
4. Police Canine Handlers have the ultimate authority to decide whether or not to deploy the police service dog at any scene due to the fact that the handler knows the dog's capabilities better than any other person.

N. PREPARATION FOR UTILIZING A CANINE

1. Prior to the use of a canine to search for or apprehend any individual, the canine handler and/or supervisor on-scene shall carefully consider all pertinent information that is reasonably available at the time. The information should include, but is not limited to, the following.
 - a. The individual's age or estimate thereof
 - b. The nature of the suspected offense
 - c. Any potential danger to the public and/or other officers at the scene if the canine is released

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- d. The degree of resistance or threatened resistance, if any, the subject has shown
- e. The potential for escape or flight if the canine is not utilized
- f. The potential for injury to officers or the public caused by the suspect if the canine is not utilized

O. USE OF CANINE FOR NON-APPREHENSION

- 1. Because canines have senses far superior to those of humans, they may be effectively utilized to track or search for non-criminals (e.g., lost children, individuals who may be disoriented or in need of medical attention).
- 2. In such circumstances, it shall be necessary for the handler to evaluate the conditions and ability of the canine to determine the feasibility of such an application.
 - a. Absent a change in circumstances that present an immediate threat to officers, the canine or the public, such applications should be conducted on leash or, if off lease, canines shall be muzzled.
- 3. Throughout the deployment of the canine in such circumstances, the handler may consider issuing periodic verbal assurances that the canine shall not bite or hurt any person.
- 4. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, assisting personnel should take direction from the handler in order to minimize interference with the canine.
- 5. Once the individual has been located, the canine should be placed in a down-stay or otherwise secured as soon as it becomes reasonably practicable.

P. WARNINGS GIVEN TO ANNOUNCE THE USE OF A CANINE

- 1. Unless it would otherwise increase the risk of injury or escape, a clearly audible warning to announce that a canine shall be released if the person does not comply, shall be made prior to releasing a canine.
- 2. If the canine handler decides to forego a verbal warning prior to the releasing the canine, the handler, when practicable, shall first advise the supervisor of their decision over the radio or in person.
- 3. In the event of an apprehension, the handler shall document in any related report, to include the Use of Force Report, whether a verbal warning was given and, if none was given, the reason why.

Q. USE OF CANINES FOR APPREHENSION

- 1. A canine may be used to locate and apprehend a suspect if the canine handler reasonably believes that the individual has either committed or threatened to commit any felony offense and if any of the following conditions exist.

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- a. There is a reasonable belief the individual poses an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death to the public, any officer, or the handler.
 - b. The individual is actively resisting or threatening to resist arrest and the use of a canine reasonably appears to be necessary to overcome such resistance.
 - c. The individual(s) is believed to be concealed in an area where entry by other than the canine would pose a threat to the safety of officers or the public.
2. It is recognized that situations may arise that do not fall within the provisions set forth in the policy. In those situations, a supervisor shall be consulted.
 3. Absent reasonable belief that an individual has committed or poses an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death to the public any officer, or the handler or has threatened to commit a felony offense against another, mere flight from pursuing officer(s) shall not serve as good cause for the use of a canine to apprehend an individual.
 4. Once the individual has been located and no longer reasonably appears to represent a threat or risk, the canine should be placed in a down-stay or otherwise secured as soon as it becomes reasonably practical.

R. POLICE SERVICE DOGS RETIREMENT

1. Determination of retirement will be considered but not limited to recommendations of the handler, canine supervisor, veterinarian, and available funds for replacement. When a police service dog retires the handler should generally be given an opportunity to purchase the dog from the city at the dog's current fair market value.

SECTION 5 OPERATIONAL AND DEPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

A. CROWD CONTROL

1. Police Canine Teams may respond as backup but may not deploy the canine for crowd control at peaceful demonstrations or riot situations.

B. TRACKING

1. A Police Canine Team may be used to track missing persons, criminal suspects, or to locate evidence that officers have reason to believe has been abandoned or hidden in a specified open area. Such searches are subject to the following conditions and limitations:
 - a. When officers are pursuing suspects and contact with the suspect is lost, the officer, prior to summoning a Police Canine Team, shall:
 - i. Stop and pinpoint the location where the suspect was last seen;
 - ii. Shut off engines of vehicles in the area if possible; and

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- iii. Avoid vehicle or foot movement in the area where the suspect or subject was last seen.
- b. On-scene supervisory personnel shall:
 - i. Secure the perimeter of the area to be searched;
 - ii. Secure the integrity of the area to be searched by keeping all personnel out of the area;
 - iii. Protect all items of clothing that will be used for scent from being handled.
- c. Police Service Canines used for tracking persons should remain on a leash of sufficient length to prevent the police canine from making any physical contact with the person being searched for. The Police Canine Team shall refrain from searching for criminal suspects alone and should attempt to have at least one cover officer with them at all times.

C. DRUG SEARCHES

- 1. Police Service Canine drug sniffs of motor vehicles may be conducted when:
 - a. There is reasonable suspicion to believe that the operator or passengers are in possession of illegal narcotics;
 - b. The canine sniff is limited to the exterior of the vehicle; or
 - c. Consent searches.
- 2. A Police Service Canine may be used to sniff luggage, packages, or other personal effects of an individual on either a random or selective basis if the items are not in the possession of the owner (for example, on conveyor belts, in the possession of baggage handlers, etc.).
- 3. A Police Service Canine may not be used to sniff luggage or related personal items in the physical possession of (i.e. control of or close proximity to) an individual in a public facility or place unless:
 - a. There is reasonable suspicion that the personal possession contains illegal drugs or evidence of a crime; and
 - b. The time required to conduct the sniff is limited in duration; or
 - c. Consent searches.
- 4. Under no circumstance may a Police Service Canine be utilized to search persons.

D. VEHICLE PURSUITS INVOLVING A CANINE UNIT

- 1. To prevent injury to the canine, handlers will not be actively involved in police vehicle pursuits. If a canine element initiates a chase, they will drop out as soon as two marked police units enter the

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pursuit. Handlers may follow at a safe speed in the event the suspect flees from the vehicle and the canine can be utilized to locate the suspect or for a narcotic sniff of the vehicle.

2. Canine handlers should adhere to the vehicle pursuit policy of this department.

E. POLICE SERVICE CANINES USED FOR BREEDING

1. Under no circumstance will a Police Service Canine of this department be allowed to take part in any breeding purposes while in service or without permission from the Chief of Police.

F. DEPLOYMENT REPORTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

1. Each time the Police Canine Team is utilized for any situation, the handler will complete a canine usage report detailing the team's use and involvement in the incident.
2. Whenever a canine has bitten or scratched an individual or has alleged to have done so, whether or not in the line of duty; the handler shall perform the following:
 - a. Notify their supervisor.
 - b. If no arrest is made, an offer will be made to the individual to provide medical care and treatment by a qualified medical professional.
 - c. If an arrest is made, the individual will be provided with medical attention in the same manner that any other arrestee would be afforded.
 - d. On scene police personnel shall take color photographs of the affected area after the wounds have been cleaned but prior to actual medical treatment, as well as after medical treatment.
 - e. Prepare and submit a Use of Force Report.

G. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. All members of the department shall know and comply with all aspects of this directive.
2. All supervisory personnel are responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions and intent of this directive.