


PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT

 HEADQUARTERS
 COLONEL OSCAR L. PEREZ
 CHIEF OF POLICE

TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	330.06	10/18/2023	10/18/2023
SUBJECT TITLE		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
K-9 Operations		1/5/2022; 1/27/2021; 12/17/2017; 3/31/2017; 3/28/2014; Supersedes: G.O. #67, Series 1995	
REFERENCE		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
CALEA 41.1.4		12/17/2025	
SUBJECT AREA		DISTRIBUTION	
Law Enforcement Operations		All Sworn Personnel	

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the management of Providence Police canines and canine teams, and to establish procedures for their use in field operations.

POLICY

Due to a canine’s superior sense of smell and hearing, coupled with their potential for aggressive behavior, Providence Police canine deployments require adherence to procedures that institute controls during potential use of force incidents while also allowing canines the ability to channel their specialized capabilities into legally acceptable crime prevention and control activities.

DISCUSSION

For the purpose of this General Order, the following definition shall apply:

Canine (K-9): a specially trained dog, belonging to the Department that engages in crime prevention and control activities.

Canine Handler: a specially trained sworn member of the Department, who is responsible for the custody, care, and control of one assigned K-9.

Canine Team: a canine handler and assigned K-9.

PROCEDURE

I. CANINE COORDINATOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Commanding Officers of the Uniformed and Administrative Divisions, or their respective designees, shall be responsible for the overall supervision of the K-9 teams under their respective commands. Responsibilities include ensuring that:
1. All administrative and operational policies and procedures pertaining to canine teams are followed.
 2. All canine handlers provide for the routine care, cleaning, and maintenance of their respective canines.
 3. All medical care relating to the well-being of the canines is properly administered.
 4. Canine vehicles and equipment are properly cleaned and maintained.
 5. On-going training programs are established for and attended by canine teams.
 6. All canine teams are competent, certified, and properly utilized.

II. CANINE HANDLER QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

- A. Handler Selection
1. A minimum of three (3) full years from his/her date of hire within the Patrol Bureau.
 2. A satisfactory work performance record.
 3. A willingness to train and be trained.
 4. A willingness to remain with the Canine Unit for a minimum of four years in the Uniform Bureau.
 5. A willingness to care for and train the animal.
 6. A willingness to accept assignments that promote the most useful coverage to the Department.
 7. A willingness to immediately withdraw from the Canine Unit, without prejudice, when so asked.

- B. New canine handlers will complete the prescribed canine training course and successfully meet all course requirements prior to field deployment.
- C. All canine handlers will complete the prescribed minimum maintenance training, i.e monthly in-serves training
 - 1. In-service trainings shall be documented and provided to the Unit Commanding Officer.
- D. Canine handlers will be assigned in a manner that will promote the most useful coverage to the Department, consistent with the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement.

III. PROCUREMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF CANINES

- A. Canines must be approved by the Chief of Police and the appropriate Division Commanding Officer prior to procurement and again prior to deployment.
- B. Canines must meet all established certification requirements according to professionally accepted law enforcement standards. Untrained or non-certified canines shall not be used.
- C. Deployment of all canines in the field shall be document and provided to the Administration Commanding Officer for the Departments annual report.

IV. MEDICAL REPORTS AND RECORDS

- A. Each canine will be health certified by a Department-approved veterinarian prior to acceptance into the Canine Unit.
- B. Only Department-approved veterinarians shall administer to Department canines, unless an emergency situation arises.
- C. Each canine will be given a complete physical annually, to include all necessary shots and a heartworm check.
- D. Whenever a canine is treated by a veterinarian, a record of such treatment will be maintained by the handler, with a copy to his/her Division Commanding Officer.

V. CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF CANINE AND EQUIPMENT

- A. Canine handlers are responsible for the care, maintenance, and training of their assigned canine. Such responsibilities include:

1. Grooming.
 2. Provisions for food, water, and general diet maintenance as prescribed by the Canine Coordinator or veterinarian.
 3. General medical attention and maintenance of health care records.
 4. Daily on-duty exercise under the direct supervision of the handler.
- B. Canine handlers are also responsible for maintaining their equipment in a clean and proper manner. Equipment may include, but may not be limited to:
1. Body armor.
 2. Tracking harnesses.
 3. Body bite suits.
 4. Bite sleeves.
 5. Muzzles.
 6. Scent tubes.
 7. Kennels.
 - a. All equipment will be approved for use by the Department.
- C. Assigned vehicles will be vacuumed and cleaned regularly.
- D. Maintenance and cleaning of the area where the canine is housed.
- E. If the canine handler is unable to perform his or her prescribed job-related duties due to illness, injury, or extended vacation:
1. The canine may be housed at a Department-authorized kennel.
- F. Except for illness, injury, or extended vacation, the canine will remain in the care and custody of its assigned handler, both on and off duty.

VI. EXPENSES FOR HANDLERS

- A. The Department will provide the following canine services, at no expense, to the handler:
1. Food (under contract);

2. Equipment used for work and training;
 3. Routine medical check-ups.
 4. Medical expenses for injuries sustained in an "ON-DUTY" capacity.
 5. Medicine prescribed by a Department-authorized veterinarian.
 6. Medical expenses for any illness until it is determined that the illness will render the canine unfit for the program.
- B. Handlers are required to obtain a local dog license at their own expense.

VII. GENERAL DEPARTMENT RULES REGARDING CANINES

- A. Personnel will not pet or touch a canine, except with the permission and in the presence of the canine handler.
- B. Whenever a canine is used in a tactical situation, personnel will heed the direction of the canine handler.
- C. No commands will be given to a canine by anyone other than the assigned canine handler, except in emergency situations when the assigned canine handler is unable or unavailable to give commands.
- D. No personnel will enter a canine cruiser, except with the permission of and in the presence of the canine handler.
- E. Personnel shall not provoke the K-9 at any time.
- F. Personnel shall not give the K-9 anything to ingest without the expressed approval of the canine handler.
- G. Personnel shall not initiate any unnecessary sharp or loud noises or movements which would affect the stability of the K-9 while it is either confined to a vehicle or working in the field.

VIII. CANINE UTILIZATION PARAMETERS

- A. Canine teams will be available on a 24-hour basis as needed, regardless of whether or not a call-back is necessary, to handle responsibilities including, but not limited to:
 1. Conducting building searches for hiding offenders.
 2. Assisting in the arrest of dangerous and violent offenders.

3. Preventing the escape of serious offenders.
 4. Protecting the public and Department members from death or serious injury.
 5. Tracking suspects.
 6. Locating lost or missing persons.
 7. Locating criminal evidence or hidden instrumentalities.
 8. Locating cadavers.
 9. Detecting the presence of concealed narcotics, explosives or arson-related accelerants.
- B. Officers shall not typically request K-9 assistance in situations which would not appear to allow the K-9 to perform within its abilities. Such situations include, but are not limited to:
1. Animal complaints of any type.
 2. Loud music calls for service.
 3. Keep the peace calls for service.
 4. Most calls for service of a non-criminal nature.
- C. Once on scene, the canine handler shall be responsible for recommending to the on-scene supervisor whether or not the situation justifies canine use and the appropriate tactical measures that should be taken.
- D. If the superior officer disagrees with the canine handler under conditions that do not represent exigent circumstances, the Officer-in-Charge of the Patrol Bureau (OIC) will be consulted and shall make the final determination.
1. If exigent circumstances do exist, however, the canine handler's decision will stand, and the canine handler assumes full responsibility for any actions pertaining to the use of the canine that are either taken or omitted.
- E. All outside agency requests for the use of Department canine teams shall be referred to the OIC, who shall then determine the appropriateness of the request and authorize the deployment of a canine team(s) to the outside agency, as appropriate.

F. CROWD CONTROL

1. Canine teams may respond as backup when appropriate but shall not be deployed for crowd control (i.e., containment or dispersal).
2. Canines shall remain in patrol vehicles or other secure locations and, whenever reasonably possible, out of the view of the crowd.
3. Canines may be deployed in appropriate circumstances related to bomb detection, pursuit of suspects in buildings, and related situations.

G. BUILDING SEARCHES

1. A primary use of canines is to locate suspects in buildings or related structures where searches by members would create an unnecessary risk to those members.
 - a. The building perimeter should be secured by the requesting Patrol Bureau personnel.
 - b. If possible, the building's owner should be contacted to ascertain the layout.
 - c. All unnecessary personnel, tenants, or workers should be removed from the facility.
 - d. If possible, all heating, air-conditioning, or other blowing units should be turned off, so as not to interfere with the canine's scent.
 - e. Once the canine has entered, all exits should be secured and communications limited to those of a tactical nature.
 - f. The canine may be unleashed at any time during a building search.
 - g. Buildings that house potentially dangerous substances for the canine should not be searched unless an overriding risk to human life is present.
 - h. Before commencing the search, the canine handler will give an appropriate warning, such as "This is the Providence Police. You are under arrest. Surrender immediately. The canine will be released and he/she will bite you."
 - i. This command will be given whenever the canine is used in conjunction with a building search or area search of fleeing suspects.

- i. Canine will be commanded to disengage when the suspect is no longer a viable threat to any officer.
- j. If at all possible, the arrestee should not be transported with the canine, unless immediate transport is needed for security or safety reasons.
- k. If used for a tracking incident, the scene should be preserved and another officer should accompany the canine team.

H. NARCOTICS DETECTION

- 1. When a situation exists in which there is a need to detect Marijuana, Hashish, Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, Heroin, or Methamphetamines which may be located inside or outside a structure, vehicle, or closed container, a Department narcotic-detecting canine may be utilized.
 - a. The use of the Department canine for drug detection shall be restricted to the above narcotics.
 - b. Only those canines properly certified and trained in narcotics detection shall be utilized.
 - c. If authorized by the OIC or above, random exploratory sniffing of luggage, packages, or other inanimate objects may be conducted in public facilities, including but not limited to:
 - i. Bus terminals.
 - ii. Train stations.
 - iii. Marine terminals.
 - iv. Government buildings.
 - e. Sworn officers of the Providence Police Department may detain specific checked luggage or related items for purposes of requesting a canine sniff, if probable cause exists that said luggage or items may contain contraband. Approval from the OIC is needed prior to such an investigation.
 - i. When a narcotic detection canine alerts to luggage or other items, in this or other circumstances, a search warrant or written consent to search should be

obtained before such item(s) is opened unless exigent circumstances exist to conduct an on-site search.

- f. The use of narcotic detection canines in public schools is permitted only when authorized by the Chief of Police or designee, and if:
 - i. The school's principal or designated authority requests or approves such use.
 - ii. There is reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal narcotics are being distributed and/or consumed on the premises.
 - iii. The search is limited to inanimate objects in public areas and the exterior student lockers, unless reasonable suspicion exists to gain admission to said areas.
- g. Narcotic sniffing canines may be used to sniff motor vehicles whenever:
 - i. Reasonable suspicion exists to believe that the operator or passengers are in possession of illegal narcotics;
 - ii. Used during a valid motor vehicle stop or commercial vehicle check, when the canine may be used to sniff the vehicle's exterior in an exploratory manner. Unless the canine alerts to the vehicle, the operator may not be detained longer than the time necessary to conclude official business associated with the initial stop or check.

- 2. Department K-9 officers who require controlled substances from the Property, Evidence, and Supply Bureau for K9 training purposes shall follow the procedures outlined in Section IV(C) (1-4) of General Order 420.01 *Property and Evidence Control*.

I. EVIDENCE RECOVERY CANINES

- 1. Most patrol canines have been trained for the rapid search of a selected area to locate all items containing human scent. Consideration of this search technique is suggested to locate discarded weapons and fruits or instrumentalities of crime.

J. TRACKING CANINES

1. Canines shall be utilized to track lost/missing persons or suspects, or to locate evidence that has been abandoned or hidden in specific open areas.
2. When officers are pursuing a suspect(s) and contact with said suspect(s) is lost, the on-scene superior officer, prior to requesting canine assistance, will:
 - a. Stop and mark the location where the suspect(s) was last seen.
 - b. Avoid foot or vehicular movement in the immediate area.
 - c. Attempt to set-up an outside perimeter to contain and isolate the suspect(s) in the area.
 - d. Protect all items of clothing that will be used for scent from being handled.
3. The handler shall determine when and if the canine should remain on lead as long as there is a reasonable measure of safety.
4. Also see General Order 330.10 *Missing Persons*.

K. USE OF CADAVER-DETECTION CANINES

1. Used to detect dead human bodies or parts thereof, as well as materials impregnated with large quantities of blood. Handlers are responsible for the manner in which the canines are used during the search.

L. USE OF EXPLOSIVE-DETECTION CANINES

1. Use for the detection of explosive devices, this canine can be used during bomb threat incidents or to ensure buildings, vehicles, airplanes, and packages do not contain explosive material.

IX. BITES AND INJURIES / USE OF FORCE REPORTING

- A. The use of specially trained Providence Police canine constitutes a real or implied use of force. A sworn Department member shall only use the canine in a manner that such force or action is reasonably necessary to overcome the physical resistance and actions of the person being arrested. No greater utilization of the canine for purpose of restraint than is necessary shall be used for the detention of any person, and no unnecessary or unreasonable force or use of said canine shall be used in effecting an arrest.

- B. Whenever a Department canine bites or otherwise injures someone, whether on or off-duty, the following procedures will apply:
- a. Immediately render first-aid or medical attention.
 - b. Examine the affected area and determine the seriousness of the bite or injury, and ascertain if the person will need future medical attention.
 - c. Request that the OIC respond to the scene.
 - d. Photograph the suspect so as to document both those areas that are injured and those that are not.
 - e. The OIC shall ensure that all applicable portions of General Order 300.01 *Use of Force*, and General Order 310.02 *Force Investigation Team/ Use of Force Review Board Procedures*, insofar as such portions pertain to the field investigation of reportable uses of force, are followed.
 - i. When completing Blue Team K-9 Utilization report and/or Incident report(s), identify the location of the bite/apprehension on the suspect's body, and offer a general description of the wound or resulting injury on the suspect.
 - ii. Note and report any visible pre-existing injuries that were not caused by the Department canine.
 - f. The Office of Professional Responsibility shall maintain a record of all of the bites and injuries caused by Department canines.
- C. Notwithstanding the above parameters pertaining to use of force reporting, a Blue Team K-9 Utilization Report will be completed and all applicable use of force reporting and review procedures followed whenever the actions of a canine against a subject or subjects are such that a reasonable person would interpret said actions as threatening and/or coercive in nature.

X. PUBLIC RELATIONS

- A. All requests for demonstrations by the canines and their handlers will be in writing and contain:
1. Time, date, and location of the demonstration.
 2. Name of the person requesting the demonstration.

3. Name of a contact person and telephone number.
 4. Reason for the demonstration.
- B. Requests will be forwarded to the appropriate Division Commanding Officer or his/her designee for approval.
- C. Requests should be made at least thirty (30) business days prior to the scheduled event, whenever possible.

XI. RETIREMENT

- A. When a canine and/or handler is retired from service:
1. The canine, with the discretion of the Chief of Police or his/her designee, may become the sole property of the handler, who will assume all future responsibilities for the canine, including expenses and liabilities.
 2. Should the canine become the property of the handler, the Department will be relinquished from all obligations, as pertaining to the canine.

APPROVED:



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CHIEF OF POLICE