

GENERAL ORDER



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Canine Teams	
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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

I. Background.....	Page 1	V. Regulations.....	Page 4
II. Policy.....	Page 1	VI. Procedural Guidelines	Page 6
III. Definitions	Page 1	VII. Cross References	Page 16
IV. Rules.....	Page 3		

I. BACKGROUND

The Metropolitan Police Department utilizes trained law enforcement canines because their superior sense of smell and hearing make a valuable supplement to police manpower. Because of their potential aggressiveness, the use of canines by this Department requires adherence to procedures that properly control their use of force potential and that channel their specialized capabilities into legally acceptable crime detection, prevention, and control activities.

II. POLICY

The policy of the Metropolitan Police Department is to ensure that all Department canines and canine handlers are trained in and utilize the handler-controlled alert methodology as defined in this order. The policy of the Metropolitan Police Department is to ensure that members assigned to the canine unit adhere to the proper rules and procedures for the management of the Department's canine unit and to use police canines in patrol or field operations in accordance with General Order RAR-901.07 (Use of Force). (CALEA 41.1.4)

III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this directive, the following terms shall have the meanings designated:

- A. **Alert** – Any movement by a canine that would indicate the presence of the subject to include the following: raising its head, sniffing, pawing, scratching, and barking.
- B. **Apprehension** – The lawful arrest, capture, or taking into physical custody of a subject. When a canine is involved or on the scene, apprehension may be described as follows:

1. With contact – where the canine physically made contact with a subject.
 2. Without contact – where articulated facts demonstrate that the presence of the canine was instrumental in the surrender of the subject.
 3. Independent of canine involvement – where the arrest, capture or custody is effected by police action without direct involvement of the canine on the scene. If the canine was used for tracking or searching for a suspect, that fact should be noted.
- C. **Bite** – Physical contact with a subject that results in a skin wound or puncture produced by a canine’s teeth.
- D. **Contact** – Any touching of a person by a canine, including nudging, pawing, seizing of subject’s clothing, or biting, which may or may not require medical treatment (but not including playful or non-aggressive behavior).
- E. **Canine Handlers** – Sworn members who have been certified by the Canine Training Official as qualified to perform all responsibilities of a canine handler. (CALEA 41.1.4-d,g)
- F. **Canine Official** – A member of the Canine Unit, the rank of sergeant or above.
- G. **Canine Team** – A canine handler and his or her assigned police canine.
- H. **Handler-Controlled Alert Methodology** – The training methodology employed by MPD that results in both the canine and handler being trained to the point that the handler has demonstrated total control over the canine’s actions. Whereby, the handler, when authorized to conduct a tactical search, shall ensure that the canine is in constant view and under the handler’s total control at all times. The only time a canine will be out of the visual range of a handler is when the canine clears a threshold (e.g. rounding a corner, entering a room, ascending/descending a stairwell.) Clearing a threshold shall take no more than five (5) seconds. The handler shall also ensure that he/she is at the canine’s position within five (5) seconds of a canine “alert.”
- The canine will only bite upon handler command. The only circumstance under which a canine may contact/bite without handler command is if the canine, the canine handler, or another is threatened with possible attack.
- I. **Serious Use of Force** – Lethal and less-than-lethal actions by MPD officers including:
1. all firearm discharges by an MPD officer with the exception of range and training incidents and discharges at animals;

2. all uses of force by an MPD officer resulting in a broken bone or an injury requiring hospitalization;
 3. all head strikes with an impact weapon;
 4. all uses of force by an MPD officer resulting in a loss of consciousness, or that create a substantial risk of death, serious disfigurement, disability or impairment of the functioning of any body part or organ;
 5. all other uses of force by an MPD officer resulting in a death; and
 6. all incidents where a person receives a bite from an MPD canine.
- J. **Tactical Use of Canine** – An on-leash track for a suspect or an off-leash search conducted by a canine team in an effort to apprehend a suspect. Off-leash canine deployments, searches and other instances where there is otherwise a significant risk of a canine bite to a suspect shall be limited to instances in which the suspect is wanted for a serious felony or is wanted for a misdemeanor and is reasonably suspected to be armed.
- K. **Non-Tactical Use of Canine** – The non-aggressive work of a canine when used to search for evidence or missing persons, to guard buildings or equipment, or to detect human remains.

IV. RULES

- A. The Metropolitan Police Department shall ensure that all MPD canine teams are trained in and adhere to the Department's "Handler Controlled Alert Methodology." This methodology shall include the following directives:
1. Prior to **any** canine deployment (tactical or non-tactical), the handler shall give a warning announcement as outlined in Section VI, D below.
 2. The canine handler shall keep his or her canine within visual and auditory range during deployments at all times. The only exception to the canine being within the handler's visual range will be when a canine clears a threshold (e.g. rounding a corner, entering a room, ascending/descending a stairwell.) Clearing a threshold shall take no more than five (5) seconds.
 3. The handler shall ensure that he/she is at the dog's position within (5) five seconds of a canine "alert."
 4. The canine handler shall command his or her canine to make contact/bite a subject only when the handler is in visual and auditory range of the subject and the canine.

5. The canine handler shall not permit his or her canine to make contact/bite unless commanded to do so by the handler. The only circumstance under which a canine may contact/bite without handler command is if the canine, the canine handler, or another is threatened with possible attack.

V. REGULATIONS

A. Authorized Uses of Canine Teams

Canine deployments can be authorized for the following assignments provided they meet the guidelines as set forth in this order: (CALEA 41.1.4-a)

1. Tactical Use of Canine
 - a. The tactical use of canines shall be limited to the following situations: (CALEA 41.1.4)
 - (1) Instances in which the suspect is wanted for a serious felony, e.g., a burglary where the suspect is concealed, an armed car jacking, assault on a police officer, assault with a dangerous weapon, sexual offenses, or homicide, etc.

OR

 - (2) Instances where the suspect is wanted and is reasonably suspected of being armed.
- b. Canines may be used to locate, apprehend, or control suspects:
 - (1) Where failure to apprehend a suspect who is fleeing and has committed a felony meets the criteria for the use of canine force, and
 - (2) Where the failure to quickly apprehend the suspect poses a risk of immediate danger to the officer or others.
- c. Canines may also be used to locate and apprehend a concealed suspect who is wanted for a misdemeanor and is reasonably suspected to be armed or is wanted for a serious felony, **except** that a canine shall not be used to apprehend known juvenile suspects who pose no immediate threat of serious injury to members on the scene.

2. Non-Tactical Use of Canines

Canines may be employed in non-aggressive work such as the following:

- a. To search for evidence, narcotics, explosives, or other contraband and critical missing persons;
- b. To guard building(s), equipment, vehicles(s), and to secure the perimeter of a search area; or
- c. To detect human remains.

B. Deployment Authorization

1. Before a canine can be deployed, canine handlers shall first seek authorization from a canine unit official (civil service sergeant or higher), but may obtain authorization from a field supervisor if unable to contact a canine official. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that intelligence is gathered on the scene and that various and obtainable factors are weighed, such as: (CALEA 41.1.4-c)
 - a. severity of the crime;
 - b. age of the suspect;
 - c. whether the suspect is armed or unarmed; and
 - d. whether the suspect has displayed violent behavior, before deployment of the canine is authorized.
2. The only exception to the requirement that an official authorize the use of a canine is under exigent circumstances when the handler is unable to contact either a canine official (first) or a field supervisor and, using sound judgment, deems it necessary to deploy the canine to protect himself or herself, other police officers, or citizens, from an immediate threat of serious bodily injury. However, a supervisor shall be notified at the first practicable moment.

C. Warning Announcements

Prior to all canine deployments (both tactical and non-tactical), the handler shall give a warning announcement as outlined in Section VFD.

D. Two Handlers to Respond

A Canine Official shall ensure that, whenever possible, two canine handlers should respond to any request for service. When two handlers respond to a request for a service, the primary handler shall search with his/her canine and the secondary handler shall act as back-up without his/her canine. If a question arises as to which handler shall be primary, the canine official shall designate the primary handler.

E. Use at Demonstrations Restricted

Canine teams shall not be used at the scene of demonstrations without prior approval of the Chief of Police or his/her designee. (CALEA 41.1.4-c)

F. Violations

Violations of this order may result in criminal and/or disciplinary action.

VI. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES (CALEA 41.1.4-b)**A. Request for Canine Services**

When the need for a canine team is anticipated, members shall:

1. Request their services through the dispatcher;
2. Advise the dispatcher of their exact location;
3. Secure the perimeter to avoid contaminating the search area with their scent; and
4. Once the request for a canine has been made, members shall not enter the area to be searched.

B. Response by Canine Officials

1. Canine officials shall respond to the scene when a request for the use of canine has been made. Once on the scene, the canine official shall make a determination whether the tactical use of a canine is warranted. The official shall consider all the guidelines set forth in this order.
2. If the canine official is unable to respond to the scene at the time the request is made, he/she must authorize the use of the canine via the radio. Authorization can only be given after the canine handler has provided all of the necessary information needed to make such a determination.
3. Under exigent circumstances, authorization by a canine official is not required; however, a supervisor (civil service sergeant or above) shall be notified at the first possible moment.
4. Canine officials shall not authorize the use of their own assigned canine. Such authorization must come from the commander of the Canine Branch, Special Operations Division, or, in his or her absence, an official the rank of lieutenant or above.

C. Response by Other Officials

When a canine team has been dispatched to the scene, an official from the requesting officer's element shall also respond to the scene.

D. Warning Announcements

1. Prior to **all** canine deployments (both tactical and non-tactical), the handler shall execute the following procedures:
 - a. Advise the dispatcher that an announcement of intent to search is about to be given. The dispatcher shall announce the time over the radio.
 - b. Issue a loud and clear announcement prior to deploying the assigned canine: **“Warning, a police canine will be used to search this (area to be searched), if you don’t come out, I will release my dog. If approached by the dog, surrender and remain still.”**
 - c. Provide a reasonable amount of time for innocent civilians, other members, and the suspect to come out before commencing with the search.
 - d. After a reasonable time has been given, the handler shall advise the dispatcher that he/she is going to begin the search. The dispatcher shall again announce the time over the radio.
2. Where there is reason to believe that a suspect may speak a foreign language, the handlers shall announce the warning in English and, when practicable, any other language that may be spoken by the suspect or other persons in the area to be searched.
3. Warnings should be repeated on each level of multi-level structures/ dwellings when practicable. However, subsequent or repeated announcements shall be given during the course of a search when, in the discretion of the handler, such a warning will not jeopardize his or her safety.
4. The warning announcement may be omitted from a search in those exigent circumstances where specific articulated facts demonstrate the need for complete surprise or where the announcement may place the handler in imminent danger. In such a case, the on-scene supervisor must approve the omission.

E. Considerations Before Canines May Be Tactically Deployed

1. In those circumstances where the tactical deployment of a canine is considered, a canine official (or a field supervisor if a canine official is not available) shall:
 - a. Determine the nature and severity of the offense for which a suspect is sought.
 - b. Determine the age of the subject and whether the subject may be armed, if possible.
 - c. Ensure that the immediate area to be searched has been vacated by all innocent civilian and police personnel, and that a perimeter is established.
 - d. Interview the property owner or manager (if available), to determine whether there are any innocent persons or children inside the location to be searched. Additionally, the canine official shall make attempts to determine if any individual inside the location may be hearing impaired, deaf, speaks a foreign language or has a physical, emotional, or other disability.
 - e. If the property owner or manager is not available, the canine official shall attempt to interview surrounding neighbors to ascertain the above listed information.
 - f. Attempt to determine if there are any animals inside the premises to be searched.
 - g. Make all information known to the responding canine handler.
 - h. Advise officers on the perimeter that if they encounter a police canine unit, to stand still and not to run. Running or attempting to flee may cause the canine to key in on the officer.
 - i. Ensure that the perimeter is maintained until the canine officer has completed the search, secured his/her canine and has advised the supervisor of the results of the search.

F. Tactical Use of Canines

1. Canine handlers shall be responsible for the following when the use of a canine is necessary: (CALEA 41.1.4-b)
 - a. Ensuring that prior approval from a canine or patrol official is given for the tactical use of their canine.
 - b. Providing a warning announcement in accordance with subsection D (Warning Announcements).

- c. Ensuring that when moving from an on-lead tactical track to an off-leash tactical search for a suspect, handlers provide another warning announcement at the point of transition, consistent with subsection D (Warning Announcements).
 - d. Allowing sufficient time for other members, citizens and the suspect to come out before deploying their canine.
 - e. Using a canine to locate a juvenile suspect ONLY where the juvenile poses a threat of serious bodily injury to the officer or others. (CALEA 41.1.4-b)
 - f. A handler shall conduct all tactical searches for a suspect with his/her own assigned canine.
 - g. If a handler believes that the deployment is unwarranted, the handler shall voice those concerns to the official authorizing the deployment and record those concerns in his or her notebook.
2. For all tactical uses of a canine to locate a suspect, the canine shall be called off at the instant that a suspect no longer poses a threat, e.g.: (CALEA 1.3.1)
 - a. In situations where a canine finds and bites a suspect, the concerned canine handler shall determine if the suspect is armed. If the suspect is not armed, the handler shall order the canine to release the bite.
 - b. The handler shall call off the canine at the first possible moment that the canine can be safely released. When deciding to call off the canine, particular attention must be given to the perceived threat or actual resistance presented by the suspect. Handlers will continue to factor into their call-off decision that the average person will struggle if being seized or confronted by a canine. This struggling, alone, will not be cause for not calling off the canine. A reference to the duration of the canine's contact with a suspect shall be included in the handler's report of the incident.
3. An on-duty canine official and the Force Investigation Team shall be immediately notified when a canine bites or causes serious injury (as described in Section III-I). In instances where a canine official cannot be contacted, an on-duty patrol official shall be notified. Members shall record the name of the official notified in the PD Form 901-e (Use of Force Incident Report). Notification shall be made whether the member is on or off duty and regardless of the location of the incident.
4. The canine handler shall notify a canine official of higher rank (or a field supervisor if a canine official is not available) when the canine

actually or allegedly bites or causes injury to a person and shall make all notifications and reports as required in Section G below.

5. Whenever a canine-related injury occurs, the canine handler shall seek immediate medical treatment for the suspect, either by ambulance, transportation to an emergency room, or admission to a hospital.
6. When the apprehension of a subject occurs without a bite, canine handlers shall:
 - a. Voice dispositions of “apprehension with (or without) contact” to the Communications Division.
 - b. Notify the Special Operations Division watch commander of the apprehension.
 - c. Complete the PD Form 906 (Tactical Use of Canine Report) prior to the end of their tour of duty, which shall include the disposition each time a suspect is apprehended.

G. Reporting the Tactical Use of a Canine

1. Initial Response

- a. When a Metropolitan Police officer becomes involved in the tactical use of a canine requiring a Use of Force Incident Report (PD Form 901-e), the first responsibilities of the officer shall be to ensure that the scene is safe, render first aid if applicable, secure the scene’s integrity, and notify a canine supervisor (or a field supervisor if a canine official is not available). (CALEA 1.3.5)
- b. District Watch Commanders and/or appropriate element supervisors shall respond immediately to the scene of the tactical use of a canine, and ensure that the Communications Division and the Synchronized Operations Command Center (SOCC) are notified. The SOCC shall notify the Force Investigation Team, if appropriate.

2. Handler Responsibilities

Handlers shall notify their supervisor and complete a PD Form 901-e (Use of Force Incident Report) immediately following any use of a canine resulting in a bite.

3. Supervisor Responsibilities

When a member has declined to complete the Use of Force Incident Report immediately following an incident, the supervisor shall compel the member to complete the report following a declination by the U. S. Attorney's Office and/or issuance of an authorized Reverse-Garrity warning.

H. Investigating the Tactical Use of a Canine

1. Members shall be guided by GO RAR-901.08 (Use of Force Investigations) as to investigative responsibilities when a tactical use of canine occurs.
 - a. The Force Investigation Team (FIT) shall be responsible for investigating all incidents involving the deployment of a canine that results in a canine bite or causes serious injury (as described in Section III-I).
 - b. The Office of the Superintendent of Detectives shall be responsible for investigating the underlying offense leading up to the use of the canine, where applicable.
 - c. An official from the Special Operations Division (of higher rank than the involved member) shall be responsible for the reporting and documentation of all use of canine incidents not involving a serious use of force.
 - d. The affected Watch Commander shall notify OPR and obtain a tracking number within one hour of the incident and shall fax a copy of the preliminary report and any supporting documentation to OPR prior to being relieved from duty.
 - e. At the discretion of the Chief of Police or his designee, any incident that may be investigated by chain of command supervisors may be assigned to the Force Investigation Team.
2. In the event that authorization for the use of canine has been given and the use of the canine has resulted in the apprehension of a person without a canine bite, the following steps shall be taken:
 - a. The handler shall immediately notify the on-duty canine supervisor who authorized the deployment through the dispatcher or on the scene.
 - b. The Special Operations Division official (of higher rank than the involved handler) shall ensure that all applicable information is recorded on the PD Form 906 (Tactical Use of Canine Report).

3. In the event that authorization for the use of a canine has been given and the use of the canine has resulted in a canine bite, the following documentation shall be completed immediately after a bite has occurred and provided to the Force Investigation Team representative who is present on the scene:
 - a. PD Form 251 (Event Report)
 - b. PD Form 163 (Prosecution Report)
 - c. PD Form 313 (Arrestee's Injury or Illness Report)
 - d. PD Form 901-e (Use of Force Incident Report)
 - e. PD Form 906 (Tactical Use of Canine Report)
 - f. Photograph of injury.
 - g. Any other documentation associated with the incident.
4. Each canine shall be evaluated after every contact with a subject and shall be provided appropriate retraining as may be determined by the Canine Training Sergeant.

I. Use of Canines in Another Jurisdiction

Canine teams may be dispatched to another jurisdiction, provided the following has occurred:

1. An official from the law enforcement agency within that jurisdiction must request the use of the Metropolitan Police Department Canine.
2. The Chief of Police or his designee has given approval.

J. Handlers

Handlers shall be responsible for the following: (CALEA 41.1.4-e)

1. Ensuring that their assigned canine is wearing a choke chain and that a District of Columbia dog tag is attached to it. (CALEA 41.1.4-f)
2. Ensuring that their assigned canine is presented for recertification in accordance Section VI-K-12, of this General Order. In the event that a handler's assigned canine fails to recertify within the prescribed time, the handler shall immediately place his/her canine in the Department kennel, and he/she shall be revoked from the vehicle take home program until such time that the canine is recertified.

3. Ensuring that their assigned canine is presented to the Department veterinarian within twenty-four (24) hours of a police canine bite. Exceptions to this policy will include weekends and holidays. In those cases the canine will be presented on the next business day.
4. Maintaining at his/her place of residence, at his/her own expense, a kennel made of chain link fence material with at least one hundred square feet of open space. The kennel shall have hard surface flooring (e.g. concrete, patio block, or wood), chicken-wire fencing across the top of the kennel, and shall be suitable for a 100-pound canine. The handler shall ensure that the kennel can be secured with a padlock. The handler shall obtain prior written approval from the canine training sergeant for any deviation from these kennel requirements. Failure to comply with this provision shall result in the immediate revocation of the handler's privilege to participate in the canine take home program and home care compensation. This action shall remain in effect until such time as the handler comes into compliance. If the handler is unable to abide by this provision, he/she shall be removed from his/her position as a canine handler. (CALEA 41.1.4-f)
5. Making the kennel at their place of residence available for inspection.
6. Ensuring that while not under the handler's immediate control, the canine is placed within its approved kennel, and that the kennel is secured with a padlock. The handler shall also make reasonable periodic checks to ensure the safety of the canine.
7. Ensuring that under no circumstance will a Department canine be kenneled with another animal.
8. Ensuring that when he/she is unable to secure his/her assigned canine in the canine's approved home kennel with a padlock, the canine is immediately placed in the Department's kennel for safekeeping.
9. Maintaining control of his/her assigned canine on and off duty.
10. Making immediate notification to the Special Operations Division Watch Commander if his/her assigned canine becomes lost or missing.
11. Reporting immediately the death, serious injury and/or illness of his/her assigned canine to the canine training sergeant. If unable to contact the canine training sergeant, handlers shall contact a member of the canine training staff or the Kennel Master. In extreme situations, notification may be made to an on-duty canine patrol sergeant. Upon being notified, the responsible official will provide the handler with specific instructions as to what steps to take. Under no circumstances shall a canine be presented to any veterinary hospital without prior approval. Violations of this provision may result in the handler's personal responsibility for payment.

12. Obtaining approval from the Commander, Canine Branch, Special Operations Division, prior to traveling outside the metropolitan area with his/her assigned canine.
13. Obtaining approval from the canine training sergeant, Special Operations Division, prior to entering his/her assigned canine into any show, trial, or exhibition.
14. Meeting physical agility standards annually, as defined by the Canine Standard Operating Procedures.
15. Returning his/her assigned canine to the canine training section whenever he/she becomes ill or injured to the extent that he/she is unable to perform as a handler.
 - a. When it is suspected that a handler cannot perform his or her duties as a canine handler for reasons of health or injury, the handler shall be referred to the Medical Services Division for a determination.
 - b. When it has been determined that a handler cannot perform his or her duties because of health or injury, a canine official shall prepare a written request to the Commander, SOD, for that handler's removal.
 - c. Upon notification that a handler is unable to participate in all aspects of training because of health or injury, the canine official shall prepare a written request for that handler's removal to the Commander, SOD, who shall act upon the request within 10 days of receiving the request.
 - d. If a handler is placed on sick leave for more than sixty (60) days, his/her canine may be reassigned.

K. Certification and Training

The canine training section shall be responsible for the following:
(CALEA 41.1.4-d)

1. Ensuring that each member of the canine training staff is a certified canine instructor.
2. Ensuring that all MPD canines are certified in handler-controlled alert methodology as defined in this order.
3. Ensuring that all canine handlers are physically capable of adhering to the canine policy and procedures described in this order and are able to maintain adequate control of their canine to prevent unlawful contact with suspects or others.

4. Ensuring that canine handlers complete all necessary training to become certified
5. Establishing and furnishing each canine handler with the required specifications that must be met for the kennel to be maintained at the handler's place of residence.
6. Inspecting each kennel twice a year to ensure that it meets all security and sanitary requirements.
7. Providing timely retraining to each canine team.
8. Ensuring that only professionally-bred canines are used.
9. Ensuring that each canine is certified annually.
10. Ensuring that any aggressive exercise such as apprehension work is done in the presence of a certified trainer.
11. Ensuring that all training and certification records are kept up to date and secure.
12. Ensuring that all assigned canines are re-certified every six weeks and canines not in compliance are immediately de-certified.

L. Support Responsibilities

1. The Commanding Officer, Special Operations Division, shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. Establishing Standard Operating Procedures to cover:
 - (1) selection and purchase of canines.
 - (2) qualification and training of canine handlers and canines.
 - (3) handling and care of canines.
 - b. Ensuring that appropriate statistical information concerning the canine unit, including use of force data, is kept on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis.
 - c. Ensuring that only professionally bred canines are used.
 - d. Establishing and publishing physical agility standards for canine handlers.
 - e. Ensuring that all canine handlers annually meet the physical agility standards.

2. The Office of Unified Communications shall ensure that dispatchers are fully informed of the requirements of this directive.

VII. CROSS REFERENCES

A. Related Directives

1. GO RAR-901.07 (Use of Force)
2. GO RAR-901.08 (Use of Force Investigations)
3. GO RAR-901.09 (Use of Force Review Board)

B. Related Forms

1. PD Form 313 (Arrestee's Injury or Illness Report)
2. PD Form 901-e (Use of Force Incident Report)
3. PD Form 906 (Tactical Use of Canine Report)

// SIGNED //
Charles H. Ramsey
Chief of Police

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