

Canine Program

318.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Canine Program was established to augment police services to the community. Highly skilled and trained teams of handlers and canines have evolved from the program and are used to supplement police operations to locate individuals, contraband and to apprehend criminal offenders.

318.2 GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF CANINES

A canine may be used to locate and apprehend a suspect if the canine handler reasonably believes the individual has either committed or threatened to commit any serious offense and/or if any of the following conditions exist:

- (a) There is a reasonable belief that the individual poses an imminent threat of violence or serious harm to the public, any officer or the handler.
- (b) The individual is physically resisting or threatening to resist arrest and the use of a canine reasonably appears to be necessary to overcome such resistance.
- (c) The individual 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.

It is recognized that situations may arise that do not fall within the provisions set forth in this policy. In any such case, a standard of objective reasonableness shall be used to review the decision to use a canine in view of the totality of the circumstances.

Absent reasonable belief that an individual has committed or threatened to commit a serious offense, mere flight from pursuing officer(s) shall not serve as good cause for the use of a canine to apprehend the individual.

Once the individual has been located and no longer reasonably appears to represent a threat or risk of escape, the canine should be placed in a down-stay or otherwise secured as soon as it becomes reasonably practical.

318.2.1 PREPARATIONS FOR UTILIZING A CANINE

Prior to the use of a canine to search for or apprehend any individual, the canine handler and/or the 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.
- (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.

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As circumstances permit, the canine handler should make every reasonable effort to communicate and coordinate with other involved personnel to minimize the risk of unintended injury.

A canine handler shall have the ultimate authority not to deploy the canine. The handler will evaluate each situation and determine if the use of a canine is technically feasible. Generally, the decision to deploy the canine shall remain with the handler. However, a supervisor sufficiently apprised of the situation may decide not to deploy the canine.

318.2.2 WARNINGS GIVEN TO ANNOUNCE THE USE OF A CANINE

Unless it would otherwise increase the risk of injury or escape, a clearly audible warning to announce that a canine will be released if the person does not come forth, shall be made prior to releasing a canine. The canine handler, when practical, shall first advise the supervisor of his/her decision if a verbal warning is not given prior to releasing the canine. In the event of an apprehension, the handler shall document in any related report whether or not a verbal warning was given and, if none was given, the reasons why.

318.2.3 GUIDELINES FOR NON-APPREHENSION USE

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) or suspects wanted for minor criminal offenses. In such circumstances, it will be necessary for the handler to evaluate the conditions and the 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 under such conditions that will minimize the likelihood that the canine will bite or otherwise injure the individual.
- (b) Throughout the deployment of the canine in such circumstances, the handler should consider issuing periodic verbal assurances that the canine will not bite or hurt the person.
- (c) Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, assisting personnel should take direction from the handler in order to minimize interference with the canine.
- (d) 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.

318.2.4 REPORTING CANINE USE, BITES AND INJURIES

Whenever the canine is deployed, a Use of Force Report shall be completed by the handler and turned in to the Shift Sergeant before going off-duty.

If a bite or injury results from the use of the canine, that information shall be documented on a Use-of Force Report form and included in the case narrative/supplemental report.

- (a) In all cases of bites or injury resulting from the use of a canine, photographs shall be taken of the bite or injury after first tending to the immediate needs of the injured party. The photographs will be archived in digital evidence. If the injury requires medical attention, the subject should be transported to an appropriate medical facility. In the event an in-custody suspect requires medical attention, an officer should standby with the suspect until treatment has been rendered.
- (b) If a subject alleges an injury that is not visible, notification shall be made to a supervisor and the location of the alleged injury should be photographed.

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It shall be the responsibility of the canine officer to ensure that related photographs are retained until the potential need for use in any related civil proceeding has expired.

318.2.5 REPORTING CANINE INJURIES

In the event that a canine is injured, the injury will be immediately reported to the Shift Sergeant.

Medical care for any injured canine shall follow the protocol established in § 318.6 et seq.

The injury will be documented on a Canine Use Report Form.

318.2.6 ASSIGNMENT OF CANINES

The canine teams shall be assigned to the Operations Division to supplement and assist the Patrol Division.

Canine teams should function primarily as cover units however; they may be assigned by Unit Coordinator to other functions based on the needs of the watch at the time.

Canine teams should not be assigned to handle matters that will take them out of service for extended periods of time unless absolutely necessary and only with the approval of the Shift Sergeant.

318.3 REQUEST FOR USE OF CANINE TEAMS

Personnel within the Department are encouraged to freely solicit the use of the canines. Requests for a canine team from outside of the Department shall go through the on duty/on call Supervisor.

318.3.1 REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER AGENCIES

The Shift Sergeant or the Unit Coordinator must approve all requests for canine assistance from outside agencies subject to the following provisions:

- (a) Canine teams shall not be used for any assignment that is not consistent with this policy.
- (b) The handler has the ultimate authority to decide whether the canine should be used for any specific assignment.
- (c) Canine teams shall not be called out while off-duty or used outside the boundaries of the City of Sequim unless authorized by the Shift Sergeant or the Unit Coordinator.
- (d) It shall be the responsibility of the canine handler to coordinate with outside agency personnel in order to minimize the risk of unintended injury.

318.3.2 REQUEST FOR PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS

All public requests for a canine team shall be approved by the Unit Coordinator prior to making any commitment.

Handlers shall not demonstrate any apprehension work to the public unless authorized to do so by the Unit Coordinator.

318.4 SELECTION OF CANINE HANDLERS

The following are the minimum qualifications for the assignment of canine handler:

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- (a) Sequim Police Department officer (currently off probation).
- (b) Reside in an adequately fenced, single-family, residence (minimum five-foot high fence with locking gates) or have adequate Canine facilities/kennel.
- (c) Live within 30 minutes travel time from the Sequim City limits.
- (d) Agree to be assigned to the position for a minimum of three years.

318.5 CANINE HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES

318.5.1 AVAILABILITY

The handler shall be available for call-out under conditions specified by the Unit Coordinator.

318.5.2 CARE FOR THE CANINE AND EQUIPMENT

The handler shall ultimately be responsible for the health and welfare of the canine and shall ensure that the canine receives proper nutrition, grooming, training, medical care, affection, and living conditions. The handler will be responsible for the following:

- (a) Unless required by a particular application, the handler shall not expose the canine to any foreseeable and unreasonable risk of harm.
- (b) The handler shall maintain all department equipment under his/her control in a clean and serviceable condition.
- (c) When a handler takes a vacation or extended number of days off, the canine vehicle shall be maintained at the Police Department facility.
- (d) Handlers shall permit the Unit Coordinator to conduct spontaneous on-site inspections of affected areas of their residence as well as the canine unit, to verify that conditions and equipment conform to this policy.
- (e) Any changes in the living status of the handler which may affect the lodging or environment of the canine shall be reported to the Unit Coordinator as soon as possible.
- (f) When off-duty, canines shall be maintained in kennels, provided by the City, at the homes of their handlers. When a canine is kenneled at the handler's home, the gate shall be secured with a lock. When off-duty, canines may be let out of their kennels while under the direct control of their handlers.
- (g) The canine should be permitted to socialize in the home with the handler's family while under the direct supervision of the handler.
- (h) Under no circumstances will the canine be lodged at another location unless approved by the Unit Coordinator or Shift Sergeant.
- (i) When off-duty, handlers shall not involve their canines in any non-police canine competitions, private dog training, or off-duty employment unless approved in advance by the Unit Coordinator or Shift Sergeant.
- (j) Whenever a canine handler anticipates taking a vacation or an extended number of days off, it may be necessary to temporarily relocate the canine. In those situations, the handler shall give reasonable notice to the Unit Coordinator so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

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318.5.3 CANINE IN PUBLIC AREAS

The handler will maintain control of the canine at all times. Control can be by leash, voice control, in a secured vehicle or in a K-9 vehicle or other area provided for the Canine. Exceptions would include specific police operations for which the canines are trained.

- (a) Canines shall not be left unattended in any area to which the public may have access.
- (b) When the canine unit is left unattended all windows and doors shall be secured in such a manner as to prevent unauthorized access to the dog. The handler shall also insure that the unattended unit remains inhabitable for the canine.

318.5.4 HANDLER COMPENSATION

The 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 employee's Memorandum of Understanding.

318.6 MEDICAL CARE OF THE CANINE

All medical attention shall be rendered by the designated canine veterinarian, except during an emergency as provided in Policy Manual § 318.6.2.

318.6.1 NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Non-emergency medical care will be coordinated through the Unit Coordinator.

Any indication that a canine is not in good physical condition shall be reported to the Unit Coordinator as soon as practical.

All records of medical treatment shall be maintained in the canine handler's personnel file.

318.6.2 EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

The handler shall notify the Unit Coordinator as soon as practicable when emergency medical care is required.

Depending on the severity of the illness or injury, the canine shall either be treated by the designated veterinarian or transported to a designated emergency medical facility for treatment. If the handler and dog are out of the area, the handler may use the nearest available veterinarian.

318.7 TRAINING

Before assignment in the field, each canine team shall be trained and certified to meet current Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) standards. Cross-trained dog teams or those dog teams trained exclusively for the detection of narcotics and/or explosives shall be trained and certified to meet established standards.

The Unit Coordinator shall be responsible for scheduling periodic training for all department personnel in order to familiarize them with how to conduct themselves in the presence of department canines.

318.7.1 CONTINUED TRAINING

Each canine team shall thereafter demonstrate ongoing proficiency to CJTC police service dog standards on an annual basis. Additional training considerations are as follows:

- (a) Canine teams shall receive approved, on-going in-service refresher training.

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- (b) Canine handlers are encouraged to engage in additional training with approval of the Unit Coordinator.
- (c) To ensure that all training is consistent, no handler, trainer, or outside vendor is authorized to train to a standard that is contrary to the policies of the Sequim Police Department.
- (d) All canine training shall be conducted while on-duty unless otherwise approved by the Unit Coordinator or Shift Sergeant .

318.7.2 FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE CJTC TRAINING

No canine team failing CJTC police service dog certification, and if cross-trained, certification in established standards, shall be deployed in the field until certification is achieved. When practical, pending successful certification, the canine handler shall be temporarily reassigned to regular patrol duties.

318.7.3 TRAINING RECORDS

All canine training records shall be maintained in the canine handler's log book in accordance to CJTC standards.

318.8 CANINE OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Canine Officer shall report to the Shift Sergeant. The Canine Officer shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Reviewing all Canine Use Reports to insure compliance with policy, identify training issues and other needs of the program.
- (b) Maintain liaison with administrative staff and Sergeants.
- (c) Maintain liaison with other agency canine units.
- (d) Maintain accurate records to document canine activities.
- (e) Recommend and oversee the procurement of needed equipment and services for the unit.
- (f) Be responsible for scheduling all canine related activities.
- (g) Ensure the canine team is scheduled for continuous training to maximize the capabilities of the team.