

Canines

317.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of canines to augment law enforcement services to the community including, but not limited to, locating individuals and contraband and apprehending criminal offenders.

317.2 DEFINITIONS

Accidental Canine Bite or injury: A canine bite or injury caused by physical contact with a canine that occurs when the handler gives no command to search or apprehend a subject.

Apprehension: A suspect surrenders or is otherwise brought into custody as the result of a canine deployment. This may be because the canine was used as trained, or because the suspect surrendered after becoming aware that the canine might be used.

Apprehension With Contact: Physical contact between the canine's teeth and a person or injury caused by physical contact with a canine. This contact does not need to result in broken or punctured skin to be a bite.

Canine Team: A specific dog handler and a specific canine controlled by that officer in the capacity of a handler, formally assigned by the employing agency to work together in performance of law enforcement or corrections duties. The handler and the canine will be considered a team, and it will be the team certified; if one member of the team changes, a new team exist, and the new team will need to be certified.

Department Designated Trainer: A Vancouver Police Officer, qualified through training/experience, to train Police K9 Teams in patrol work and narcotics detection. The trainer will complete a trainer's course through an appropriate canine vendor or training facility. The course should include canine selection, obedience, control work and detection work. The trainer should be recognized by the Washington State Police Canine Association (WSPCA) as a trainer. Within the K9 Unit, a Department Designated Trainer is subordinate to the K9 Supervisor.

Deployment: The specific term for commanding a PSD to track, apprehend a suspect, search for a suspect, search for evidence or search for the odor of controlled substances.

K9 Handler: Vancouver Police Officer who is assigned to the Vancouver Police K9 Unit and has successfully completed Department training.

K9 Warning: Loudly verbalizing or using a public address (PA) system to give a warning that a police service dog is about to be used to search/apprehend a suspect. ***The following is an example VPD K9 warning:***"Vancouver Police Canine. You have 5 seconds to make your presence known or a police dog will be sent to find you. When he finds you, he will bite you."

On Leash: A PSD that is attached to, and controlled by, a leash in the hands of a K9 Handler.

Police Service Dog (PSD): A dog owned by the Vancouver Police Department that has been trained to, and certified to, Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC)

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policy standards. In addition, the PSD must be approved for duty by the Department Designated Trainer and the Office of the Chief

Unintended Canine Bite or Injury: A canine bite or injury caused by physical contact with a canine that occurs when the handler gives the command to search or apprehend a subject, but the canine engages the wrong person.

317.3 POLICY

It is the policy of the Vancouver Police Department that teams of handlers and canines meet and maintain the appropriate proficiency to effectively and reasonably carry out legitimate law enforcement objectives.

317.4 REQUESTS FOR CANINE TEAMS

Members of the department are encouraged to request the use of a canine. If a canine is needed, contact the on duty K9 Handler. If a K9 Handler is not on duty, contact an on-duty supervisor and they can call out a canine.

317.5 SCOPE OF CANINE DEPLOYMENTS

Canine deployments shall be limited to the following situations addressed in this section.

317.5.1 AUTHORIZED FELONY CRIMES

The following felony crimes are generally allowable applications of the Canine Team:

- Burglary, not including trespass with non-violent secondary crimes
- Robbery, not including theft that are accompanied by low level assault
- Homicide including vehicular homicide
- Assaults I, II, and III, and Vehicular Assault
- Kidnapping
- Arson with threat of harm to people
- Domestic violence felony crimes
- Felony sexual assault
- Failure to register as a sex offender
- Trafficking
- Drive by shooting, not including unlawful discharge of a firearm
- Hit and Run with serious physical injury
- Felony harassment with a weapon displayed or implied
- Escape I and II
- Possession of Controlled Substances with Intent to Deliver/Manufacture

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- Unlawful possession of a firearm
- Theft of a firearm
- Possession of a stolen firearm
- Attempt to elude police vehicle
- Possession of a Stolen Motor Vehicle with mitigating factors
- Theft of a Motor Vehicle with mitigating factors
- Intimidating a Witness
- Department of Corrections (DOC) warrant for failure to appear (FTA) or failure to contact (FTC) with original charge on this list

317.5.2 AUTHORIZED MISDEMEANOR CRIMES

The following misdemeanor crimes are generally allowable applications of the Canine Team:

- Domestic Violence Assault, with injury and/or independent witness statements
- Domestic Violence Order Violations that are subject to mandatory arrest violations shall involve the suspect's physical presence at the victim's location or a threat of harm.

317.5.3 OTHER CANINE DEPLOYMENTS

- For all other crimes where the subject is considered to be armed or there is a threat of harm to the public or officers, approval by an on-scene supervisor with the rank of sergeant or above is needed.
- If the canine unit is being requested outside the city limits, approval from a Vancouver Police Department Sergeant or above is needed.
- If a supervisor approves a canine deployment outside of the Authorized Felony and Misdemeanor crimes as listed in Policy 317.5.1 and 317.5.2, the supervisor making the decision will articulate their reasoning in a police report.

317.5.4 NON TACTICAL USE OF CANINE

Canines may be deployed in non-aggressive work such as:

- Searching for evidence, controlled substance(s) or contraband

317.6 PREPARATION FOR DEPLOYMENT

Prior to the use of a canine to search for or apprehend any suspect, the canine handler and/or the supervisor on-scene should carefully consider all pertinent information reasonably available at the time.

As circumstances permit, the canine handler should make every reasonable effort to communicate and coordinate with other involved personnel to minimize the risk of accidental K9 bite or injury.

Both the on-duty supervisor and canine handler have the authority to order that the canine team disengage. It is not necessary that the supervisor and canine handler agree. The canine handler

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shall have the authority to decline the use of the canine whenever he/she deems deployment is unsuitable.

317.6.1 WARNINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Unless it would increase the risk of injury to law enforcement personnel or aid in the suspect's escape, a VPD K9 warning should be given that a PSD is about to be used to search/apprehend a suspect.

If a warning is not to be given, the canine handler, when possible, should first advise the supervisor of his/her decision to not give a warning before releasing the canine.

In the event of an apprehension with contact, the handler shall document in any related report how the warning was given and, if none was given, the reasons why.

317.7 CANINE IN PUBLIC AREAS

The canine should be kept on a leash when in areas that allow access to the public. Exceptions to this rule would include specific law enforcement operations for which the canine is trained.

- (a) A canine shall not be left unattended in any area to which the public may have access.
- (b) When the canine vehicle 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 ensure that the unattended vehicle remains inhabitable for the canine.

317.8 HANDLER COMPENSATION

The canine handler shall be available for call-out under conditions specified in the Canine Manual.

The canine handler shall be compensated for time spent in the care, feeding, grooming and other needs of the canine in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and according to the terms of the collective bargaining agreement/memorandum of understanding (29 USC § 207).

317.9 TRAINING

Before assignment in the field, each canine team shall be trained and certified to meet current Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) standards for their particular discipline. Additionally when feasible they should be certified to Washington State Police Canine Association (WSPCA) standards or other recognized and approved certification standards as applicable for their particular discipline. Per WSCJTC Policy (Chapter 6, Policy 10) canine handlers must fulfill different training requirements depending on their experience.

The Special Operations Canine Sergeant or designee shall be responsible for scheduling periodic training for all Department members in order to familiarize them with how to conduct themselves in the presence of Department canines.

All canine training should be conducted while on-duty unless otherwise approved by the Special Operations Canine Sergeant or Shift Sergeant.

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317.9.1 CONTINUED TRAINING

Each canine team shall thereafter be recertified to current CJTC, WSPCA or other recognized and approved certification standards on an annual basis. Additional training considerations are as follows:

- (a) Canine teams should receive training as defined in the current contract with the Vancouver Police Department canine training provider.
- (b) Canine handlers are encouraged to engage in additional training with approval of the Special Operations Canine Sergeant.
- (c) To ensure that all training is consistent, no handler, trainer or outside vendor is authorized to train to a standard that is not reviewed and approved by this department.

317.9.2 FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE TRAINING

Any canine team failing to graduate or obtain certification shall not be deployed in the field for tasks the team is not certified to perform until graduation or certification is achieved prior to expiration. When reasonably practicable, pending successful certification, the canine handler shall be temporarily reassigned to regular patrol duties.

317.9.3 TRAINING RECORDS

All canine training records shall be maintained in the canine handler's and the canine's training file in accordance with Washington State retention record laws.

317.9.4 TRAINING AIDS

Training aids are required to effectively train and maintain the skills of canines. Officers possessing, using or transporting controlled substances or explosives for canine training purposes must comply with federal and state requirements regarding the same. Alternatively, the Vancouver Police Department may work with outside trainers with the applicable licenses or permits.

317.10 CANINE OPERATIONAL MANUAL

As a supplemental document to this policy, the Canine Operational Manual has been developed to provide further assistance in the management and operations of the Canine Unit.