

**PALOS VERDES ESTATES POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**POLICY MANUAL**

**SECTION 28**

**POLICE CANINE PROGRAM**

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- 28.0 PURPOSE**
- 28.1 OBJECTIVES**
- 28.2 ORGANIZATION**
- 28.3 OPERATING POLICIES**
- 28.4 DEPLOYMENT**
- 28.5 CANINE UNIT SUPERVISOR**
- 28.6 CANINE HANDLER - DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
- 28.7 CANINE VEHICLES**
- 28.8 VETERINARIAN SERVICES**
- 28.9 INJURED HANDLER - PROCEDURES**

## **28.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this order is to provide guidelines for the utilization of the department's police canine program.

## **28.1 OBJECTIVES**

The principle objectives of the canine program are as follows:

- A. Provide a higher level of police response to better serve the community of Palos Verdes Estates.
- B. Develop preventative patrols as a deterrent to residential and commercial burglaries as well as other crimes.
- C. Decrease assaults on and injuries to police officers sustained during the investigation and apprehension of suspects involved in violent crimes.
- D. Promote community awareness and acceptance of the PVEPD Canine Program as a viable and important crime prevention tool.
- E. Reduce the time required for building and area containment and searches.
- F. A reduction of other preventable crimes through high visibility preventative patrol.

## **28.2 ORGANIZATION**

- A. The canine teams will be organizationally placed under the command of the patrol division.
- B. Operationally, the canine teams will be under the direct control of the on-duty Watch Commander.
- C. The Chief of Police may assign a specific supervisor to be the canine program supervisor in addition to his other duties.

## **28.3 OPERATING POLICIES**

### **A. PATROL**

1. Canine teams will patrol in specially equipped vehicles designed for such duty and clearly marked "Police K-9."
2. The decision to apply a police dog to a specific police operation shall remain with the dog handler concerned. This decision may be altered by the supervisor at the scene if conditions, in that supervisor's opinion, require such. When requested to apply his dog to a specific problem, the handler shall first evaluate the situation to determine if in fact the use of his dog is feasible. In those cases where the decision is made not to use the animal, the handler will stand by to give other police assistance as required.
3. When possible, as determined by the Watch Commander, canine teams will not be assigned to a specific patrol area,

but shall be allowed to roam free throughout the city responding to silent alarms or radio calls at the direction of the handler or by direction of the Watch Commander or the dispatcher.

4. Canine teams shall be specifically assigned as back-up units for the following calls for service:
  - a. All burglary in progress calls, silent alarms, events in progress, or just occurred.
  - b. Felony crimes where the suspect is on foot and a possible area search is eminent.
  - c. Any major 415 call (fights, disturbances involving crowds or parties). The decision to deploy the canine in these situations rests with the on-scene supervisor.
  - d. Any other call in which, in an officer's opinion, a canine team would be an asset as a back-up.
5. When canine teams are assigned a specific beat, they will be given the latitude of responding to any of the above calls at the discretion of the watch commander or dispatcher.
6. All mutual aid requests shall be approved and coordinated through the on-duty watch commander.

B. DOG BITE REPORTING

Whenever a canine attacks or bites a suspect, the following shall apply:

1. Officers shall provide proper medical attention to anyone bitten by the canine and prepare an injury report of the incident.
2. The bite area shall be examined and photographed. Proper photographs will show actual injuries sustained by the individual. The handler and at least one other officer, preferably the field supervisor, shall observe the injuries caused by the bite. These injuries will be carefully documented and witnessed in the injury report submitted by the handler. The witness will submit a supplemental report of his/her observations.
3. The department will keep health records and photos of the animals up to date. These reports will be available to bite victims should the department deem it advisable.
4. In addition to his officer's activity report, the handler will complete a canine officer's daily log each work day and submit it at the end of his watch. This will capture information pertaining to the use of the canine during that particular work day.

5. In any instance where the handler encourages his dog to take any unjustifiable bite on any person or takes part in any activity which might bring discredit upon the Canine Program, he will be subject to departmental disciplinary action and/or removal from the Canine Program as deemed necessary and proper by the Chief of Police.

C. FIELD OFFICER AWARENESS

In order to achieve maximum effective utilization of the Police Canine Teams, field officers should be aware of the following:

1. Officers should maintain containment of any area or building to be searched by a canine team.
2. Officers should, if at all possible, avoid contamination of the search scene prior to the canine team arrival.
3. If officers have entered a search area or building prior to the canine team's arrival, they should make sure that all personnel are out of the area prior to the search.
4. Officers should avoid:
  - a. Horseplay with the handler or dog.
  - b. Reaching in the canine unit with the dog inside.
  - c. Feeding the dog(s).

D. CANINE EQUIPMENT

1. The canine handler shall make frequent inspections of equipment to insure their proper condition and to maintain a satisfactory inventory.
2. Canine handlers are responsible for the care and condition of all equipment issued to them for training and control of their animals.
3. Canine units are to be kept in good operating order, interior cleaned and disinfected. All other department regulations pertaining to the proper maintenance of city vehicles shall apply.
4. The canine unit taken home shall be used only for departmental approved activities.
5. Any miscellaneous equipment, such as leashes, shall be of a type approved by the kennel furnishing the canine, based on their expertise in training and experience with such equipment. Variations must be approved by the Chief of Police.

E. TRAINING AND CARE OF THE ANIMALS

1. Canine handlers shall utilize constant training techniques, as recommended by the kennel, in order to keep their dogs trained to their fullest abilities. This includes training with other local police agency canine personnel.
2. Handlers shall use approved training equipment provided by the department when engaged in attack training.
3. The responsibility for grooming and general care of the animal on a daily basis rests with the handler.
4. Animals will be kept at the handler's home.
5. The animal is the responsibility of the handler and shall not be allowed to roam at will. The animal must be under the direct supervision of the handler.
6. Canine handlers are not to involve themselves in any off-duty activity, germane to their assignment, which may discredit the department or the canine program.

F. PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. All requests for canine team participation in community relations programs or demonstrations shall be through the Chief of Police.
2. Requests should be made at least one week in advance of the desired appearance.
3. Requests will be honored to the extent possible without placing program efficiency in jeopardy.

**28.4 DEPLOYMENT**

- A. Canine teams will be subject to shift changes or modifications to meet the demands or current crime trends or for any reason as determined by the Chief of Police.
- B. Canine teams will be subject to 24 hour call out on their normal work days.

**28.5 CANINE UNIT SUPERVISOR**

The Canine Unit Coordinator shall be directly responsible to the Chief of Police. The unit coordinator is responsible for:

- A. The development and continual training of the canine service teams.
- B. The procurement of all equipment, food, and supplies necessary for effective canine service, maintenance, and training.

- C. Accurate and timely record keeping of all data involving the activities of the canine unit.
- D. Assisting in the preparation and dissemination of training and tactical information pertinent to the use of canines by the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department.

#### **28.6 CANINE HANDLER - DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Respond to all radio calls when and where the unit's presence will further police service objectives.
- B. Provide for timely back-up assistance requests from other police units.
- C. Maintain required standards of proficiency for their assigned canines through continual on-duty and off-duty training.
- D. Care for and maintain assigned canine in his home at City expense.
- E. Provide for medical care and treatment by transporting his assigned canine to the veterinarian at any time such care and treatment is required.
- F. Maintain his service and training equipment in a clean and orderly manner, and in a manner that conforms to departmental specifications.
- G. Prepare and file all appropriate reports and logs pertinent to his daily, weekly, and monthly activities.

#### **28.7 CANINE VEHICLES**

A properly equipped vehicle will be assigned to each canine officer/handler and shall be used by him only in the performance of his duties or other police related functions such as training, public relations programs, transportation to the veterinarian, and 24 hour call outs.

#### **28.8 VETERINARIAN SERVICES**

In the event that a canine becomes sick or injured to the extent that professional medical attention is required, it shall be incumbent on the handler to transport the canine to the veterinarian.

The handler will direct a memo to the canine unit coordinator indicating all the circumstances surrounding the need for medical attention and the

treatment received.

Whenever possible the handler will utilize the department approved veterinarian for needed medical attention or treatment of his canine.

### **28.9 INJURED HANDLER - PROCEDURES**

The following courses of action shall be considered by all officers in the event a canine handler is injured and unable to command his canine. If the handler is downed, his canine in all probability will stand guard and prevent anyone from approaching. The dog and handler train, live, and work together, therefore it is likely that the dog's attitude will change if the handler is hurt or in danger.

- A. DO NOT rush in on the handler or dog.
- B. Call to the handler; if he can, he will call off the dog.
- C. Try to call the dog by using an authoritative voice.
- D. Request the assistance of another canine officer immediately.
- E. If a canine officer cannot be contacted, request the assistance of a member of the injured handler's family.
- F. The canine vehicle has protective sleeves, muzzles, and additional leads in the trunk. If the dog cannot be called off, he can be secured by allowing him to attack the protective sleeve. Once he has a grasp he will not let go. The canine can then be secured with a leash and muzzled with a minimum of danger, or the dog can be directed to the canine police car.
- G. After the canine is secured, another handler should transport him to the injured handler's home.
- H. In the event a canine is also injured, alert Dispatch to phone the veterinarian and advise him of the emergency. Request the assistance of another canine unit, if available, to transport the dog to the veterinarian.
- I. If conditions are such that none of these options are realistic or viable, the dog may have to be destroyed by other officers. If possible, this decision will be made by the watch commander or supervisor at the scene. This option should only be considered as a

last resort to protect an injured handler.