



# SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



## 580.14 USE OF CANINES 6-27-22

### **PURPOSE**

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of department canines to augment police services in the community including, but not limited to, locating suspects, contraband and apprehending criminal offenders.

### **POLICY**

The Sacramento Police Department values the sanctity of human life and the freedoms guaranteed by the United States and California Constitutions. It is the policy of the Sacramento Police Department that canine handlers meet and maintain the appropriate proficiency to effectively and reasonably carry out legitimate law enforcement objectives pursuant to GO 580.02 Use of Force policy and GO 522.02 Emergency Care for Individuals in Police Care or Control policy.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The Sacramento Police Department's primary use of canines is to safely locate suspect(s) in areas that are difficult or dangerous to search, while preserving the handler's option to use minimal force or avoid force altogether, to apprehend and place the suspect into custody. Canines will be deployed based on the criteria listed in this policy. Nothing in this policy supersedes the Sacramento Police Department's Use of Force Policy to include de-escalation, proportionality, and or crisis intervention techniques.

The Sacramento Police Department primarily deploys canines utilizing voice commands from the handler as a method of control. Repeated notice on the presence of a canine and request to surrender are given during a deployment when possible. The canines are deployed for suspects wanted for violent felonies, specific felonies listed in this policy, other crimes where a suspect is fleeing and officers believe the suspect is armed with a weapon, or when a suspect is actively resisting arrest. The canine is used to search and locate a suspect(s). Should the suspect(s) surrender the canine will be called back by the handler. Should the suspect resist or continue to evade officers, the canine will engage the suspect and be called off as soon as safely possible by the handler.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **A. DEFINITIONS**

1. Canine handler - Sworn members who have been POST trained and have attended the canine training school to be certified and qualified to perform all responsibilities of a canine handler.
2. Handler control methodology - The training methodology employed by the department for both the canine and handler in which the handler demonstrates that they are able to maintain physical or verbal control over the actions of their canines.

#### **B. GENERAL**

1. Approval shall be obtained from a field supervisor prior to using a canine to search for, or apprehend, a suspect. Exception: A rapidly evolving situation that is within the deployment guidelines, but in which it is impractical to obtain supervisory approval.



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NOTE: It is recognized that situations may arise that do not fall within the provisions set forth in this policy; in such a case, **a watch commander can use a standard of reasonableness to review the decision** to deploy a canine in view of the totality of circumstances.

2. Watch commanders shall notify the Metro Special Operations Section Lieutenant of any performance issues regarding handlers or canines.

3. [REDACTED]

## C. DEPLOYMENT GUIDELINES

The deployment of a canine shall be continuously re-evaluated during an incident to determine appropriateness of its use. During deployments when practical and safe to do so, the handler shall try to maintain visual sight, verbal control and/or have physical control of the canine.

1. Canines shall not be deployed for subjects in the following circumstances:

- a. Infractions
- b. Misdemeanor crimes not involving a weapon likely to cause serious bodily injury (such as simple assault, petty theft, vandalism, city code violations)
- c. Mere flight from an officer unless one of the factors in C. 2. are present
- d. Petty thefts that escalate to the level of a robbery due to the suspect's resistance towards the victim's efforts to stop the theft (absent actions resulting in great bodily injury (GBI) or a weapon being involved).
- e. Stolen vehicles involving a named suspect or civil in nature such as a rental car non-return
- f. Protest or crowd control situations

2. Canines can be deployed for suspects in the following circumstances:

- a. Wanted for violent felonies (such as homicide, robberies, kidnapping, serious assaults, drive by shootings, sexual assaults)
- b. Reasonable belief the person may be in possession of a weapon likely to cause serious bodily injury
- c. Specific felony property crimes:
  - i. Burglaries
  - ii. Stolen vehicles (when factors in section C.1.e don't exist)
  - iii. Felony vehicle evading
- d. Warrant service where any of the following are met:
  - i. Wanted for violent felony
  - ii. Has a violent criminal history
  - iii. Has a criminal history with firearms
  - iv. Has a criminal history of felony evasion or being physically assaultive towards law enforcement
- e. Suspect is actively resisting arrest

3. When a canine has engaged a suspect, the handler shall direct the canine to release its hold as quickly as possible when the totality of the circumstances indicates the suspect is surrendering or when adequate resources are available to take the suspect safely into custody. Factors in assessing when a suspect is surrendering include, but are not limited to:

- a. Suspect verbally surrenders
- b. Suspect's hands can be seen and are not in possession of a weapon
- c. Suspect physically complies (i.e., hands in the air, follows verbal commands or body language indicative of surrendering)



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## D. CONSIDERATIONS PRIOR TO DEPLOYMENT

Prior to the use of a department canine to search for or apprehend a suspect, the canine handler and/or supervisor at the scene shall consider all pertinent information reasonably available at the time.

The information shall include, but is not limited to:

1. The suspect's age or an estimate thereof.
2. The nature of the suspected offense.
3. Any potential danger to the public and/or other officers at the scene if the canine is utilized.
4. The degree of resistance, if any, the suspect has shown.
5. The potential for escape or flight if the canine is not utilized.
6. The potential for injury to officers or the public caused by the suspect if the canine is not used.
7. Ability of suspect to understand and comprehend canine warnings to include mental health, language and other disabilities.
8. Having other less lethal force options available to aid the canine during a deployment.

## E. BUILDING AND AREA SEARCHES

Whenever practical, a perimeter should be established before the canine is used for a building/area search. Canine officers shall:

1. If necessary, make search recommendations to the field supervisor.
2. Provide verbal warnings in a loud voice, or by use of amplified sound prior to releasing the canine:
  - a. Announce the presence of the canine unit.
  - b. Order the suspect out of hiding.
  - c. Warn the suspect that he or she may be bitten.
  - d. After allowing for a reasonable period of compliance, repeat the warning. If no response is received after again waiting for a reasonable period of compliance, the search may begin.
  - e. With the approval of the watch commander, the canine handler may omit or forgo canine warnings when exigent circumstances exist.
3. Repeat additional warnings when appropriate and safe to do so or when encountering structures where initial canine warnings may not have been heard. Supervisors and canine handlers should consider foregoing additional canine warnings when either of the following are present:
  - a. when there is increased risk to officer safety due to the reasonable belief the suspect (s) is armed with a weapon likely to cause great bodily injury
  - b. where the suspect (s) continues to elude officers during an area search based on the proximity of the canine
4. [REDACTED]
5. Officer should attempt to contact residents prior to utilizing a canine for yard searches. If a resident or responsible is unable to be contacted, then an additional canine warning shall be made by the handler prior to deploying the canine to search the backyard.
6. Advise Communications after initial warnings are given, and when possible, record on In Car Camera (ICC) and/or Body Worn Camera (BWC).
  - a. When feasible for area searches, verify the announcement could be heard by another officer on the perimeter opposite of the warning.
7. Notify communications and perimeter officers that the search has begun.
8. Maintain verbal control and frequent visual contact of the canine during the search.



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## F. CANINE OFFICERS

1. Canine officers shall:
  - a. Take a pro-active approach in dealing with priority calls, game plans, and attempt pickups where the use of a police canine would benefit the safety of the public and the officers involved.
  - b. When applicable, notify the field supervisor if there is a possibility of a potential canine deployment within that supervisor's area of responsibility.
2. Canine officers should not:
  - a. Be assigned to handle routine report calls.
  - b. Be dispatched to misdemeanor calls; i.e., 415s, 5150s, 901s, or traffic control.

## G. CANINE SERGEANT

1. Intentional Apprehensions
  - a. The canine Sergeant shall be notified as soon as practical regarding the apprehension and the circumstances of the call.
  - b. The canine Sergeant shall review all pertinent reports, in-car camera video and body worn camera video related to the canine apprehension.
  - c. Based on the review, the canine Sergeant may go over the incident with the handlers but will not determine any policy findings pending outcome from the Use of Force committee.
2. Unintentional Bite
  - a. The canine Sergeant shall:
    - i. be notified as soon as possible of any unintentional apprehension.
    - ii. respond to the scene when possible.
    - iii. notify the Metro Special Operations Section Lieutenant.
    - iv. review all pertinent in-car camera video and body worn camera video related to the apprehension.
    - v. coordinate with the Professional Standards Unit and the Metro Command to determine if a field settlement agreement is appropriate based on the totality of the incident.
    - vi. identify any training lessons learned from the incident and address with the handler and canine unit for educational and training purposes after concurrence by the Metro Captain that no policy violations need to be addressed.
    - vii. ensure a report and a red border form (RM3) is completed.
    - viii. document findings in a memorandum to the Deputy Chief of Office of Specialized Services.

## H. CARE OF CANINE AND EQUIPMENT

1. Canine officers shall:
  - a. Be responsible for the health and welfare of the canine, ensuring that the canine receives the proper nutrition, grooming, training, medical care, and living conditions.
  - b. Not expose the canine to any foreseeable and unreasonable risk of harm, unless required by a particular application.
  - c. Maintain department canine equipment under their control in a clean and serviceable condition.
  - d. Permit the canine unit sergeant to conduct on-site inspections of affected areas of the residence to verify that conditions and equipment conform to this policy. The canine unit sergeant shall minimally provide 24-hour notice prior to the inspection.





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- e. Report to the canine unit sergeant any changes in living status that may affect the lodging or environment of the canine.
- f. Report any injury or illness of the canine to the canine unit sergeant.
- g. Advise the canine unit sergeant prior to taking their canine to the veterinarian for a routine examination or for minor medical problems.
- h. Take the canine to the nearest available veterinarian if the canine is seriously injured or requires immediate medical attention. The canine unit sergeant shall be notified as soon as time permits.

## I. TRAINING

1. Prior to assignment in the field, each canine team shall:
  - a. Be trained and certified to meet POST standards.
  - b. Receive training as defined in the current contract with the department canine training provider.
  - c. Conduct all canine training while on duty unless otherwise approved by the canine sergeant.
  - d. Demonstrate an understanding and ability to use the handler control methodology, including the ability to control the canine both physically and with verbal commands.

## J. CROSS TRAINED CANINES

1. Canines trained in more than one discipline shall assist with investigations as directed by the Metro Special Operations Section Lieutenant.
2. Cross trained canine teams shall meet POST certifications.
3. Narcotics and firearm detection canines shall:
  - a. Assist in the search for narcotics or firearms during a search warrant service.
  - b. Search vehicles, buildings, and any other articles deemed necessary.
  - c. Not be used to search a person.
4. Explosives detection canines shall:
  - a. Assist in the search of a location where a bomb threat has been established. NOTE: Prior to responding, credibility of the threat shall be assessed.
  - b. Conduct preventive searches at locations such as special events, dignitary visits and restricted areas.
  - c. Not be used to clear a suspicious package.
  - d. Not be used to search a person.
  - e. Narcotics, article and explosive searches do not require verbal warnings prior to deployment.
5. SWAT deployment canines:
  - a. Shall be used in SWAT operations. NOTE: Only canine teams that have received specialized training and the approval from the Metro Special Operations Section Lieutenant will be utilized in this capacity.
  - b. Shall participate in bi-annual training with the SWAT team.

## K. OUTSIDE AGENCY ASSISTANCE

Upon request from an outside agency for the assistance of a department canine, the following conditions shall be met:

1. The Communications Division shall:
  - a. Obtain all necessary information including location, type of incident, suspect description, contact person, etc.
  - b. Notify the watch commander.



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2. The watch commander will respond to the request, taking into consideration personnel availability, the availability of the requesting agency's canine, and whether the need for the canine is consistent with department policy.
3. Prior to deployment, the canine officer will ensure that the use of the canine is within department policy.
4. Following a reportable injury caused by canine use of force, the nearest district sergeant or assigned field supervisor shall follow the supervisor's reporting procedures and responsibilities pursuant to GO 580.02 (Use of Force), including the completion of a tracking software entry.

## L. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR INJURIES INFLICTED BY A CANINE UPON AN INTENDED SUSPECT AT THE DIRECTION OF THE HANDLER

Canine officers shall:

1. Ensure first aid is rendered pursuant to (GO 522.02 Emergency Care for Individuals under Police Care or Control).
2. Notify the district sergeant, who shall follow the supervisor's reporting procedures and responsibilities pursuant to GO 580.02 (Use of Force), including the completion of a tracking software entry.
3. Obtain a statement from the intended suspect or witnesses relevant to the use of the canine when possible.
4. Notify CSI for photos of suspect's injury(ies). If CSI is unavailable, notify the district sergeant for photographs.
5. Complete appropriate reports detailing the incident including documentation of warnings issued prior to the deployment of the canine when applicable.
6. Complete a red border form (RM 3).

## M. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR INJURIES INFLICTED BY A CANINE UPON AN UNINTENDED INDIVIDUAL

Canine officers shall:

1. Ensure first aid is rendered pursuant to (GO 522.02 Emergency Care for Individuals under Police Care or Control).
2. Notify the watch commander and canine sergeant.
3. Ensure an attempt was made to obtain a statement from the individual who was unintentionally injured by the canine or witness(es) relevant to the use of the canine when possible.
4. Notify CSI for photos of victim's injury(ies). If CSI is unavailable, notify the district sergeant and request they respond for photographs.
5. The canine sergeant will coordinate with the Professional Standards Unit and the Metro Command to determine if a field settlement agreement is appropriate based on the totality of the incident.
6. Complete appropriate reports or department memorandum detailing the incident, including circumstances that led or contributed to the unintended bite.
7. Complete a City of Sacramento Workers' Compensation form WC001 (first report of injury form) if a City employee is the unintended individual.
8. Complete a red border form (RM 3).

## N. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

1. The canine unit sergeant shall:
  - a. Review all incidents in which a department canine injures any person. This does not replace or circumvent the Use of Force committee.



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- b. Notify the Metro Special Operations Section Lieutenant of any deployment or training issues.
  - c. When applicable, implement corrective and/or preventative action for any training, equipment, or canine issues that have been discovered as a result of the review. Any corrective actions should be approved by the Metro Captain so there is no conflict based on the Use of Force committees recommendations.
  - d. Maintain a record, cross referenced by officer, on all injuries involving department canines for a period of five (5) years from the date of injury.
2. The Metro Captain and the Metro Special Operations Section Lieutenant shall:
- a. Review all incidents in which a department canine injures any person.
  - b. Review the Blue Team entry, making a determination as to the appropriateness of the use of the canine.
  - c. The deployment is then brought before the Use of Force Committee to determine whether the incident is within policy.