

# Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

---

**Effective Date:** July 20, 2009 (interim)

**Series:** Law Enforcement and Security

**Part 446:** Law Enforcement

**Chapter 23:** Police Canine Teams

**Originating Office:** Office of Law Enforcement and Security

---

## 446 DM 23

23.1 **Purpose.** This chapter establishes policy concerning the use of Police Canine Teams by law enforcement bureaus and offices of the Department of the Interior.

23.2 **Scope.** This policy applies to all bureaus and offices of the Department of the Interior (Department / DOI).

23.3 **Definitions.** For the purpose of this chapter, the terms below are defined as follows:

A. Law Enforcement Officer (LEO): A DOI law enforcement officer sworn and commissioned to enforce criminal statutes and authorized to carry firearms, execute and serve warrants, search, seize, make arrests, and perform such duties as authorized by law.

B. Canine: A canine, trained and certified in duties such as patrol, tracking, narcotics, explosives, wildlife, search and rescue, cadaver, or other detection duties in accordance with current law and Departmental policy.

C. Canine Handler: A LEO trained to work with a canine trained in standard police duties, detection or other disciplines.

D. Canine Team: Canine handlers and their assigned canine.

E. Canine Deployment: A law enforcement activity in which a canine team is on scene and plays an active role in a law enforcement action.

F. Canine Apprehension: Any law enforcement activity in which a canine is on scene and plays a well documented role in the capture of a wanted suspect.

G. Release Warning: A verbal announcement that a canine handler is about to release their canine and the suspect should surrender immediately.

H. Canine Detection: Use of a trained canine to search for and locate evidence.

23.4 **Policy.** Bureaus/offices may, through bureau or office policy or standard operating procedures, authorize Law Enforcement Programs to use canine teams in the performance of their duties. All bureau or office policies authorizing canine teams will meet the minimum standards set forth herein.

23.5 **Responsibility.**

A. Deputy Assistant Secretary - Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Management is responsible for policy development and provides program guidance and oversight of the Department's law enforcement programs.

B. Heads of bureaus and offices are responsible for promulgating any counterpart policy or procedure required to implement the policy established in this chapter.

C. Bureau/office LEOs are responsible for complying with established policy and procedure governing canine team use.

23.6 **Standards.** This section sets forth minimum standards for use of canine teams within the Department.

A. General Conditions.

(1) The bureau or office canine program will have an organizational structure with a clear supervisory chain of command for the canine teams in the field. Each bureau/office will identify one individual as a Canine Team Coordinator who will serve as a Point of Contact for the Office of Law Enforcement and Security (OLES).

(2) The selection criteria for a canine handler will be clearly established.

(3) The selection criteria for a canine will be clearly established.

(4) All canines will be the property of the bureau or office.

(5) Canine handlers are responsible for the actions of their assigned canine at all times, both in the performance of their duties and during off-duty hours.

(a) Bureau or office canines shall not be left unattended in any area to which the public may have access;

(b) If given authority by bureau/office guidelines and directives to deploy a canine in the course of official duties, the final decision to deploy the canine shall remain with the handler. The handler will evaluate each situation and determine if the use of a canine is appropriate;

(c) Canine handlers must reevaluate the threat throughout a canine deployment or apprehension.

(6) The bureau or office will establish compensation policies implementing the Fair Labor Standards Act provisions and assuring that canine handlers are compensated for daily canine care outside of regular work hours.

(7) Bureaus/offices shall assure that canines are provided with appropriate housing both at the handler's place of residence as well as temporary kennels, if required, at the office. Housing must provide security for the canine and appropriate safety such as shade, water, as well as heat and air conditioning if required.

(8) Vehicles used to transport canines will be clearly marked as canine units, except that work units may request a waiver from bureau/office law enforcement management of the marking requirement when it poses a threat to handler and/or canine safety.

(9) Vehicles used to transport canines will be outfitted for safe canine transport per bureau/office guidelines and directives.

(10) A canine handler shall complete a written report for all canine deployments.

(11) Canine deployments that result in a bite or an accidental bite resulting in serious bodily injury shall be reported to the Interior Operations Center in accordance with the Serious Incident Reporting policy (446 DM 17).

**B. Canine Team Deployment Parameters.**

(1) All decisions to deploy a canine must be consistent with Graham v. Connor (490 U.S. 386 (1989)), and include balancing:

(a) The severity of the crime at issue;

(b) Whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the officers or others, and;

(c) Whether the suspect is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight.

(2) Prior to a canine deployment, the handler or another officer should give a clear release warning, taking into consideration factors such as language barriers, distance between officer and suspect, type of deployment (apprehension verses detection), and probable location of the suspect. A reasonable amount of time should be given for the suspect to comply with commands prior to the canine deployment. The handler is not required to give a warning if such announcement may endanger the safety of the canine or officers.

(3) Except in exigent circumstances or where there is imminent danger of death or serious injury, the canine, when deployed, should be kept in visual contact by the canine handler.

(4) A canine team may be used for crowd control in accordance with bureau / office policy.

(5) A canine may be deployed to locate and apprehend a suspect if the canine handler has reasonable belief that the individual has either committed or is about to commit a serious offense and if any of the following conditions exist:

(a) There is a reasonable belief that the individual poses an immediate threat of violence or serious harm to the public, or any officer;

(b) The canine is needed to search for and locate suspects who have fled the scene of a serious crime or to locate evidence of a crime when the officer has reason to believe the person is hiding or the evidence has been abandoned in a specific area;

(c) The canine is needed to assist in the arrest of suspects when the suspect is known to be armed with a weapon;

(d) The canine is needed to assist in the arrest of, or to prevent the escape of, serious or violent offenders;

(6) 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 when deciding to use a canine in view of the totality of the circumstances.

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

(8) A canine may be used in accordance with current law and Departmental policy to:

(e) Search persons, vehicles, buildings, bags, landscape and other articles deemed necessary.

(9) Canine deployment for non-law enforcement actions will be in accordance with bureau or office policy.

#### C. Canine Team Post-Bite Response Procedures.

(1) When a canine is deployed and a bite occurs, the handler will call off the canine when the canine can be safely removed, taking into consideration the safety of the handler, other officers, and any person at the scene and whether the suspect has been controlled.

(2) Whenever an injury related to the deployment of a canine occurs or there is a complaint of an injury, the following actions shall be taken:

(a) Medical attention shall be sought immediately.

(b) The handler shall document all reported injuries including color photographs of the injuries taken at the time of the incident or as soon as possible thereafter.

(c) The canine involved in the bite should be removed from the scene as soon as practical. If possible, the canine handler involved in the deployment should not be the investigating officer for the bite investigation.

(d) The investigating officer should take photographs (in addition to those taken by the handler at the time of the incident). When practical, take photographs after the individual receives medical attention, but prior to the application of bandages. Treat photographs as evidence. Maintain the investigative report, canine handler report, and evidence in accordance with bureau or office reporting procedures.

(e) The investigating officer shall document the attending physician's identification information, as well as ask for a diagnosis and prognosis of the sustained injuries. The information should be included in the investigative report.

D. Canine Team Certification and Training.

(1) Prior to deploying or utilizing a canine, canine handlers will successfully complete a bureau or office approved canine certification course. Certification courses must comply with a nationally accredited police canine training organization or meet industry standards, and meet the requirements set forth herein.

(2) All certified canine teams will receive re-certification training annually.

(3) All canine team certification training will be conducted by bureau or office approved instructors.

(4) Government time will be provided for training.

(5) Bureaus or offices will establish minimum training curriculums and maintain canine team certification and training records including;

(a) the date, location, skills evaluated, and length of training;

(6) Canine team certification and re-certification training will include the following:

(a) Canine team fundamentals (e.g., legal update, obedience, scent work, etc.);

(b) Canine care (e.g., basic grooming, health care, and first aid for canines, etc.);

(c) Canine team bite response (e.g., medical treatment, photographs, investigation, etc.);

(d) Canine team reporting requirements; and

(e) Canine team use policies.

(7) Training aids such as drugs or explosives used by canine teams must be properly secured. Canine handlers must maintain chain of custody in accordance with bureau or office policy.

(8) Periodic maintenance training should occur on a monthly basis. At a minimum, canine teams should receive an average of 4 hours a week of training.

(9) If a canine team fails to certify as required by the bureau or office, the canine may not be used in that capacity until the requirements are met.

E. Medical Care and Grooming.

(1) The canine handler shall ensure the canine receives proper nutrition, grooming, training, medical care, affection, and living conditions;

(2) The bureau or office shall require an annual medical examination by a bureau or office approved veterinarian;

(3) The bureau or office shall provide funding for all canine medical care;

(4) In the event of a serious injury to a canine, bureaus/offices will in all cases make care and treatment decisions based on the best interests of the canine. All decisions involving significant medical care or euthanasia will be made by Bureau/Office Directors of Law Enforcement, or their designee, in conjunction with the canine handler.

F. Reporting Requirements.

(1) Bureaus or offices will document and maintain the following:

(a) A record of all canine unit deployments, to include utilization statistics;

(b) A record of all canine certification and training;

(c) A record of canine medical records; and

(d) A record of all bite incidents.

(2) In addition to standard bureau or office “use of force” and/or incident reporting requirements, bureaus or offices will report “use of force” incidents of a canine unit in accordance with the requirements outlined in Departmental Manual, 446 DM 17, “Serious Incident Reporting.”

G. Retiring of canines.

(1) Bureau and office canine program procedures/guidelines should establish that a canine may be retired from the program when:

(a) The canine is no longer needed for official purposes, or;

(b) The canine's temperament is incompatible with bureau/office guidelines for the type of work that the canine is trained, or;

(c) The canine fails to achieve a passing score on their bureau or office certification program. Additional training and remediation is permitted, but bureaus should establish guidelines to determine when retirement is appropriate, or;

(d) The canine can no longer perform the requirements for the certification due to age, sickness, or injury.

(2) The canine handler shall have input in the decision making process concerning retiring a canine.

(3) Bureaus/offices will establish property transfer policies to officially transfer retired canines to the care of canine handlers or to other individuals who have experience handling canines. Transfer of retired canines to private ownership shall incur no cost to the recipient.