



HEADQUARTERS MEMORANDUM 24-01

File With: FC 0131

Distribution: All

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Subject: Use of Force Involving Trained Police Patrol Canines

A Trained Police Patrol Canine is specially trained to locate suspects and aid in criminal apprehensions. The primary purpose of a Patrol Canine is its use as a locating tool. Situations may arise where a Trained Police Patrol Canine may be used as a less-lethal use of force option, in accordance with FC 0131, to physically apprehend a suspect as long as the below requirements are met:

- a. Licensed by the State of Maryland as a police canine.
- b. Completion of a patrol canine course, with certification, that has been approved by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC).
- c. Holds current certification for patrol deployment, which the Special Operations Division (SOD) Director has approved; and
- d. All required canine vaccinations are up-to-date.

A Trained Police Patrol Canine, when used in accordance with department training, is NOT a deadly force tool. Police Canines will be viewed as a protective instrument related to department-authorized less lethal force options and may be used as such per FC 0131.

The canine officer will make patrol canine announcements in accordance with department training. A patrol canine announcement is a verbal announcement intended to de-escalate a situation, remove innocent persons, and facilitate a peaceful surrender without the need to use force. By itself, issuing or observing a patrol canine announcement is not a reportable use of force under FC 0131.

Suspects who purposely hide to avoid detection or arrest despite being offered reasonable opportunities to surrender are considered to be engaging in active resistance for the purposes of force relating to the use of a Trained Police Patrol Canine.

When a canine is used as a use-of-force implement or makes a physical apprehension of a suspect, the canine handler will ensure the on-duty supervisor in the district of occurrence is notified. The canine handler will also attempt to notify a canine unit supervisor. If the canine handler is unable to make contact with a canine unit supervisor, a notification to any SOD executive will satisfy any SOD notification requirements.

By themselves, unintentional physical canine contact is not a reportable use of force. However, canine handlers will refer to FC 0131 for reporting requirements related to any injury to suspect(s) during an arrest or other lawful police action. A canine handler who has unintentional physical canine contact will report the incident to a canine unit supervisor or SOD executive and will complete any required reports to document the incident.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. G. Jones".

Marcus G. Jones
Chief of Police