



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

CANINE UNIT

DIRECTIVE NO:

FC 0741

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PROPONENT UNIT:

Special Operations Division, Canine Unit

AUTHORITY:

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If a provision of a regulation, departmental directive, rule, or procedure conflicts with a provision of the contract, the contract prevails except where the contract provision conflicts with State law or the Police Collective Bargaining Law. (FOP Contract, Article 61).

I. POLICY

The *Montgomery County Department of Police (MCPD)* Canine Unit provides specialized assistance to operational units in the field through the use of trained *police* canines. *MCPD maintains a Canine Unit to provide the community with the best police services possible. The Canine Unit allows the department to increase officer safety and productivity, deter crime, and improve public relations by utilizing explosives, firearms, and narcotics detection capabilities, as well as the unit's tracking and enhanced search capacities.*

II. PURPOSE

This directive establishes guidelines for managing the MCPD Canine Unit and using police canines in field operations.

III. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this directive, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

- A. Advanced Tracking Canine:** *A canine specifically trained in scent discrimination to track and locate humans.*

- B. Canine Handler:** *A sworn member/officer who has been specially trained in the care, handling, and training of a canine for law enforcement functions.*
- C. Canine Team:** *An officer handler and their assigned police canine*
- D. Canine Unit:** *The MCPD unit comprises multiple Canine Teams.*
- E. Explosives Detection Canine (EDC):** *A canine specially trained to detect and alert to the odor of explosive materials.*
- F. Firearms Detection Canine:** *A canine specially trained to detect and alert to the odor of spent shell casings, discharged projectiles, discharged firearms, and their componentry.*
- G. Narcotic Detection Canine:** *A canine specially trained to detect and alert to the odor of certain narcotic odors.*
- H. Patrol Canine:** *A patrol canine is specially trained to locate suspects and aid in criminal apprehensions. A 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:*
 - 1. *Licensed by the State of Maryland as a police canine.***
 - 2. *Completion of a patrol canine course, with certification, that has been approved by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC).***
 - 3. *Holds a current certification for patrol deployment, which the Special Operations Division (SOD) Director has approved.***
 - 4. *All required canine vaccinations are up to date.***
- I. Police Canine:** *A canine procured or donated to the Montgomery County Department of Police (MCPD), whose primary function is a locating tool.*

IV. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A.** Canines may be utilized for, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1.** Tracking/*Locating* suspects.
 - 2.** *Tracking and locating lost or missing persons.*
 - 3.** Searching buildings, fields, and wooded areas for suspects.
 - 4.** Searching crime scenes for evidence.
 - 5.** Apprehending fleeing suspects.

6. Searching for hidden narcotics, *explosives, and firearms.*

7. *Perimeter and operational support for investigative, tactical, and surveillance units.*

8. High-risk arrest situations

B. Patrol Canines, by nature of their presence, are often a de-escalation tool that can alleviate the potential need for force to be used to affect a law enforcement purpose.

C. Members of the Canine Unit also assist patrol units with calls for service when not actively performing canine-related tasks.

V. EXPLOSIVES DETECTION CANINE (EDC)

A. *Explosives* detection canines (**EDC**) are available to assist field officers in certain incidents involving explosives searches.

B. *Conditions such as temperature, environment, and the search area size influence the effectiveness of explosive detection canines.* The handler will determine *if additional canines are needed*, when a canine should rest, and when the search should be discontinued.

C. The following are typical incidents where the explosives detection canine could be utilized:

1. Searching the scene of a detonated device *to locate any secondary devices and/or evidence related to the initial event.*

2. *Credible threats to facilities, persons, or events.*

3. Bomb threats *when the on-scene supervisor believes an explosives detection canine would be warranted.*

4. *Searches before and/or during special events.*

VI. NARCOTICS DETECTION CANINE

A. Narcotics detection canines are available to assist officers with searches of buildings, *parcels*, vehicles, and open areas for **Controlled Dangerous Substances** (CDS). A narcotics detection canine will not be used to search an individual for CDS.

B. Officers requesting a narcotics detection canine should secure the location/vehicle to be searched and should refrain from searching prior to the arrival of the canine team to avoid contamination.

C. *For the safety of the canine team, occupants shall be relocated from the vehicle prior to the deployment of the narcotics detection canine.*

VII. FIREARMS DETECTION CANINE

- A. Firearms detection canines are available to assist officers with searches of buildings, vehicles, and open areas for firearms and firearms-related evidence. A firearms detection canine will not be used to search an individual for firearms.**
- B. Officers requesting a firearms detection canine should secure the location/vehicle to be searched and should refrain from searching prior to the arrival of the canine team to avoid contamination.**

VIII. ADVANCED TRACKING CANINE

- A. The advanced tracking canine is trained to scent discriminate to track a specific person while overcoming environmental factors and significant time delays.**
- B. The department utilizes advanced tracking canines to assist officers in searches for missing persons and suspects where the enhanced capabilities of the advanced tracking canine may be required. A team may be requested via the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC) after officers have consulted with on-duty Canine Unit personnel to determine the need for an advanced tracking canine. In the absence of a Canine Unit officer, an on-scene supervisor may call out an advanced tracking canine; however, on-duty Canine Unit personnel will continue to be the primary first responders when canine-assisted searches are requested.**
- C. When the advanced tracking canine team is requested, the on-scene supervisor will:**
 - 1. Ensure a complete search of the immediate area is conducted while reasonably protecting the point where the person was last seen.**
 - 2. Ensure that the location where the subject of the search was last observed is secured and protected from contamination.**
 - 3. Ensure running vehicles are moved away from the immediate search area since exhaust fumes adversely affect the advanced tracking canine's scenting abilities.**
- D. Scent Article**

Upon the arrival of the advanced tracking canine team, the handler will locate a scent article. Common scent articles include clothing, car seats, steering wheels, doorknobs, footprints, etc. Scent articles will be protected from contamination and will not be touched or disturbed.
- E. Accompanying Officer**

If the search is for a missing person, the advanced tracking canine handler may request that a patrol officer accompany the handler to assist with radio communications. **Sufficient cover officers should accompany the advanced tracking canine team** if the search is for a wanted person. **When possible, a second canine handler or patrol canine team may deploy with the advanced tracking team in addition to sufficient cover officers.**

IX. PROCEDURES FOR UTILIZING CANINE ASSISTANCE

- A. *Canine* teams are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as *staffing* allows. Every attempt will be made to have canine coverage in each police district, with the greatest concentration of canine teams working between 2000 and 0200 hours. *When staffing is not optimal, primary canine coverage will be prioritized based on the department's operational needs.*
- B. Officers may request a canine team through *the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC)* to the scene of any incident where, in their opinion, a canine team can be useful.
- C. Once a canine team has been requested, the senior ranking officer on the scene should direct officers to establish a perimeter to prevent the suspect from escaping. Officers should not enter a building or open area once the canine team is en route. Every effort should be made to preserve the area from which a suspect was last seen fleeing so the track may be started at that point.
- D. When the canine officer arrives on the scene, the canine officer will be briefed on the following:
 - 1. The type of crime *and whether the crime is a misdemeanor or a felony.*
 - 2. Whether or not criminal charges will be placed; officers must advise the canine officer if the suspect is wanted only for investigation.
 - 3. The number of officers on the scene.
 - 4. *The location of on-scene and perimeter officers.*
 - 5. Other persons, if any, known to be in the building or area.
- E. Deployment of officers on the scene will be coordinated between the canine officer and the senior ranking officer.
 - 1. Officers should be advised when the canine unit enters the search area.
 - 2. The senior ranking officer on the scene will ensure that no officer or citizen enters the search area once the canine search has started unless specifically requested by the canine officer.
 - 3. At least one patrol unit will remain on the incident scene until the canine activity is completed.
- F. The canine officer is ultimately responsible for the *canine* team's safety. If, in the *canine* officer's opinion, the request falls outside the scope of the team's capacity or places them in an unacceptable degree of danger, the canine officer will not deploy the officer's canine.
- G. Arrests and Reports
In the event of an apprehension by the canine team, patrol officers will be responsible for transporting and processing arrestees and completing subsequent written reports. This includes apprehensions *due to* a canine deployment *and* any apprehension made by a canine officer (e.g.,

DWI, wanted subject, etc.). *Canine officers will be responsible for filling out any canine reports or other reports required of each officer individually.*

H. If all canine teams are out of service when an officer requests their assistance, the senior ranking officer will decide whether to wait for *the* canine's arrival or begin the search without a canine unit. Factors such as the reduced time delay because of the number of available teams, officer safety, *the* likelihood of suspect(s) hiding inside, type and size of the building or area, number of officers on the scene, etc., should be considered.

I. When officers on the scene of any incident are unsure if the canine can be helpful, they should request their assistance and allow the canine officer to make the decision.

J. Call-Out Procedures for Canine Units

The senior ranking officer at the scene of an incident shall have the authority to call out an off-duty canine officer if, in the officer's opinion, the dog can be useful. Call-outs should be considered in cases involving murder, kidnapping, rape, burglary, robbery, or lost or missing persons. Consideration should be given to location, time delay, weather, and the amount of foot traffic.

X. PATROL CANINE ANNOUNCEMENT

A. *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.*

B. *When issuing a patrol canine announcement, the canine officer or designee will ensure the following elements are used:*

1. *Announcement of presence as an authority*
 - a. *Example: "County Police, Canine!"*
2. *Request for the surrender of the suspect(s)*
 - a. *Example: "Speak to me now!"*
3. *Warning of the potential use of force for not surrendering*
 - a. *Example: "I will send my dog; if they find you, they may bite you!"*

XI. REPORTING AND NOTIFICATIONS

A. *All canine deployments will be documented using the authorized canine documentation software.*

B. *When a canine is used as a use-of-force implement or makes a physical apprehension of a suspect, the internal MCP Form 741, Canine Bite Report, will be completed. A Use-of-Force report will also be completed in accordance with FC 0131.*