
	GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT		
	Canine Use		
	GENERAL ORDER	609.1	
Effective Date	06/05/2022	1.2.4, 12.1.2, 41.1.5, 41.2.5, 84.1.4	
Authorized by:	Mark P. Sroka CHIEF OF POLICE	SIGNATURE	DATE 05/20/2022

1. PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this directive is to outline specific requirements for the Department's canine program, and to provide guidance to personnel concerning the use and deployment of canine teams.

2. POLICY

2.1. Canine teams provide specialized assistance to operational units through the use of highly trained dogs and their handlers. Officers should be familiar with canine functions so they are able to make informed decisions as to when canine can be useful and should be summoned.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. **Canine** - Within the context of this directive, the term "canine" refers to a dog that is owned by a law enforcement agency, has been trained and certified for law enforcement specific duties and is assigned to a canine team.

3.2. **Canine Team** - Within the context of this directive, the term "canine team" refers to dog and handler from the Gaithersburg Police Department, who have been canine-trained and certified together, or to a similar such team from an allied law enforcement agency.

3.3. **Handler** - Within the context of this directive, the term "handler" refers to a law enforcement officer who has been trained and certified with his or her canine partner and is assigned with that partner to a canine team.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1. General Provisions

4.1.1. The designated handler is responsible for day to day care of the canine.

4.1.2. Officers are selected for the Department's canine handler position through a competitive process if there is more than one interested officer.

4.1.3. The Department consults with subject matter experts (SMEs) during the evaluation and selection process, when a police canine is acquired

for Department service. This often involves the SME traveling with the canine handler to various kennels, in order to select a dog with the proper temperament, abilities, and disposition to be a good fit with the handler, and to accomplish the Department's objectives.

- 4.1.4. The Department's canines and their handlers must together attend and successfully complete an approved canine training program before being deployed for law enforcement purposes and testifying in court.
- 4.1.5. Canine teams will maintain certification and proficiency by attending and participating in monthly training to maintain skills.
 - 4.1.5.1. Training is documented in the K9 Monthly Statistical Report submitted to the Operations Bureau Commander.
 - 4.1.5.2. Additional evaluation is conducted, and certification maintained, through Annual K9 In-Service training. This is accomplished in partnership with other area allied agencies.
- 4.1.6. Any controlled dangerous substances utilized in training of narcotics detection-trained canine team(s) will be obtained from the Montgomery County Police crime laboratory and will be accounted for and strictly controlled.
 - 4.1.6.1. Only the canine handler may sign CDS out from the MCP Crime Lab. The CDS will be weighed and its receipt documented at the time of withdrawal.
 - 4.1.6.2. The CDS will be securely maintained in a locked cabinet within the police facility and only removed for training purposes. When training is completed, the CDS will be returned to the locked cabinet.
 - 4.1.6.3. When the handler has no further training need for the CDS it will be returned to the MCP Crime Lab and weighed.
 - 4.1.6.4. Any loss of or discrepancy involving the CDS will be immediately reported to the Chief of Police through the Operations Bureau Commander.
- 4.1.7. Only Department approved equipment will be used by the Department's canines and their handlers.
- 4.1.8. Police vehicles used by canine team(s) will be equipped with a modified passenger compartment intended for the comfortable, yet confined transport of the animal. During patrol or normal activities or operations, the animal will not be permitted to roam free in the police vehicle.

- 4.1.9. Canines will be equipped with a collar and leash configuration that maximizes the dog's effectiveness while minimizing any potential harm or injury to the animal. The Department's canine(s) will wear a collar with appropriate tags and identifiers affixed.
- 4.1.10. The following required equipment is issued to canine teams:
 - 4.1.10.1. Dog food
 - 4.1.10.2. Gallon jug for water
 - 4.1.10.3. Stainless steel water bowl
 - 4.1.10.4. Play equipment
 - 4.1.10.5. Under coat and grooming brushes
 - 4.1.10.6. Leather adjustable leads
 - 4.1.10.7. Extra collar
 - 4.1.10.8. Muzzle
 - 4.1.10.9. Tracking harness
 - 4.1.10.10. Hidden sleeve
 - 4.1.10.11. Canine carrier vehicle insert
 - 4.1.10.12. Emergency heat reaction fan with alarm system
 - 4.1.10.13. PVC training/reward pipes
 - 4.1.10.14. Bottle of Narcan (antidote for narcotic ingestion)
- 4.1.11. Narcotics trained canine teams will not be used to search persons unless specifically directed by a Bureau Commander.

4.2. Requesting Canine

- 4.2.1. Officers may request a canine team, via the Public Safety Communications Center, to the scene of any incident where, in their opinion, a canine team can be useful.
- 4.2.2. Officers must be cognizant of those situations that require a search warrant before a search can be conducted (See General Order 601.3 for guidance).
- 4.2.3. Officers should consider requesting the response of a canine team when:

- 4.2.3.1. Tracking suspects or lost persons;
 - 4.2.3.2. Searching buildings, fields and wooded areas for suspects;
 - 4.2.3.3. Searching crime scenes for evidence;
 - 4.2.3.4. Searching for hidden narcotics; or
 - 4.2.3.5. High risk arrest situations exist.
- 4.2.4. When evaluating the need for canine assistance for the search of a vehicle, container, or area, the safety of the investigating officers is of primary concern. Prior to requesting a search by canine, officers must ensure that the vehicle, container, or area to be searched is secured and protected.
- 4.2.5. Officers must ensure that any persons from the vehicle to be searched, or who possessed any items to be searched, are not able to tamper with, dispose of, or destroy evidence.
- 4.2.6. Once a canine team has been requested to respond to the scene of potential or actual criminal activity, officers must ensure that the scene remains secure, to prevent suspects from fleeing or potential or actual evidence from being compromised.
- 4.2.7. Officers should avoid entering a building or open area once the canine team is enroute.
- 4.2.8. Whenever possible, a perimeter will be established to assist canine and to define a crime scene or area for the search, keeping in mind that the perimeter may need to expand or contract as the search progresses.

4.3. Canine Deployment

- 4.3.1. The canine handler has the ultimate responsibility for the safety of the canine team. If, in the handler's judgment, the request falls outside the scope of the canine team's capacity, or places them in an unacceptable degree of danger, the handler will not deploy the canine.
- 4.3.2. When the canine team arrives at the scene, they will be briefed on:
- 4.3.2.1. The type of offense or incident involved;
 - 4.3.2.2. Whether or not criminal charges are pending;
 - 4.3.2.3. The location and number of officers assisting; and
 - 4.3.2.4. Whether anyone else is known to be in the building or in the area where the canine will search.

- 4.3.3. Outdoor searches and tracks will be conducted on lead except when in the judgment of the handler off lead work is required for officer safety. In those instances when an off lead search is used, the handler will make a reasonable attempt to insure the safety of innocent citizens.
- 4.3.4. When making the decision to deploy the canine, the handler shall consider all of the following:
 - 4.3.4.1. The severity of the crime at issue;
 - 4.3.4.2. Whether the subject poses an imminent threat to the safety of officer or others;
 - 4.3.4.3. Whether the subject is actively resisting arrest or lawful detention; and
 - 4.3.4.4. Whether the subject is displaying active aggression to the officer or others.
- 4.3.5. Any use of force using the canine will be done in a manner consistent with General Order 600.1 – Response to Resistance/Aggression and the Maryland Use of Force Statute ([Md. Code Ann., Pub. Safety \(“PS”\) § 3-524\(d\)\(1\)](#)).
- 4.3.6. The canine may be deployed in a deterrent manner when active resistance may be anticipated or when a subject is passively resisting, such as refusing to show his/her hands or refusing to show themselves from a place of concealment. Under such circumstances, the handler will consider all known facts prior to releasing the canine.
- 4.3.7. When practical, before releasing the canine for the purposes of taking a subject into custody the handler will:
 - 4.3.7.1. Use a verbal command to gain the subjects compliance;
 - 4.3.7.2. Afford suspects a reasonable opportunity to surrender.
- 4.3.8. Once a canine is released or commanded to apprehend a suspect by biting and holding them, it is the duty of the handler to remove the dog off the bite (physically or by voice command) at the earliest opportunity in order to minimize injury to the suspect. Specifically, this is when the officer is able to see the suspect’s hands or when it can be determined that he or she is no longer a threat.
- 4.3.9. The Canine Officer may use the canine to protect him/her or others from the threat of death or injury. The use of a canine is considered a use of force but is not considered deadly force.

- 4.3.10. Deployment of officers will be coordinated between the canine handler and the senior ranking officer on the scene.
- 4.3.11. Since the canine handler has been specially trained to control the dog, officers at the scene will adhere to the canine handler's direction at all times.
- 4.3.12. No officer, other than the designated canine handler, will attempt to control or handle the dog, unless otherwise directed by the handler.
- 4.3.13. Investigating officers and any other officers deployed will be notified when the canine team begins to search or enters the area to be searched. Officers deployed shall ensure that no other officers or citizens enter the area being searched.
- 4.3.14. At least one (1) patrol officer will remain at the scene of the incident until the canine activity is completed.
- 4.3.15. When a vehicle is to be searched, officers should turn off the engine and close the windows of the vehicle.

4.4. Reporting

- 4.4.1. In the event of an apprehension by a canine team, patrol officers will be responsible for transporting and processing arrestees and completing subsequent written reports (except reporting requirements specific to canine teams).
- 4.4.2. Investigating or arresting officers shall document the use of a canine team in the related event report. The report shall indicate the name of the canine officer, the particulars of the search and the results of the search.
- 4.4.3. In any search conducted by a canine team, the canine officer shall document the actions on a canine detection report.
- 4.4.4. Canine Show of Force and Canine bites are documented in a Response to Resistance / Aggression Report, as outlined in General Order 600.2 – Response to Resistance / Aggression Reporting & Review Process.
- 4.4.5. Other canine deployment data is captured in the K9 Monthly Statistical Report.

4.5. Deactivation

- 4.5.1. Upon the deactivation of any Department canine, all efforts will be made to locate a new owner for the animal.

- 4.5.2. The adopting owner will be required to demonstrate that they possess the proper facilities and capabilities for providing proper care for the animal.
- 4.5.3. The opportunity for adoption will first be given to the current Department handler and then to other sworn members of the Department.
- 4.5.4. In the event two or more members of the Department request to adopt the animal, the final decision will be made by the Chief of Police after consultation with the canine handler and Operations Bureau Commander.
- 4.5.5. If an adoption is to be sought outside of sworn Department personnel, the Operations Bureau Commander will consult with an animal welfare agency to determine the appropriate course of action.
- 4.5.6. Any need to provide continuing food and veterinarian services for the deactivated canine will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police with the approval of the City Manager.
- 4.5.7. The new owner of the animal will be required to complete an Acceptance of Ownership and Full Responsibility form. The form will be retained by the Commander of the Operations Bureau and the City Attorney.