

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



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SUBJECT: K-9 Unit Operations		
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I. Policy

There shall be a standard of performance for St. Joseph Police Department K-9 members. All K-9 members shall be evaluated annually. In addition to general patrol duties, the K-9 Unit shall also provide support to all other Department Divisions. If requested, assistance to other law enforcement agencies shall be provided pursuant to approval by the Chief of Police or their designate.

II. Procedure

The following guidelines shall be adhered to regarding the selection, use, and management of the Department's K-9 Unit.

A. K-9 Responsibilities/Services: The K-9 Unit shall perform services unique to the trained Police K-9 including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Locating illegal controlled substances and/or paraphernalia;
2. Tracking criminal suspects;
3. Tracking missing and endangered persons under exigent circumstances;
4. Searching buildings and/or other large areas;
5. Assisting in member protection; and
6. Assisting in the apprehension of dangerous subjects.

B. K-9 Certification:

1. K-9 Teams shall be re-certified on an annual basis through the National Police Canine Association, at the discretion of the Unit Supervisor.
2. K-9 Teams shall also be required to pass an annual Department performance standards evaluation under the supervision of the Unit Supervisor. The evaluation process shall assist the Unit Supervisor in determining if the K-9 Unit is performing as expected. K-9 team evaluations shall include, at the minimum, area and/or building searches, apprehension testing, drug searches, and tracking. Written documentation of the evaluation format, including

satisfactory and unsatisfactory performance definitions, shall be included in this process.

C. K-9 Personnel:

1. **K-9 Trainer/Unit Supervisor:** Shall be assigned by the unit's Captain (usually the Dayshift Captain). The Trainer may be the K-9 Unit Supervisor, if trained properly, or a trainer from outside the agency. The K-9 Unit Supervisor is responsible for:
 - a. Supervising the operations of the K-9 Unit by ensuring that K-9 members are performing their specialized duties and working towards the goals of the K-9 Unit. If problems arise with a K-9 Handler's performance, the Unit Supervisor shall make a conscientious attempt(s) to correct them. If the determination is made that such problems cannot be sufficiently addressed by counseling/remedial training, the Unit Supervisor shall make the appropriate recommendations to the K-9 Unit Captain;
 - b. Assisting in the recruitment and/or selection process for all new K-9 members;
 - c. K-9 Unit Training:
 - 1) The Unit Supervisor shall schedule all in-service training, maintenance training, and/or specialized training for the K-9 members, and shall ensure that all such members participate in the training sessions. Training sessions shall be designated on the dates and times established by the K-9 Unit Supervisor.
 - 2) The Unit Supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring the training of all new K-9 members;
 - d. Purchasing of necessary equipment. The Unit Supervisor shall replace any damaged or worn equipment when advised of such by a K-9 Handler;
 - e. Inspecting K-9 member kennel facilities and/or K-9 vehicles;
 - f. Documenting maintenance costs for all K-9 units;
 - g. Assisting the Professional Standards Officer with any necessary follow-up investigation concerning K-9 use incidents; and
 - h. Maintaining K-9 Use Records: Such records shall include:
 - 1) Training Records (a copy of all training documentation shall be available for the Department Training Officer);
 - 2) K-9 Use Reports (copies kept in the K-9 Office and maintained by the K-9 Supervisor);
 - 3) Veterinary Records (copies kept in the K-9 Office and/or on the designated K-9 tracking program maintained by the K-9 Supervisor); and
 - 4) Equipment and Maintenance Costs for all K-9 members.
2. **K-9 Handlers:** The K-9 Handler shall be the only member responsible for handling the Police K-9. Under no circumstances shall any other member take or use the K-9 unless specifically directed to do so by the Chief of Police. Members shall not address, feed, pet, agitate, or play with a Police K-9

without approval of the K-9 Handler. The K-9 Handler shall be supervised by the on-duty Shift Supervisors/Commanders of the Patrol Division. A K-9 Handler's shift assignment and/or days off shall be determined by their Division Commander through coordination with the K-9 Unit Supervisor. K-9 Handler guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Responsibilities: A K-9 Handler will be responsible for performing the tasks and/or assignments required of such a position to the best of their ability. These **shall include**, but are not limited to, the following:

1) Individual training, maintenance, and care of their K-9;

a) Including maintaining a clean, healthy environment for their K-9 in its kennel and vehicle (all kennels and vehicles are subject to inspection by the K-9 Supervisor). The Police K-9 shall be kenneled at the residence of the assigned K-9 Handler. During extended periods of time when the K-9 Handler is unable to care for the K-9, the dog shall either be boarded at a Department-approved facility or cared for by other K-9 members.

b) Each K-9 Handler shall report any performance problem concerning their dog to the K-9 Unit Supervisor immediately.

c) K-9 Handlers shall maintain control of their respective dog (on and off duty) at all times.

2) Maintaining the condition of all equipment issued to them (See also Section "C.2.c." of this same General Order);

3) Attending training assignments as determined by the K-9 Supervisor (attendance is mandatory, unless otherwise specified by the Supervisor). Unexcused absences may result in remedial training, disciplinary action, or expulsion from the K-9 Unit;

4) Maintaining files containing the individual training, use, and/or public demonstrations involving a K-9 Handler's dog. Such files shall be subject to inspection by the K-9 Unit Supervisor and must be entered into the designated tracking program;

5) Providing routine examinations and/or emergency veterinary care for their K-9. All medical reports shall be forwarded to the K-9 Unit Supervisor;

6) Performing community service programs as assigned by the K-9 Supervisor; and

7) Completion of a "K-9 Use Report" when the canine is utilized in an official capacity, and forwarding the report to the K-9 unit Supervisor.

b. K-9 Handler Selection: The selection of K-9 Handlers shall be governed by the criteria set forth in GO 0123 (Specialized and Rotational Assignments):

- 1) A newly appointed K-9 Handler shall be placed on a two-month probationary period following their completion of a "Basic K-9 Handler" course or their appointment of a new K-9. At the end of the probationary period, the Unit Supervisor shall forward a written recommendation to the Patrol Commander and the Chief of Police concerning the continued status of the probationary K-9 Handler; and
 - 2) A member shall forfeit their K-9 position due to a recognized failure(s) to meet established criteria and/or guidelines pertaining to the K-9 Unit.
- c. **K-9 Handler Equipment:** (Provided by the Department and/or the City)
- 1) One waist leash;
 - 2) One 6' lead;
 - 3) One tracking lead;
 - 4) One leather collar;
 - 5) One fur saver collar;
 - 6) One pinch collar;
 - 7) One K-9 Patrol harness;
 - 8) One food bowl;
 - 9) Two water bowls;
 - 10) One "Agitation Muzzle";
 - 11) One K-9 Medical Trauma Kit (including Narcan);
 - 12) One concrete pad (for outdoor dog kennel);
 - 13) One outdoor dog kennel;
 - 14) One dog house (optional);
 - 15) Veterinary care necessary for the Police K-9;
 - 16) Food needed for the Police K-9, and
 - 17) Grooming equipment;
 - 18) Electronic Dog Collar (E-collar);
 - 19) K-9 Ballistic vest.

D. K-9 Unit Equipment: The equipment provided to the K-9 Unit shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. One bite suit, top and bottom;
2. One concealed sleeve;
3. Two exposed sleeves;
4. DEA Narcotics Kits (cocaine, heroin, meth, ecstasy and marijuana); and
5. A safe.

E. Use of a Department K-9: Each K-9 Handler ultimately knows the capabilities and limitations of their K-9. Decisions regarding the use of a Department K-9 shall rest with the K-9 Handler (including those decisions not to use a K-9), and shall be based upon risks to the public, other members, the K-9 Handler and/or the K-9 itself. An individual K-9 may not have the capabilities necessary to deal with a certain type of service call and/or situation. A K-9 Handler may request that another K-9 team respond if the requested team is more suitable for the task at hand.

F. Assignment and Usage

1. Restriction on Canine Use of Force

- a. Patrol canines will be trained to use only the level of force necessary to counter resistance or threats.
- b. Canines can cause serious physical injuries, therefore, they should not be released or used against persons who do not pose an imminent threat to the officer or other person, except as otherwise provided in this order.

2. Priority Assignments

Patrol canine units should, if available, be assigned to assist in the following types of calls:

- a. Vehicle searches
- b. Burglaries in progress and intrusion and robbery alarms
- c. Major civil disturbances
- d. Searches for felons who are attempting to flee on foot
- e. Other situations in which the specialized capabilities of a canine unit are needed

3. General Use

Patrol canines can be used for:

- a. Routine patrol
- b. Field and building searches for criminals or evidence of criminal activity
- c. Tracking and apprehending persons who have escaped or who are in the process of escaping from crime scenes, arrest or confinement in a corrections or mental health institution
- d. Tracking endangered, lost or injured persons under exigent circumstances
- e. Detection of controlled substances
- f. Crowd control when necessary to prevent death or injury to innocent persons, assault on officers or damage to property
- g. Public appearances and demonstrations to promote public relations
- h. Providing strong psychological deterrents to certain types of criminal misconduct including unlawful assembly, assault and resisting arrest
- i. Security of government property
- j. Other duties and functions as may be directed by the Supervisor

G. K-9 Vehicle Operation: Due to the unique circumstances involving the transport of a Police K-9, certain considerations must be weighed to ensure the safety of the dog.

1. **Traffic Control:** K-9 Handlers should avoid the use of K-9 units containing canines for traffic control in dangerous locations. Consideration should be given to the use of flares and/or cones to alert approaching traffic when necessary.
2. **Emergency Responses/Vehicle Pursuits:** A K-9 Handler shall follow the same guidelines contained in the Department General Order governing "Vehicle Pursuits". In addition, the K-9 Handler will keep in mind the welfare of their K-9 during necessary maneuvers that could possibly toss the K-9 around inside the vehicle. If a K-9 Unit initiates a vehicle pursuit, the K-

9 Unit shall become the secondary pursuit vehicle as soon as another marked vehicle is available to take over as the primary unit.

Chris Connally, Chief of Police

Date