



Sheridan Police Department
Policies and Procedures
16.3
Chapter 16 – Patrol Operations
Section 3 – K-9 Operations

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Signature:

Because of their physical capabilities including their superior senses of smell and hearing, the Sheridan Police Department uses trained police canines as a tool to detect and locate illegal drugs, track suspects involved in criminal acts, recover evidence, apprehend certain criminals, search buildings, and provide demonstrations to further public relations.

Definitions:

Canine Team - Handler and assigned canine.

Handler - Sheridan Police Department officer assigned to a canine team who has successfully completed and maintained the required training and certification.

16.3.1 K-9 Program Organization

A. Structure of the Canine Program

1. Canine handlers shall be sworn officers. Canine handlers shall be responsible through the chain of command to the patrol operations lieutenant for canine related issues.
2. The patrol operations lieutenant will be the canine unit coordinator. The coordinator shall:
 - a. Oversee the administrative operation of the unit;
 - b. Ensure the canine unit maintains performance standards meeting industry accepted certification requirements;
 - c. Conduct semi-annual evaluations of the canine team; and
 - d. Develop and/or approve records on selection, training, and evaluation and forward those records to the office of the chief of police for maintenance.

B. Canine Handler Duties

1. Canine handlers are responsible for carrying out all regular duties of their rank.
2. Canine handlers shall maintain constant control of the canine.
3. Canine handlers shall respond to calls for service to search buildings, track or locate suspects, locate evidence, and conduct searches for illegal drugs.
4. The canine handler must maintain up to date knowledge of all statutes, case law, and policy regarding the appropriate use of his or her canine.
5. Canine handlers shall coordinate the use of other officers to assist the canine team.
6. Canine handlers shall assist other law enforcement agencies as authorized.
7. Canine handlers shall be subject to call-outs when available. (Prior to contacting an off duty handler, the on-duty supervisor will review the need for the canine team.)
8. Canine handlers shall participate in public relations demonstrations.

9. Canine handlers shall complete and forward to the operations commander required canine records including:
 - a. Detailed training logs; and
 - b. Utilization (including exercise) through the department records management system.
 10. Canine handlers shall ensure that the canine maintains proficiency necessary to retain certification.
 11. Canine handlers shall attend canine training as directed.
 12. Canine handlers shall care for the canine including:
 - a. Feeding a high quality, well-balanced food to keep the canine at its appropriate weight as determined by a veterinarian.
 - b. Keeping their canine clean and well groomed.
 - c. Ensuring the canine gets adequate exercise to maintain a healthy state of readiness for canine service.
 - d. Ensuring that the canine receives timely and proper medical care including vaccinations.
 - i. Handlers will notify the patrol commander should illness or injuries prevent the canine from working.
 - ii. All veterinary service arrangements shall be made by the handler with notification to the patrol commander.
 - iii. All medical bills shall be sent to the patrol commander for approval.
 - iv. If the canine is ill and cannot work, the handler will report for duty.
 13. Canine handlers shall maintain a current City of Sheridan animal license for the canine.
 14. Canine handlers shall obtain food and other canine equipment needs. All expenses other than dog food, annual medical exams, and normal maintenance items must be pre-approved by the patrol commander.
 15. In the handler's absence, the canine may be boarded at department approved kennels.
- C. Handler Injury
1. In the event the canine handler is injured and unable to care for the canine, it will be the responsibility of the patrol operations lieutenant or designee to arrange care. Options include the handler's family, a boarding facility, or another officer's home.
 2. No officer may work the canine during the handler's absence. This does not preclude others from grooming, exercising, or playing with the dog.

16.3.2 Use of Canine

A. Narcotics Detection

1. Prior to using the canine for a drug search or sniff, the handler must determine that there is legal justification for the dog's use and its use is constitutionally permissible (i.e. - a search warrant, a warrant rule exception combined with probable cause based on articulable facts, consent, etc.).
2. Canines may be used to conduct searches or sniffs of buildings, vehicles, fields, baggage, mail, and any other area that the officer has legal authority to search.
3. When the canine handler is called to a scene to conduct a search or sniff, the handler will contact the on-scene officer and evaluate the type and legality of the requested search or sniff. He will evaluate the search area for potential hazards, wind and air

currents. He will plan the search/sniff and brief officers at the scene as to what their conduct or actions should be.

4. Prior to the search/sniff, all plain view drugs must be secured. Windows and doors should be shut. Fans, including central air and heating, should be turned off. The scene should be contaminated no more than is necessary to make it safe and secure. The handler will explain in detail what is being requested of back up units. Loud noise, excessive talking, and radio traffic should be kept to a minimum while the canine is working.
5. The canine is capable of detecting the following drug odors:
 - a. Marijuana;
 - b. Cocaine;
 - c. Heroin; and
 - d. Methamphetamine.
6. School searches, sniffs for the purpose of locating controlled substances shall be limited to locker, parking lot or classroom searches. No body searches will be performed.

B. Public Relations

1. Canines will be available to perform public demonstrations as representatives of the department for various community service groups, schools, churches, etc.
2. Demonstrations of the canine unit shall be coordinated and implemented by the canine handler.
3. Canine teams giving demonstrations shall prepare and perform in a professional manner.
4. Handlers should complete a Spillman "Public Contact" incident report for each demonstration.

C. Mutual Aid Requests

1. Requests for the use of the Sheridan Police Department canine outside of Sheridan County will be directed to the patrol operations lieutenant or captain. A reasonable effort will be made to accommodate outside agency requests for assistance.
2. The proper functioning of the Sheridan Police Department shall not be jeopardized in order to provide assistance to an outside request.
3. A canine handler assigned to an outside agency request shall complete an incident report.

D. The canine handler shall have the sole responsibility in determining whether or not to use the canine unless specifically relieved by a superior officer who shall then assume the full responsibility.

E. The canine team will be assigned a Sheridan Police Department vehicle for the transportation of the canine while at work unless otherwise authorized by the bureau commander.

1. This vehicle will be a marked patrol unit with the rear seat removed and a platform installed to provide a safe area for the canine.
2. The vehicle shall bear distinct markings to identify it as a K-9 vehicle.
3. The police vehicle will be operated and maintained in accordance with the vehicle operation policy (chapter 19.)

F. Police canines will not be used for any purpose other than official duties.

16.3.3 K-9 Unit Controlled Substance Protocol

- A. Dogs must receive frequent training and exposure to the substances they will come into contact with to accomplish the duties of narcotics detection. Drug detecting canines shall receive 12 hours of training in drug detection every three months.
- B. In order to conduct drug detection training, it is necessary for the department to obtain and maintain a supply of schedule I substances. The following protocol shall be followed:
 - 1. Controlled substances shall be available to K-9 handlers to train dogs in the detection of controlled substances. The department conducts training for detection of both small and large amounts of narcotics.
 - 2. The department will maintain the following controlled substances for K-9 training purposes:
 - a. Marijuana;
 - b. Cocaine;
 - c. Amphetamines; and
 - d. Heroin.
 - 3. The department trains dogs for both indoor and outdoor detection. Trainers will hide controlled substances in different locations and containers for the dogs to find and indicate on. Trainers will carefully monitor hiding places to ensure that no accidental discovery or loss of a substance occurs.
 - 4. Controlled substances remain the property of the Sheridan Police Department. Control and responsibility of any substance rests with the individual K-9 handler and the patrol operations lieutenant.
 - 5. The department recognizes the need to maintain strict control over the security of controlled substances.
 - a. The department will assign each dog handler a specific quantity of controlled substances to meet the daily training needs of their dog.
 - b. Each K-9 handler will have a secured vehicle vault and each controlled substance will be sealed in individual containers within the vault. A separate secured room containing a lockable cabinet will be assigned to store excess drugs, packaging and other K-9 equipment.
 - c. Each K-9 handler will be responsible for the drugs that have been assigned to them and will be the only person who has the keys for the vehicle vault.
 - d. All drugs will be secured at the Sheridan Police Department or in the K-9 vehicle vault when not in use for training.
 - e. All training aids shall be safely cared for and properly documented. In the event that a training aid is damaged and some or the entire source is lost or destroyed, the handler shall notify the on duty administrator and the handler will write a report and file it with the police department. A copy of the report should be forwarded to the patrol commander.
 - f. The patrol commander will be responsible for the overall maintenance and security of narcotics assigned to the individual K-9 units.
 - g. All K-9 vehicle drug vaults and drug storage room will be subject to unannounced inspection by the patrol commander, the chief of police or a person assigned by the chief of police. Inspections will include a review of all documents related to the use and storage of assigned controlled substances. An

annual inspection and inventory of training drugs will be conducted by a designee of the chief of police.

- h. Each K-9 handler will maintain a record of all amounts of controlled substances received for training purposes. The handler will record the dates and times of all uses, the manner and the location of the controlled substance use, by means of the K-9 training log. Any accidental destruction or ingestion, which should be reported immediately to the patrol commander.
- i. The patrol operations lieutenant will be responsible for investigating any accidental destruction or ingestion of controlled substances, and all discrepancies between the amount possessed by the handlers and the amount received by the handlers.
- j. The senior K-9 handler will be responsible for the application and maintenance of the required DEA and state controlled substance licensing.

16.3.4 Officer Conduct in the Presence of Canine

The following rules of conduct apply to all department personnel when around the canine. Employees shall:

- A. Respect the handler's wishes in regards to the dog.
- B. Not tease the dog.
- C. Not try to entice the dog to break away or disobey commands.
- D. Not feed the dog.
- E. Not encourage the dog to jump on them.
- F. Not use any command the canine handler uses except in the event of the handler's incapacitation.
- G. When providing backup to the canine unit, officers will keep all noise to a minimum and abide by the handlers requests as to how the backup will be deployed to assist them.
 - 1. Officers should avoid lighting up the canine with spotlights or flashlights.
 - 2. Officers should take a position to the rear of the handler.
 - 3. If an officer comes between a suspect and the dog the officer should stand as still as possible unless a threat from the suspect requires immediate action.
- H. Units assigned to a perimeter when a canine is deployed should stay away from windows, doors or other openings into the premises being searched.
- I. Officers should avoid contaminating the search area prior to completion of the canines search.

16.3.5 Handler Selection

- A. Officers wishing to become a canine handler shall meet the following minimum qualifications:
 - 1. Narcotics Detection Canine Handler: Minimum 2 years of service with the Sheridan PD.
 - 2. Receive their supervisor's recommendation regarding the applicant's interest, temperament, attitude, personality, and performance.
 - 3. Have demonstrated the ability to work effectively without close supervision.
 - 4. Have family members in full agreement on the assignment to the canine unit.
 - 5. Maintain a residence providing an area suitable for the dog during off duty hours. In the event the officer does not own the property, the officer shall obtain written permission from the property owner for the housing of the canine.
 - 6. Ensure other pets at home will not interfere with the canine program.

7. Must be willing to participate in an intensive initial training period.
 8. A willingness to be assigned as a canine handler for an extended period of time. See section 4.3.1.
- B. Selection of officers as canine handlers will be made as follows:
1. The applicant's qualifications will be reviewed by the patrol operations lieutenant to ensure eligibility standards are met.
 2. Qualified applicants will be given an interview by the patrol operations lieutenant and at least one present or past canine handler, if available.
 3. The applicant's spouse may be interviewed as part of the selection process.
 4. The applicant's home and yard may be inspected to verify suitable space for the K-9.
 5. Final selection will be made by the patrol operations lieutenant with approval of the chief of police. Officers selected to be canine handlers will be given a pay differential of seven additional hours of regular pay per eighty hour pay period in recognition of extra duties (grooming, dog care, kennel maintenance) outside of duty hours. The K-9 Officer will not receive differential pay during those times when the dog is boarded.

16.3.6 Selection and Training

- A. Dogs selected for department use must meet the following criteria:
1. Dogs must pass a physical examination by an approved veterinarian.
 2. Dogs must pass temperament testing.
- B. Canine handlers shall attend initial training and meet certification standards before using the canine in non training situations.
1. A canine (K-9) training program will be selected to meet specific needs/philosophies of the department.
 2. Safeguards shall be employed to prevent injuries to dogs, personnel and third parties during training.
- C. The canine handler will conduct 8 hours of maintenance training per month for canines used only for narcotic detection to ensure the handler and canine are proficient.
- D. In the event that a detector canine ingests a training source that is toxic, immediate first aid steps should be taken and the canine should be transported to the department veterinarian.
- E. In the event that a canine team fails to obtain a satisfactory score during certification, the team will be placed in remedial training. The canine will be removed from service until it can meet certification standards. If after remedial training the team still fails to meet the standards, the canine coordinator may decide on additional training or dissolution of the team and reassignment of either the handler or dog.

16.3.7 K-9 Equipment

- A. Each K-9 handler will be issued the following equipment:
1. Patrol lead;
 2. Electronic Collar;
 3. Fur Saver Collar;
 4. Muzzle;
 5. Tracking lead;
 6. Vari-Kennel;
 7. Bark collar;
 8. Food and water bowls; and

9. Chain link or welded wire kennel/run.
- B. K-9 handlers are responsible for proper care of issued equipment and for its return when the handler leaves the K-9 program.

16.3.8 Disposition of Canines

- A. Retirement of the Canine
 1. Police canines are the property of the Sheridan Police Department.
 2. Canines will be retired with approval of the chief of police based on the recommendation of the department's veterinarian, the handler, and/or the canine coordinator.
 3. When it becomes necessary to retire a canine from active duty, the department may transfer ownership of the animal to the last handler. A contract releasing the City of Sheridan, the Sheridan Police Department, and its personnel from all liability must be signed by the person taking possession of the canine.
 4. If the animal is unable to be placed in a proper home, the canine coordinator may surrender the canine (K-9) to an animal shelter.
- B. Death of a Canine
 1. In the event of the death of a department canine, the handler will immediately notify the patrol commander and the chief of police.
 2. The patrol operations lieutenant will conduct an investigation of the incident, separate from any possible criminal case. If deemed necessary, a post mortem examination may be conducted by the department's veterinarian. The post mortem report will be filed with the investigation.
 3. The patrol operations lieutenant will authorize cremation/burial arrangements.