

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURE**

DATE: June 10, 2016
NUMBER: 6.16 – PATROL
SUBJECT: POLICE SERVICE DOGS
RELATED POLICY: [6.16](#)
ORIGINATING DIVISION: OPERATIONAL SUPPORT
NEW PROCEDURE:
PROCEDURAL CHANGE:
SUPERSEDES: DP 6.16 –04/04/2014

I. PURPOSE

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for use, deployment, and authority of Police Service Dogs.

II. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all sworn members of the Department.

III. BACKGROUND

The Canine Unit is a centralized unit of the Operational Support Division. The handler and Police Service Dog (PSD) can offer valuable assistance in conducting searches, apprehending suspects, narcotic detection, explosives detection, and provide a psychological deterrence to aggressive acts against officers or other persons. The canine teams are responsible for City-wide coverage and are under the direct supervision of the Canine Unit supervisors.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Deployment - the removal of the Police Service Dog (PSD) from the police car for any legitimate law enforcement purpose.

- B. Dog Bite - any gripping of a person's body or clothing by the PSD's mouth, irrespective of injury or damage. It is also defined as any injury to a person or damage to clothing caused by any contact with the PSD's teeth.
- C. Non-bite Injuries - any injury caused by a PSD that is not associated with a bite.
- D. Operational Bite - the PSD is directed to bite a person for any legitimate law enforcement purpose. Operational bites will be classified as "within policy" or "not within policy."
- E. Unintentional Bite - the PSD bites a person without specific direction from the handler. Unintentional bites will be classified as "preventable" or "not preventable."
- F. Intervention - Any use of a PSD where the apprehension or surrender of a suspect is directly attributed, either through statements or obvious facts, to the presence of the PSD.

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V. PROCEDURES

- A. The canine handler has responsibility for the PSD and its actions. The handler shall exercise control over his/her PSD at all times. Prior to deployment, the handler must consider:
 - 1. The severity of the crime;
 - 2. The immediacy of the threat; and,
 - 3. If the subject is actively resisting arrest (Graham v. Connor).
- B. A police service dog may be deployed for any of the following circumstances, in accordance with Department Procedure 1.04, Use of Force:
 - 1. For the protection and/or safety of the handler, other Department personnel or other persons.
 - 2. To locate, apprehend or control subjects reasonably believed to be assaultive, violent or dangerous.
 - 3. To apprehend fleeing criminal suspects when the canine handler reasonably believes probable cause exists to arrest the person for a felony.
 - 4. To locate and apprehend concealed felony suspects when it would be unsafe for officers to proceed into the area and conduct the search.

5. To control an actively resistive subject reasonably believed to possess or have immediate access to a deadly weapon.
6. To search for evidence, narcotics, explosives, or other contraband.

C. Guidelines for Use of the PSD in Field Situations

1. During searches, the canine handler will function as the contact officer. Once at the scene, the handler should assume control of the search and direct cover units to support positions, as needed.
2. During field contacts with other officers, the canine handler should function as a cover unit. The handler and PSD should be used to prevent and/or control violent or aggressive acts directed at the handler, officers or other persons.
3. During contacts involving high-risk persons or vehicle stops, the canine handler and PSD should generally function as a cover unit. In the event the handler has assumed the contact officer position, the handler should relinquish this role to the first uniformed unit arriving at the scene. The canine handler will remain at the scene as a cover unit until the incident is under control.
4. The canine handler or canine supervisor shall make the final decision regarding the deployment of the PSD.

D. Apprehension

Police service dogs are trained to locate and control persons on command. When the PSD is used in this manner, each handler will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Prior to releasing the PSD, the handler must take reasonable steps to ensure the person to be apprehended is the suspect.
2. The handler shall verbally warn the suspect that the PSD is going to be released, unless the handler has specific and articulable facts to indicate making canine announcements would put officers or the public in additional and unnecessary danger. If possible, the handler will give at least two warnings in a loud and clear manner. If the search area is extensive, the handler will give additional verbal warnings at different locations throughout the search area.
3. When practical, the handler will notify Communications Division of the deployment.

4. The handler will not knowingly deploy the PSD to apprehend a subject being pursued on foot by other officers.

E. On-duty Restrictions on Use of a PSD

It is important that each handler understand the civil liability potential incurred by the Department when a PSD is deployed. When a PSD is used to gain control of a subject, it represents a utilization of force as defined in Department Procedure 1.04, Use of Force. To limit liability, the following restrictions apply:

1. Handlers will not allow the PSD to urinate or defecate in or around any inhabited building;
2. Police Department personnel shall not tease or agitate a PSD, nor allow others to do so;
3. Generally, PSDs will not be allowed inside a police facility;
4. Handlers should generally park their vehicles in such a way as to limit public access to the PSD;
5. Generally, a PSD should only be taken into a private residence for officer safety reasons or to conduct a search;
6. Generally, a PSD should not be taken into crowded public places;
7. When the handler is out of sight, or away from the canine vehicle for an extended period of time, the remote receiver door release mechanism shall be in the locked position and all doors locked. The rear windows shall be opened at least halfway and the vehicle heat sensor on;
8. All non-emergency, out-of-county travel utilizing the PSD and/or Department vehicle must have prior approval of the Captain of Operational Support Division;
9. Unless prior approval is obtained from a Canine supervisor, PSDs will only be transported in a marked canine vehicle; and,
10. Except during breaks, or if off-lead deployment is appropriate, PSDs should be on-lead.

F. Off-duty Restrictions on Use of a PSD

1. All restrictions and guidelines outlined previously apply to off-duty use of a PSD.

2. Police service dogs will be housed in a secure, Department-approved kennel.
3. For medical reasons, a PSD may be housed in an enclosed area approved by a canine supervisor.
4. A PSD should not be allowed to move unsupervised in any area that is accessible to the public.
5. When the handler is unable to provide the daily care required for the PSD, the animal will be cared for by either an SDPD canine handler, canine supervisor or taken to the Canine facility and placed in the kennels.
6. While off-duty, handlers may use their PSDs for any legitimate law enforcement purpose in accordance with this procedure and Department Procedure 1.04, Use of Force.
7. Police service dogs are not to be considered as pets and should not be used for the following:
 - a. As a jogging partner in heavily traveled areas (crowded beach, parks, etc);
 - b. To play with non-immediate family members (neighbors, friends, relatives);
 - c. To play unsupervised with immediate family members;
 - d. Play or associate with other dogs, including family pets;
 - e. Any outside business or enterprise (guard dog, detection dog); and,
 - f. Breeding purposes.

G. Unattended Police Service Dogs

1. As a general rule, while on-duty, a PSD should not be left unattended for an extended period of time. When not under the immediate control of the respective handler, the PSD should be secured in a Department approved kennel or inside a properly equipped canine vehicle.
2. When outside of the canine vehicle, and not in an approved kennel, the PSD should be secured to a solid, fixed object. The handler should take steps to ensure the PSD will not injure itself or someone else. If secured in this manner, the handler must remain in visual contact with the animal at all times.

3. Occasionally, it may be necessary to leave a PSD in a canine vehicle for a short period of time. If the animal is left unattended, the following precautions shall be taken:
 - a. Ensure the PSD has sufficient shade during warm weather;
 - b. Ensure the PSD has an adequate supply of water inside the vehicle;
 - c. The PSD shall be checked at least once every hour to ensure it is not in distress; and,
 - d. When secured in the canine vehicle during warm weather, the vehicle's air conditioning unit shall be on, the rear windows shall be at least halfway down, and the Heat Sensor Alarm System must be active.

H. Training Responsibilities

1. Training is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the Canine Unit and ensures field readiness of the handlers and their PSDs. Canine teams will be continuously evaluated on their performance during training and actual field situations.
2. Attendance at all scheduled training is mandatory. Since training is conducted on a "10-10" in-service basis, handlers will respond to all radio calls that require the use of a canine team.
3. It is the handlers' responsibility to participate in all scheduled training and ensure his/her PSD meets the necessary performance standards. Any handler having a performance or training related problem shall contact their supervisor and a member of the training staff immediately.
4. Any problems that develop between a handler and a training officer will be reported to the training sergeant and squad supervisor as soon as possible.
5. No person shall train a PSD without prior approval of the Canine Unit training sergeant or a member of the training staff.
6. All members of the training staff will participate in academies and all training activities. In an effort to promote development and enhance skill levels, training officers may be required to rotate squads. At the direction of the training sergeant or the Canine Unit Lieutenant, training officers will rotate squads in conjunction with scheduled shift changes.

7. All personnel selected for the position of Training Officer must complete a one-year probationary period.
8. All sergeants and officers selected for the Canine Unit must complete a basic canine academy. Prior to the successful completion of the academy, the member is not entitled to canine specialty pay or a uniform allowance.

I. Reporting Dog Bites

1. In the event of a dog bite or other injury caused by a PSD, on-duty or off-duty, the handler shall notify a Canine Unit supervisor as soon as possible. The handler shall also report the incident to the Department of Animal Control within 24 hours.
2. If necessary, the canine supervisor shall notify the Watch Commander's Office in accordance with Department Procedure 1.04, Use of Force. Except for training bites, the handler shall prepare a detailed and accurate report on all bites in accordance with Department Procedure 1.04, Use of Force and Section 4.5 of the Canine Unit Operations Manual.
 - a. In-custody suspects who have been injured shall be examined and treated for their injuries at a designated treatment facility.
 - b. In-custody juvenile suspects shall be examined and treated at a designated treatment facility prior to final disposition. Officers shall attempt to contact a parent or legal guardian to obtain authorization for medical treatment.
 - c. Non-criminal subjects who have been injured shall be offered transportation to the nearest medical facility for treatment. The injured person may seek private transportation to a medical facility.

J. Emergency Call-out

1. Canine units are available in the field on a 24-hour, 7-day a week basis. When called to a scene, the first canine unit to arrive will determine if additional canine units are required. If there are insufficient on-duty canine units available, a Canine Unit supervisor and the Canine Unit Lieutenant shall be contacted before a call-out is initiated for additional units.
2. The Canine Lieutenant and Special Response Canine (SRC) Supervisor shall be notified anytime a canine unit is requested at any SWAT incident.

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K. Detection Dogs

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1. Article and explosive detection dogs are available for service or call-outs on a 24-hour basis. Requests for call-outs shall be initiated through a Canine Unit supervisor and the Canine Unit Lieutenant.
2. Requests for detection dogs by outside agencies shall be routed through a Canine Unit supervisor and the Canine Unit Lieutenant.

L. Use of Dog Catch Pole

Each canine handler is issued a dog catch pole, and has received training in its use. Although the County of San Diego Department of Animal Services is the primary responder to calls of aggressive dogs and should be called first, a canine unit can provide assistance and respond to calls involving aggressive dogs if there is a delay in Animal Services' response, or if they are unable to respond.

1. A canine officer, with catch pole, should be requested to assist officers when:
 - a. An aggressive dog has been or will be encountered;
 - b. Communications Division has received a call of an aggressive dog and the San Diego Police Department is responding to the call; or
 - c. Personnel have prior knowledge of an aggressive dog and Animal Services officers are unable to respond.
2. There may be situations where the catch pole will not be appropriate, such as when the animal is engaging or attacking a victim and the use of another force option (e.g., baton, pepper spray (OC), taser, or firearm) would be more effective. If possible, officers should utilize the time the dog is temporarily incapacitated by the taser or OC to capture the dog with the catch pole. Additionally, dogs are similar to humans in that OC does not work on all dogs.
3. Officers on scene may be asked to provide cover for the canine handler attempting to capture the dog. They shall stay with the canine handler until the dog has been safely secured.
4. Once the dog has been captured with the pole, it will be placed in a secured location such as:
 - a. Enclosed area, such as a shed, garage, etc;
 - b. Fenced yard;

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- c. Secured room/closet;
 - d. In the back of a police vehicle; or,
 - e. As a last resort, secured by collar and leash to a fixed object.
5. A smaller containment area is preferred, as that would aid in the recapturing of the dog by Animal Services personnel. The dog will remain in the secured location until the arrival of Animal Services to take custody of the animal, if warranted.
 6. In some instances, a non-aggressive dog may be captured with the pole to facilitate a non-dynamic tactical or investigative operation. Examples would be non high-risk search warrants, arrest warrants, vehicle searches or building searches where the capturing of the dog would prevent the dog from becoming aggressive as officers move through the location conducting a search. The dog should be released at the conclusion of the operation or when it can be moved to a secure location or, if appropriate, controlled by the owner.
 7. If a dog is injured when snaring it, the canine handler should contact his or her supervisor, and have Communications Division contact Animal Services to respond to the scene and take custody of the dog.
 8. Officers need to use caution in dealing with multiple dogs. When capturing one dog, the others may develop a “pack mentality” and attack the officer in defense of the captured dog.

M. Injured Handler Procedures

If a canine handler is injured and unable to move, the PSD will probably remain with the handler. The animal may be confused and possibly feel threatened by anyone attempting to approach the handler. All officers shall consider the following course of action in the event the handler is down and unable to control the PSD:

1. Do not move toward the handler or PSD. Call to the handler. Determine if the handler is injured and capable of taking control of the PSD;
2. Immediately request the assistance of another canine handler or canine supervisor; and,
3. If the handler is unable to assist, or additional canine personnel are unavailable, move the handler’s vehicle or another marked vehicle to a position near the handler and the PSD. Perform the following:

- a. Open the left rear door of the vehicle Drive the vehicle close to the PSD with the open door facing the animal. If using a canine vehicle, make sure the interior sliding screen is closed prior to moving toward the PSD;
 - b. Remain in the car and call to the PSD. In an authoritative voice, tell the PSD, “In Vaggen” (In Wagon) or say, “In the car.” Most PSDs will comply with the command;
 - c. After the PSD has entered the car, quickly exit the car and close the door, trapping the dog in the car. Await the arrival of Canine Unit personnel;
 - d. Once the PSD is secured, do not attempt to re-enter or operate the vehicle; and,
 - e. Only a canine handler or canine supervisor should transport or remove the PSD from the car.
4. The PSD may be destroyed only if the handler’s injuries appear life threatening and/or to prevent injury to other officers or persons.

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