

	<b>LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT</b> <b>Ardmore, Pennsylvania</b>	
	<b>Policy 3.18.3</b>	
Subject:		Distribution:
<b>Canine Patrol</b>		<b>All Sworn Personnel</b>
Date of Issue:	Expiration Date:	Rescinds:
<b>10-2-2018</b>	<b>Until Amended or Rescinded</b>	<b>Policy 3.18.3 (06-01-2014)</b>
References:		
<b>CALEA: 41.1.5; PLEAC: 1.10.6</b>		
By Authority of:		
		<b>Superintendent of Police</b>

## **PURPOSE**

To establish procedures for the maximum effective use of Police Department Canine Teams.

## **POLICY**

The Police Canine is a specially trained dog with unique capabilities intended to support and complement the police department in accomplishing the overall mission of the organization. Each canine shall be assigned to a specific police officer who will be the dog's handler. Hereafter, the canine and handler shall be known as a Canine Team.

The use of a Canine Team in effecting an arrest constitutes either an actual or implied use of force. Police canine handlers and their supervisors will be fully aware of all available facts and circumstances surrounding an incident before the decision is made to use the canine for other than deterrent purposes.

Police canines are tools that canine officers may use to effect an arrest when the officer meets physical resistance to that arrest. Police officers may not use any more force than is necessary to overcome the resistance that is met.

All canines will be kept on lead, except in the course of building, article, or field searches, or when warranted and justified for the apprehension of a fleeing criminal suspect (based on the escalation of force model), or to prevent injury to the officer or another person. The only other exception would be for off-lead obedience training.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **A. USE OF CANINE TEAM (CALEA 41.1.5 a)**

1. The use of the Canine team is authorized for the following:

- a. To deter criminal activity and to assist in the prevention and detection of crime.
- b. In accordance with the use-of-force policies, to effect the arrest or prevent the escape of a person whom the police have probable cause to believe has committed a felony or serious misdemeanor.
- c. To prevent bodily injury to the officer or another person.

## 2. Building Searches

- a. It shall be the responsibility of the patrol officers to set up a perimeter around a building when necessary and wait for the arrival of the Canine Team.
- b. Police officers shall not open doors or windows to any building to be searched by the Canine Team.
- c. Police officers should not enter the building nor allow anyone else to enter the building once it has been determined that a Canine Team will be deployed.
- d. Upon the arrival of the Canine Team, the handler shall consult with the on-scene supervisor. The handler shall make every effort to verify that no innocent or authorized person is in the building before commencing the search. The handler shall advise all on-scene units when he/she is entering the building.
- e. The Canine Team may conduct building searches on or off lead (on or off the leash).
- f. Before committing the dog off lead, the handler will attempt to call the suspect out by announcing the presence of the Canine Team and the intent to use the canine to search the building or premises.
- g. During the course of the search, no person shall enter the building or premises except the Canine Team or someone at the request of the handler.

## 3. Tracking

- a. In tracking situations, the areas where the subject was last seen shall be preserved so as to prevent scent contamination of the scene.
- b. Police officers should refrain from entering the areas unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
- c. The Canine Team will generally conduct tracking searches on lead. The search for missing persons will always be conducted on lead.

**4. Article Searches**

- a.** In searching for articles and/or evidence left by suspects/actors, the areas where the subject was last seen and/or where the articles are believed to be, should be preserved so as to avoid scent contamination.
- b.** Police officers should refrain from entering these areas unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

**5. Crowd Control**

- a.** By order of the Superintendent of Police, at no time will the Canine Team be used for crowd control.

**6. Locating Lost or Missing Persons**

- a.** The first officer on the scene shall attempt to determine as much information as possible on the missing person such as; physical description, place and time the person was last seen, age, and physical condition. The officer should inquire if anyone else has been attempting to locate the subject and how far he or she went in their attempt to find the individual.

**7. Detection of Narcotics and/or Controlled Substances**

- a.** Drug searches shall only be conducted by those Canine Teams that have been specially trained in narcotics detection.
- b.** Drug searches may be conducted by the Canine Team to help establish probable cause for a search warrant and locating hidden narcotics.
- c.** The Canine Team may be used to search vehicles, packages, luggage, open areas, and buildings, upon establishing the reasonable belief that narcotics may be present.
- d.** All drugs that are in plain view shall be seized before the Canine Team begins the search.

**8. Detection of Explosives and/or Explosive Devices**

- a.** Searches for explosives and/or explosive devices shall only be conducted by those Canine Teams that have been specially trained in explosives detection.
- b.** The Canine Team may be utilized in the event of a bomb threat to search a building or structure for the presence of explosives after the premises have been evacuated. If the canine indicates the presence of explosives, the scene should be secured and turned over to a bomb disposal unit as soon as

possible.

- c. At no time shall the canine be used to sniff a suspicious package assumed to contain an explosive device. The surrounding area should be evacuated and secured and turned over to a bomb disposal unit.

## 9. Responsibilities

- a. It is incumbent upon every canine handler to promote and uphold the success, efficiency, and good public relations of the Canine Team by exercising sound judgement in the use of the canine.
- b. The handler will immediately notify a Patrol Supervisor when the canine is involved in an incident on or off-duty.
- c. Canines shall be kept under complete control and supervision at all times. When on-duty, they shall not be left unattended in any public place or upon any public street, except while in a locked patrol unit.
- d. It shall be the duty and responsibility of all handlers when on-duty, to cooperate with and assist all department units. They shall make themselves available with their canines when their services may be of value in preventing or investigating a crime or apprehending an offender.
- e. Once on the scene in response to any assignment, it shall be the handler's determination, based on his/her assessment of the situation and knowledge of the capabilities of the canine, as to whether or not the Canine Team is to be used.
- f. The handler is fully responsible and accountable for all actions of his/her assigned dog while both are on and off-duty.
- g. The handler will maintain his/her assigned canine at a high level of proficiency and peak physical condition.
- h. The handler, in cooperation with the Staff and Inspections Unit, will be responsible for all medical, training, and deployment reports.
- i. The handler will be responsible for the proper care of the dog, including feeding, grooming, providing clean living conditions, and medical attention.  
**(CALEA 41.1.5 d)**
- j. The handler will be responsible for the maintenance of all required equipment, which includes, but is not limited to: **(CALEA 41.1.5 e)**
  - 1. Patrol & Traffic Lead
  - 2. Tracking Lead

3. Tracking Harness
  4. Decoy Sleeve
  5. Reward Toys
  6. Water bowl
  7. Choke/Pinch Collar
- k.** The handler will be responsible for the maintenance of the canine vehicle, including the cleaning of the canine containment compartment. This will be done at the conclusion of the handler's tour of duty.
- l.** All canines will be retired from duty if unable to perform properly and adequately due to age, physical abilities, or medical condition, upon approval of the Superintendent of Police. The handler will then sign a waiver, which will release the canine from the department to the handler and relinquish all liabilities from the department.

## **10. General Guidelines**

- a.** No one shall agitate the canine, unless directed to do so by the handler during training.
- b.** Always use caution when approaching a vehicle containing a police canine.
- c.** Avoid horseplay or physical contact that could be perceived by the canine as an assault upon the handler.
- d.** If requested to assist the Canine Team, officers should stay directly behind the handler and not cross between the handler and the canine.
- e.** Should a canine confront an officer, the best tactic is to stand still, avoid eye contact, and avoid any sudden movement or attempts to flee which may cause the canine to apprehend.
- f.** In the case of an accidental apprehension, officers should not struggle, nor attempt to beat, injure, or hit the canine.

## **11. Request for a Canine Team by Other Law Enforcement Agencies**

- a.** Requests for a Canine Team by other law enforcement agencies require the approval of the Watch Commander. If no Canine Team is on-duty at the time, an off-duty Canine Team may be called in if it is an emergency situation.
- b.** Those law enforcement agencies requesting the services of an Explosive Detection Canine Team for the purpose of searching a private business or institution should be advised that the cost of the Canine Team will be borne by the private entity. The cost of the Canine Team is the current hourly extra-duty detail rate from the time the officer is contacted until the assignment is

completed, with a four-hour minimum, plus one half hour travel time. This cost exists whether the officer is on or off duty at the time of the request. The Watch Commander shall obtain an agreement by a representative of the private entity authorizing payment for the services of the Canine Team, prior to approving the request.

- c. Law enforcement agencies will not be charged for the services of the Canine Teams, such as suspect searches, searches for missing persons, etc.
- d. The responding Canine Team must be given all available information prior to introducing the dog into a situation. The handler will decide if use of the dog is legal or warranted.
- e. An incident record shall be initiated for any assist to an outside agency by the Canine Team and the handler shall submit a report detailing his/her participation, including which entity should be billed for the Canine Team's services.

## **B. INJURIES**

1. In the event that a handler is injured to the extent that he/she cannot exercise control over the canine, the following procedure may be used:
  - a. If possible, open the rear door of the canine vehicle and allow the canine to enter.
  - b. Use a dog stick to control the canine.
  - c. Use an apprehension sleeve to occupy the canine in conjunction with a dog stick.
  - d. Call for another handler.
  - e. As a last resort, an officer may use pepper spray on the canine and then use the dog stick to get the canine into any police vehicle. The canine will then be sprayed with the decontaminant and then hosed down as soon as possible.
2. After all canine apprehensions or accidental bites, the handler shall:
  - a. Render any needed first aid and have the subject transported to a hospital.
  - b. Immediately notify a Patrol Supervisor.
  - c. Photograph the actor to document the presence or absence of injuries.
  - d. Complete a detailed report of any incident involving a canine bite. If the bite is the result of a criminal apprehension, a use of force report is required.

## **C. CANINE HANDLER SELECTION PROCESS**

1. The department will screen all potential canine handlers. Selection will be based on the following: **(CALEA 41.1.5 b)**
  - a. A high level of physical fitness as measured by the following derived from the Cooper Institute standards:
    1. Performing a minimum of 25 push-ups prior to failure.
    2. Performing a minimum of 32 sit-ups in one minute.
    3. Completing a 300-meter sprint in 67 seconds or less.
    4. Completing a 1.5 mile run in 15:32 (min./sec.) or less.
  - b. Flexibility of schedule and availability for call back.
  - c. Ability to provide off-duty living accommodations for canine at residence.
  - d. Must have keen interest in animals and their training and well-being.
  - e. Performance record review.
  - f. Must be able to attend approximately 22 weeks of canine handler training.

## **D. TRAINING**

1. Police officers selected to be handlers and their assigned canines shall attend a certified Basic Canine Patrol School. In addition, Canine Teams may be sent to a certified specialized scent training school, as deemed necessary. **(CALEA 41.1.5 b) (PLEAC 1.10.6 a)**
2. Canine Teams are required to attend in-service training at a certified K-9 school at least quarterly in basic patrol skills and in specialty scent detection, if they are so certified. **(CALEA 41.1.5 b) (PLEAC 1.10.6 b)**
3. Documentation of training is provided by the certified K-9 school and all training records are retained by the Staff & Inspections Unit. **(CALEA 41.1.5 c)**

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of all supervisory personnel to ensure that all personnel under their immediate supervision comply with this policy.