

JACKSONVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy: 5-14
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CANINE UNIT

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for the management, training, certification, and operation of the Canine Unit.

MISSION: It is the mission of the Canine Unit to provide specialized services of highly trained canine teams to support field units in the performance of their duties. Unit members shall assist in the location and apprehension of suspects and items of evidence that may be of value in a criminal case.

POLICY: Because of superior senses and agility, the trained police canine is a valuable supplement to law enforcement personnel. However, utilization of canines requires adherence to procedures that properly control their use of force potential and that channel their specialized capabilities into legally acceptable crime prevention and control activities.

DEFINITIONS:

- I. **HANDLER:** An officer selected by the Chief of Police, certified by the canine trainer to care for and use a police service dog.
- II. **TRAINER:** An officer selected by the Chief of Police certified by a professional training center as an expert in the training and use of police service dogs and their handlers.
- III. **CANINE SUPERVISOR:** The Captain of Patrol or his designee.
- IV. **DUAL-PURPOSE PATROL DOG:** A service dog selected by the canine trainer and certified by recognized standards to perform basic patrol/narcotic functions.
- V. **CANINE TEAM:** The handler and assigned service dog.
- VI. **CERTIFIED:** A team meeting the performance standards of the Department, and a recognized professional association, as evaluated by a qualified police service dog expert.

PROCEDURES:

- I. **STRUCTURE**
The Canine Unit is a specialized unit within the uniformed Patrol Division. A canine team shall consist of an officer and his assigned canine. The Canine Unit shall consist of a number of teams, to be determined by the Chief of Police. The Canine Unit will be under the direct supervision of the Canine Unit Supervisor who will be responsible for all administrative matters involving the unit and its employees. All canine handlers will be appointed by the Chief of Police.
- II. **HANDLER QUALIFICATIONS**
An officer shall meet the following criteria to be considered for assignment to the Canine Unit.
 - A. Minimum of two (2) years of uniformed patrol experience.
 - B. Must have an above average attendance and performance record for the past twelve (12) months.

- C. Must be able to lift and carry the weight of the average police service dog [eighty (80) pounds] and have the ability to pass designated physical fitness and agility tests related to the tasks of handling a canine. Must be willing to work flexible hours, overtime, and be called out during off-duty hours.
- D. Must have a suitable place to house the canine and be willing to care for the animal until expiration. A suitable place is defined as an area free from fleas, ticks, and parasites; location able to place a 10' X 10' canine kennel and covered doghouse supplied by the Department.
- E. Must successfully complete the prescribed canine training program and become certified.
- F. Must be willing to dedicate at least four (4) years to the program.
- G. Must live within a thirty (30) minute response time frame during on-call duty or emergency response.

III. TRAINER QUALIFICATIONS

An officer shall meet the following criteria to be considered for assignment as the Canine Trainer.

- A. Must meet all the requirements for selection to the Canine Unit as a Handler.
- B. Must meet State requirements and pass a written test given by Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy for a State certifying official certificate.
- C. Must have successfully worked as a Police Canine Handler for a minimum of five (5) years.
- D. Must receive certification from a professional training center, which has been approved by the Chief of Police within eighteen (18) months of appointment.
- E. Must be recommended through the chain of command and approved by the Chief of Police.

IV. CANINE SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS

The Canine Supervisor shall meet the following criteria in order to be considered for assignment as the Canine Supervisor.

- A. Assigned to the position of Captain of Patrol or his designee.
- B. Displays above average management skills while in the rank of Lieutenant and is knowledgeable in canine case law.

V. HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of a Canine Handler include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Handlers will perform all patrol related functions as directed by the Canine Supervisor.
- B. Handlers will be responsible for the actions of their assigned dog at all times.
- C. Handlers will be responsible for the proper care of their assigned dog at all times.
- D. Handlers will assist in the initial orientation of new recruits and in-service training as directed by the Canine Trainer.
- E. Handlers will actively participate in public demonstrations as assigned by the Canine Supervisor.
- F. Handlers will be responsible for the proper care and maintenance of all issued equipment.
- G. Handlers will be responsible to maintain the canine at an acceptable performance level and point out any and all deficient areas to the Trainer.
- H. Handlers will be responsible to ensure that all reports are completed before ending a tour of duty.
- I. Handlers will be responsible for maintaining a log of all the team's training, deployments, community contacts and apprehensions on Department approved forms.
- J. Handlers will be expected to use his skills and those of his assigned canine to actively deter and detect criminal activity.