



# CANINE OPERATIONS

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## **INDEX AS:**

Canine  
Reports  
Searches  
Use of Force

## **I. PURPOSE**

It is the purpose of this policy to provide guidelines for the management and use of the department's canine unit. The utilization of canines requires adherence to procedures that properly control their use and channel their specialized capabilities into acceptable crime prevention and control activities.

## **II. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Iowa City Police Department to use trained canine teams in acceptable fashion to augment the traditional law enforcement and crime prevention functions of the Iowa City Police Department. The Department recognizes that under certain circumstances that the use of a canine constitutes a use of force and must comply with the Department's Use of Force policy.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

Canine (K-9) Team: an officer handler and his/her assigned police canine.

Canine Supervisor: an ICPD sergeant selected/designated by the ICPD Command Staff. The Canine Supervisor reports directly to the Commander of Field Operations.

### **IV. CANINE OFFICER SELECTION**

Canine officers for the department shall be considered a specialized assignment. In addition to the minimum requirements established for application and selection to a specialized assignment, an officer must be able and willing to do the following:

1. Be able (in conjunction with other family members) to care for and house the canine at the officer's residence with a secure outdoor area for the canine.
2. Demonstrate a strong desire to work with the canine and the willingness to care for and train the animal.
3. Possess the physical ability to train and deploy the canine.
4. Complete a canine training course and successfully meet all course requirements.
5. Be available on a twenty four (24) hour on call status subject to canine unit availability.
6. Promote the department and the canine program through educational and public relations duties (e.g. school visits, talks to civic groups, demonstrations, etc.).

### **V. CANINE SELECTION**

Dogs eligible to provide service to the Iowa City Police Department will meet the following criteria:

1. Be X-rayed for hip dysphasia with a Schnelle grading of -0 and #1 as acceptable, or a rating of good being acceptable from the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals, or a German "A" stamp rating of "normal" or "fass normal".
2. Before any dog is considered for police training, it must be tested and evaluated as to its fitness for service. The purpose of pretesting is to determine if the animal has any undesirable temperament characteristics that would adversely affect its serviceability. Testing may be conducted by department personnel or contracted out to another business. Pre-testing shall measure the following qualities for all dogs considered for service with the Iowa City Police Department:

- a) Temperament
  - b) Alertness
  - c) Prey and defense drives
  - d) Play and retrieving drives
3. All dogs must have a general physical examination to include fecal exam and DHL and rabies boosters. The physical examination is an important element in the pre-testing program. For economic reasons, dogs must successfully complete temperament testing and meet all other requirements prior to scheduling the physical exam.

## **VI. PROCEDURES**

### **A. CANINE UTILIZATION**

1. The Department's canine team, if available, may respond on a 24-hour basis to: conduct building searches; assist in the arrest or prevent the escape of serious or violent offenders; protect officers or others from death or serious injury; track suspects or locate lost or missing persons, or hidden evidence of a crime; and detect the presence of narcotics or explosives.
  - a. Canine teams may be assigned "routine" calls-for-service when not engaged in canine specific calls-for-service or training.
  - b. Canine teams may be called upon to do public demonstrations as assigned.
2. Canine handlers are responsible for determining whether a situation justifies canine use and the appropriate tactical measures that should be taken. Where the on-scene supervisor disagrees with the handler's tactical assessment, the Canine Supervisor or the Commander of Field Operations (or designee, when the Commander of Field Operations is absent) should be notified and his/her decision followed. Where time does not permit such notification, the directions of the on-scene supervisor shall be followed.
  - a. Police canines shall not be handled or given commands by anyone other than the assigned handler. Should the assigned handler be injured or otherwise unable to command the canine, the canine should be removed from the scene.
3. Canine team assistance shall be requested by patrol officers to the Department's on duty canine team. Outside agency canine teams or Department's off duty canine requests must go through the Supervisor on duty. Communications center personnel will forward the requisite information concerning the incident to the canine handler or unit supervisor. Requests from the Investigative Section should be routed through the Investigative Supervisor on duty, or if unavailable, the request should be routed through the on-duty watch commander. In instances where the request comes from an active SRT response, the request will be routed through the SRT supervisor in charge of the scene.

## B. BUILDING SEARCHES FOR SUSPECTS IN HIDING

A primary use of canines is for locating suspects in buildings or related structures where search by officers would create an unnecessary risk to officers and/or bystanders. All building searches or entries shall comply with departmental directives pertaining to building searches and entry. In addition the following guidelines apply when a canine unit is used in the search:

1. The building perimeter should be secured by responding personnel.
2. In all cases, an attempt shall be made to contact the building's owner or tenant, an attempt shall be made to determine whether there may be tenants or others in the building, and an attempt shall be made to ascertain the building's layout.
3. When a canine building search is anticipated, a preliminary search by officers should not be conducted, as this will interfere with the canine's ability to discriminate scents.
4. On-scene personnel should take the following steps in preparation for the canine search:
  - a. Evacuate all tenants, workers or others from the facility.
  - b. Request that all air moving equipment be shut down.
  - c. Ascertain if there are any other pets or animals in the building or in the surrounding area.
5. The canine shall not be used to search facilities that contain substances potentially harmful to the animal unless overriding risk to human life is present. The presence of such substances is a factor weighing in favor of an on-lead search of the property.
6. Unless exigent circumstances exist, prior to commencing the search, the handler or other designated person shall loudly announce that there are police officers on the premises and that a trained police canine will be released if the individual does not surrender. A statement, similar to "IOWA CITY POLICE DOG! ANNOUNCE YOURSELF, COME OUT NOW OR YOU WILL BE BIT" shall be repeated at least once. In the absence of exigent circumstances, the canine unit shall wait at least 3 minutes prior to entry of the structure, to allow the suspect a reasonable opportunity to respond. In multilevel, partitioned or large single level structures said announcement shall be repeated as reasonably necessary to apprise occupants of the structure that there are police officers on the premises and that a trained police canine will be released if the individual does not surrender. For example, this standard may require a repetition of the announcement at new levels, entryways or portions of the structure distant from the original location of entry. To the extent possible, any warning should be communicated in a manner so that it is recorded by an in-car or body-cam recorder, or given over an open radio channel for capture on the voice data logs. The time and location of the announcement(s) should be relayed to communications for inclusion in the CAD but in any case shall be noted in the canine officer's incident report.
7. Prior to entry:
  - a. All exits should be under containment. Officers should be

positioned in such a manner as to provide a view of the site without exposing them. Containment means the suspect cannot escape from the perimeter without being observed.

- b. Radio communications switched to a designated frequency and limited to a tactical nature.
8. The decision as to whether the search should be conducted on- or off-lead will be made by the handler based on the information available at the time. The presence of substances potentially harmful to the canine is a factor weighing in favor of an on-lead search.
9. When apprehending suspects in these or related circumstances, canines shall be commanded to disengage as soon as the suspect is subdued or readily complies with the handler's commands.
10. Assisting officers should not walk between the canine and the suspect unless specifically instructed to do so by the handler.
11. The arrestee should not be transported in the same vehicle with the canine unless alternative transportation is not available and immediate transport is essential for safety or security reasons.

#### C. REPORTS REQUIRED

Use of specially trained police canines for law enforcement responsibilities constitutes a real or implied use of force. In this as in other cases, officers may only use that degree of force that reasonably appears necessary to apprehend or secure a suspect as governed by this department's Use of Force policy. In all instances where a canine is deployed, a supplemental report shall be submitted by the handler, or in the event he/she is unable to complete the report, by a watch supervisor. The supplemental report shall be forwarded to the Canine Supervisor. Whenever the canine unit apprehends a person, the handler shall complete a Use of Force Report. Whenever a canine apprehends an individual with physical contact, whether or not in the line-of-duty, the handler shall:

1. Summon a supervisor to the scene.
2. Examine the affected area to determine the seriousness of the bite or injury.
3. Obtain medical treatment for the person; medical personnel should examine the affected area irrespective of the perceived seriousness of the bite or injury.
4. Take color photographs of the affected area, if possible, prior to and following medical treatments. A "full body" photograph should also be included.
5. Complete an incident report whenever it is known or alleged that a canine has apprehended or otherwise injured an individual. The report shall detail the circumstances surrounding the incident, the identity of the individual involved and any witnesses, the extent of the injuries, if known, and measures taken in response to the incident. A Use of Force report shall also be filled out. Copies of the incident report shall be forwarded to the Canine Supervisor and the Commander of Field Operations prior to the end of the watch.

D. CROWD CONTROL

1. Canine teams shall not be used for crowd control for peaceful demonstrations or gatherings.
2. Canine teams shall be used for crowd control only upon approval of the watch commander or canine supervisor, and only to protect against imminent loss of life or possible bodily injury.

E. DRUG DETECTION

Use of police canines in a drug detection capacity is authorized in the following situations and under the following conditions:

1. The canine unit shall maintain records that document the use and proficiency of individual canines in drug detection. This documentation shall be readily available to canine officers and others who may need it when seeking warrants.
2. Random exploratory sniffing of luggage, packages or other inanimate objects may be conducted in public facilities such as airports, and bus terminals, as authorized by the canine unit supervisor or other authorized command officer and in accordance with State and Federal law.
  - a. When a drug detection canine alerts to luggage or related items, a warrant or consent to search must be obtained before it is opened unless exigent circumstances exist to justify a warrantless search.
3. The use of drug detection canines in public schools is permitted only when:
  - a. The school's principal or designated authority requests or approves use of the canines.
  - b. The search is limited to inanimate objects in public areas and the exterior of student lockers unless reasonable and articulable suspicion exists to gain admission to lockers and related areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. (see Iowa Code Section 808A.3, Student Searches)
4. Drug-sniffing canines may be used to sniff motor vehicles when:
  - a. Reasonable suspicion exists to believe the operator or passengers are in possession of illegal narcotics; or
  - b. During a valid vehicle stop, the canine is used to sniff the vehicle's exterior in an exploratory manner. The traffic stop may not be unreasonably prolonged in order to have the canine unit dispatched to the stop unless there is a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity other than the reason for the stop. Unless the canine alerts to the vehicle, the operator may not be detained longer than necessary to conclude the business associated with the initial stop.
  - c. A drug alert on a motor vehicle in and of itself is not probable cause to arrest or search a passenger of that vehicle. There must be additional articulable facts to provide a reasonable belief of guilt before a passenger is arrested or searched.

F. TRACKING

Police canines are available to track missing persons or suspects, or to locate evidence believed to have been abandoned or hidden in a specified open area. Such searches are subject to the following conditions and limitations:

1. When officers are pursuing suspects and contact with the suspect is lost, the officer, prior to summoning a canine team shall:
  - a. stop and pinpoint the location where the suspect was last seen;
  - b. shut off engines of vehicles in the area if possible; and
  - c. avoid vehicle or foot movement in the area where the suspect or subject was last seen.
2. Canines used for tracking persons shall remain on a leash of sufficient length to provide a reasonable measure of safety to the subject of the search without compromising the canine's tracking abilities.
3. When used to locate small children, unless there is a reasonable suspicion of foul play or a reasonable belief that serious bodily injury or death will occur if the child is not located immediately, the search shall be conducted on-leash.
4. Canine teams should not be used to apprehend persons suspected to be mentally ill, if no other crime is involved, unless the person poses an immediate significant threat of death or serious physical injury to themselves, an officer or others.

#### G. CANINE USE

1. Teasing, agitating or roughhousing with a police canine is strictly prohibited unless performed as part of a training exercise.
2. Handlers shall not allow anyone to touch, pet or hug their canine without their permission and immediate supervision. Should a civilian express a desire to do so, they should be informed that police canines are working dogs and they can be dangerous if improperly approached.

#### H. OUTSIDE USE OF CANINES

1. Handlers will not offer or provide the services of the police canine for use to any outside agency without supervisor approval. The on-duty shift supervisor will make the decision and grant or deny approval for the K-9 unit to respond to the requesting agency. The supervisor will consider the current availability of units within the city prior to authorizing the use of the unit outside the city.
2. Emergency requests for the canine unit which occur when the canine unit is off-duty, will be cleared by the watch commander and coordinated with the canine unit.

#### I. CANINE USE AND CARE

Police canines are the sole property of the City of Iowa City and assigned to the selected officer(s) as a law enforcement tool. The canine officer has assigned responsibilities to maintain the animal, but the animal may be reassigned at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

1. Police canines shall not be used for breeding, participation in shows, field trials, exhibitions or demonstrations without prior approval of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
2. Canine handlers are personally responsible for the daily care and feeding of the animal including, but not limited to:
  - a. maintenance and cleaning of the kennel and yard area where the canine is housed;
  - b. provision of food, water and general diet maintenance as prescribed by the departmentally authorized veterinarian;
  - c. grooming on a daily basis, or more often as required by weather, working conditions or other factors;
  - d. daily exercise (police canines are not permitted to run at large unless performing police duties, i.e. training, under the direct control of the handler);
    - 1) when someone other than the handler is exercising or otherwise handling the canine in public, the canine shall be muzzled.
  - e. general medical attention and maintenance of health care records.

The kennel area of the officer's residence is subject to inspection by the Chief of Police or his/her designee without notice. Any records pertaining to the canine which are housed at the officer's home are also subject to review and inspection without notice.

#### J. VETERINARY SERVICE

A licensed veterinarian will be chosen by the City to supply such veterinary services as needed. Periodic examinations will be arranged by the veterinarian for the canine. All medical treatments will be administered through the veterinarian's orders. In an extreme emergency the handler may utilize the nearest available veterinarian. The handler will notify the City veterinarian as to the illness or injury of the canine, and treatment given, as soon as possible.

#### K. TRAINING

Successful completion of initial training for the police canine team is required before being put into service.

In order to continually develop the skills learned in the initial training, the canine handler and canine shall complete a minimum of 16 hours of refresher training each month.

The canine supervisor shall arrange for periodic training to include annual re-certification of specific skills at designated periods. The primary responsibility of maintaining the working capabilities of the canine will remain with the handler. The canine handler shall forward documentation of all training to the department's training officer.

Initial, monthly, and annual evaluation/certification shall be documented.



- L. The department shall enhance the effectiveness of canine training and the reliability of court testimony by utilizing controlled substances in the training process. The following procedures shall be utilized for the use of controlled substances as canine training aids:
  - A. Controlled substances used for canine training shall be obtained from the Drug Enforcement Administration (D.E.A.) Special Testing and Research Laboratory or Iowa City Evidence Custodian. The current D.E.A. procurement process will be followed when obtaining evidence from the D.E.A. All documentation relating to the procurement shall be preserved to enable tracking at a later date.
  - B. All controlled substances obtained for canine training shall be stored in a dedicated safe in a secure locker when not in use for training. Only the canine officer and the canine supervisor shall have access to the safe.
  - C. The canine officer will maintain a log of the controlled substances that will be stored in the dedicated safe. The log will document all chain of custody events concerning the use of the controlled substances.
  - D. In the event the training controlled substances become lost, stolen, damaged, spilled, or unusable, the canine handler will complete an interdepartmental memorandum explaining the incident. This report will be forwarded to the canine supervisor who will notify the Captain of Field Operations.
  - E. The canine supervisor shall conduct semiannual inspections of the training controlled substances. A report of the semiannual inspections will be submitted to the Captain of Field Operations and on the Departmental memorandum. The report will include the weight and condition of each controlled substance and include reference to any occurrence of lost, stolen, damaged, spilled, or unusable substances since the last inspection.
  - F. Random inspections may also be undertaken by the canine supervisor, Captain of Field Operations, or chief of police designee.
  - G. Once a controlled substance is no longer usable for training, D.E.A. and departmental procedures for documenting controlled substance destruction shall be followed.
  - H. Any requests for the replacement for controlled substances will follow the current D.E.A. or Departmental procurement process-whichever is applicable.
- M. Equipment
  - 1. Canine officers shall have a specially equipped vehicle intended for the purpose of transporting the canine. The

canine officer shall use the vehicle to transport the canine to and from work or to other canine related duties.

2. Canine transport vehicles shall have a cage designed specifically for the transport of canines. The cage shall be of a design that gives the canine adequate room for extended periods of stay and constructed in a manner that safeguards the canine from injury. The cage shall protect the driver and other occupants of the vehicle from the canine and shall shield the canine from outside contact. The canine vehicle shall not be utilized to transport detainees.
3. Canine transport vehicles shall be equipped with a temperature monitoring device that will alert the canine officer by an audible alert when the vehicle temperature exceeds safe levels. This system may also incorporate a remote-controlled door opening system to allow rapid exit of the canine for emergency situations.
4. Canine officers shall be provided with the necessary equipment for work, care, and use of the canine. At a minimum this will include: a. Water and food bowls b. An indoor crate of proper size for the breed of canine assigned to the officer. c. Walking and tracking leads d. Collars and neck chains to include tracking harnesses, collars, and general duty choker chains. e. Secure containers for narcotics used in training. f. General purpose and hidden bite sleeves for use in bite training. g. Reward "toys" for use in training. h. Grooming equipment to include brushes, nail clippers, other tools, and supplies for maintaining the canine's appearance
5. When necessary, the department shall have constructed an appropriate outdoor dog run at the canine officer's residence for containment of the canine. Any dog run utilized by the canine officer for securing the canine outside shall be approved by the canine supervisor and include a visual inspection. Any needed repairs or maintenance shall be provided by the department. The canine officer shall be responsible for maintaining the outside dog run in a condition to prevent the escape of the police canine.
5. Other equipment may be provided as necessary.

O. Deployment Data

Canine officers shall record the following deployment data:

- a. Date and Time
- b. Requesting officer and agency
- c. Type of Deployment
  - i. Traffic stops
  - ii. Tracks
  - iii. Dwelling open air detection
  - iv. Building searches
  - v. Open searches
  - vi. Public relations events
  - vii. Drug interdictions
- d. Outcome of deployment
- e. Weather conditions if applicable
- f. Notes the handler believe are pertinent

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Dustin Liston, Chief of Police

**WARNING**

This directive is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. The department policy should not be construed as a creation of higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third-party claims. Violations of this directive will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions.