

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.