



CITY OF AKRON, OHIO
POLICE DIVISION
Kenneth R. Ball II, CHIEF OF POLICE

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SUBJECT K-9 Procedure		ISSUING AUTHORITY Chief Kenneth R Ball II

I. POLICY

The K-9 team is a valuable law enforcement tool for use in criminal apprehension, evidence location, narcotic detection, search and rescue, and for promoting favorable public relations. K-9 teams will be specially trained and utilized in the daily operation of the police department.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. K-9 handler – A police officer who has been specially trained in the care, handling, and utilization of a K-9.
- B. K-9 team – A police officer and his assigned K-9.
- C. Narcotic K-9 – Trained only in the detection of illegal narcotics.
- D. Patrol K-9 – A dog trained in area search, evidence search, structure search, criminal apprehension, tracking of suspects or lost persons, and officer protection. The primary purpose of this type of K-9 is that of a locating tool. Upon location of a suspect, the secondary purpose is use of force.
- E. Dual purpose K-9 – Trained in patrol K-9 duties and one other special duty or scent detection; i.e., narcotic, cadaver, explosive, or arson detection.
- F. Deployment – The use of a K-9 in one of the trained and certified areas. This includes public demonstrations.
- G. K-9 Apprehension – Any time the K-9 is deployed and plays a clear and well-documented role in the capture of a person. The mere presence of a K-9 at the scene of an arrest shall not be counted as an apprehension.
- H. Bite Ratio – The number of K-9 bites divided by the total number of K9 deployments. This ratio will be kept for the individual K9 team and for the group as a whole.
- I. Verbal Warning – Must state that a police K-9 will be released if the suspect fails to make themselves known or fails to surrender. The warning, when tactically feasible, will be issued no less than two separate times and should state clearly that the dog will bite. After the

warning, adequate time will be given before the K-9 is deployed to allow the suspect to surrender. Additional warnings may be necessary depending on the size of the search area or structure.

III. PROCEDURE

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. All police department K-9s will be owned by the City of Akron, licensed and certified in accordance with all state and local regulations.
2. The Patrol K-9 teams will be placed within the Uniform Subdivision and the narcotic K-9 teams will be assigned to the Investigative Subdivision for day-to-day operations.
3. The K-9 sergeant(s) will coordinate general staff supervision for training, equipment needs, K-9 certification, care, and required documentation.
4. Patrol K-9 teams will patrol in modified, specially equipped vehicles designed for such duty and clearly marked K-9. The narcotic K-9 teams will also have specially equipped vehicles. Narcotic K9 vehicles may be unmarked.
5. The Patrol K-9 officers and sergeants will perform Patrol Officer and Patrol Sergeant functions with the assistance of a K-9 partner.
6. Requests for off-duty K-9 teams must be approved by a Subdivision Commander or their designee. Requests for use of K-9 teams whether on-duty or off-duty for pre-planned events will be made via email through the sub-division commander or designee to whom the K-9 team is assigned.
7. K-9 handlers are the primary trainer for their assigned K-9. Additional training will be provided to help maintain the team's proficiency and state standards. Attendance and participation in provided training will be a duty assignment.
8. No employee will initiate interaction with a K-9 without the handler's approval.
9. Handlers are responsible for their K-9s at all times and are accountable for any force that results from their use. Including when the K-9 is off-lead.

B. DEPLOYMENT

1. A K-9 handler will evaluate each situation and determine if the use of the K-9 is technically feasible. Generally, the decision to deploy the K-9 shall remain with the handler; however, a shift commander sufficiently apprised of the situation may decide **not** to deploy the dog. If the shift commander countermands a handler's decision to deploy the K-9, he shall indicate in writing the reason.

2. K-9 deployment to apprehend a suspect is a use of force. Like all other force used by police, the force must be objectively reasonable. K-9 teams may be utilized to apprehend a suspect after considering all pertinent information. K-9 handlers will use all available information to determine whether to use the K-9 on or off leash in any type of deployment. This information may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. The suspect's approximate age.
 - b. The nature of the suspected offense.
 - c. Any potential danger to the public or officers at the scene if the K-9 is deployed.
 - d. The potential for injury to officers or the public caused by the suspect if the K-9 is not deployed.
 - e. The degree of resistance, if any, the suspect has shown.
 - f. The potential for escape or flight if the K-9 is not utilized.
 - g. Whether the suspect is reasonably suspected to have a weapon.
 - h. Whether the suspect is being directly pursued by an officer on foot.
 - i. Suspect's obvious frailty, infirmity or inability to resist arrest.
3. When tactically feasible, verbal warnings will be given prior to deployment in area and structure searches, and prior to criminal apprehensions and foot pursuits.
4. When a K-9 makes an apprehension, the handler will call off the dog at the first possible moment the K-9 can be safely released.
5. When a K-9 locates an armed barricaded suspect, the K-9 call ends.
6. K-9 teams shall not be used for crowd control during riots, potential riot conditions, or other illegal assemblies. This does not preclude officers from using detection K9's for the purpose of bomb detection or from using K-9's in other policing activities.
7. K-9 teams shall not be directed by anyone to search people for weapons or narcotics.

C. BUILDING and AREA SEARCHES

1. Occupancy Unknown
 - a. When K-9 teams are called to respond to building and area searches, officers on the scene shall observe the following guidelines:

- (1) Officers shall surround the building or area and wait for the arrival of the K-9 team. Officers shall not enter the search area unless directed to do so by the K-9 team(s).
 - (2) Officers shall not open doors or windows or allow anyone to enter a building.
 - (3) During the course of the search, no person shall enter the building or area except the handler and a back-up officer at the handler's request.
 - (4) K-9 teams may conduct building searches either on or off leash.
- b. K-9 handlers conducting a building search will observe the following guidelines.
- (1) Upon arrival on the scene of a building or area to be searched, the K-9 officer should consult with the officers on the scene and assess the situation.
 - (2) The K-9 officer shall make every effort to verify that no innocent or authorized person(s) are in the building or area before commencing a search. (Example: janitors, employees working overtime, etc.)
 - (3) The K-9 team shall advise all on-scene units when the team is entering the building or area to be searched.
 - (4) Where a suspect is trapped inside during a crime in progress and is in a place of hiding, if tactically feasible, the handler shall challenge the suspect by clearly announcing their identity, that a police dog is present and will be sent in before committing the police dog off leash. (Example: This is Officer Smith of the Akron Police Department. You have two (2) minutes to speak to me or come out or the dog will be sent in.)
 - (5) The K-9 officer will wait for one (1) minute and then give the suspect the second and final warning. When two (2) minutes have elapsed, the dog will be released for a search.
 - (6) If a K-9 officer is requested to conduct a search where no signs of forced entry can be found, (open door or window); the search by the K-9 team may be conducted on or off leash. If after entry into the building, evidence indicates a crime is in progress, the preferred tactic is for the handler to release the K-9 for an off leash search. The handler will immediately notify the perimeter units of a change in tactics.

10. Narcotics detection

- a. Vehicle
- (1) A K-9 may be used to sniff the outside of a vehicle legally stopped by law enforcement for another violation. The duration of the vehicle stop may not extend beyond a reasonable amount of time to effect the stop and associated tasks for the violations observed.
 - (2) A K-9 sniff of the interior of a motor vehicle may be conducted, upon probable cause, based on articulable facts leading the officer(s) to believe that the vehicle contains some drug related contraband. An exception to this is a special operation or preplanned event in which motor vehicles will be included in the search such as a school search for narcotics.
 - (3) When the K-9 is evaluating the outside of the vehicle, all persons must be restricted from the area.

- (4) It is the responsibility of the requesting officer or back-up officer to maintain observation of the operator and any occupants.
- (5) If the interior will be searched by a K-9, the requesting officer will first secure any narcotics or paraphernalia in plain view and immediately advise the K-9 handler of its location. All food and dangerous items shall be removed.
- (6) It is the responsibility of the requesting officer to ensure that any recovered contraband or evidence is properly tagged.

b. Structures

- (1) The requesting officer will conduct a search of the area with the K-9 handler. This search will be conducted without the K-9 to secure any narcotics, paraphernalia, or hazards in plain view.
- (2) All persons on the premises must be removed or placed in one area prior to beginning the K-9 search. The only exception to this policy will be in the event of a consent search. The owner or the owner's representative will be permitted inside the structure.
- (3) It is the responsibility of the requesting officer or cover officer to maintain observation of the owner or representative.
- (4) It is the responsibility of the requesting officer to ensure that any recovered items are tagged.
- (5) K-9 handlers should be involved in the briefings on large-scale drug operations if K-9 use is probable.

C. PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Requests for K-9 demonstrations shall be forwarded to the sub-division commander or designee to whom the K9 team is assigned for consideration and assignment.
2. Demonstrations can include obedience, article search, narcotic detection, agility, social interaction, and education.
3. Any type of apprehension demonstration must have prior approval from the appropriate sub-division commander or designee.

D. INJURY TO K-9 HANDLER OR K-9

1. If a handler is seriously injured or becomes incapacitated, the K-9 will be very protective and will probably not allow officers or paramedics to approach the handler. Immediately contact another handler. If another handler is not available, contact a decoy officer.
2. If the K-9 is loose or around the handler, attempt to detain or secure the K-9 in the back of a K-9 cruiser, a regular cruiser, room or enclosure before approaching the handler by:

- a. Taking the leash and leading the K-9 away from the injured handler, securing the K-9; or
 - b. Retrieving the training sleeve from the trunk of a K-9 cruiser, and while wearing the sleeve on the arm, approach the K-9 with the sleeved arm held towards the K-9. Let the K-9 take hold, then drag or back the K-9 away by using the sleeve or apply a leash and secure the K-9 in a cruiser or a nearby room or enclosure, then slip the sleeve off allowing the K-9 to keep it in its mouth. If a K-9 has a sleeve in its mouth, it will not release in order to re-engage the person, the K-9 will remain on the sleeve; or
 - c. Call an animal warden to detain the K-9; or
 - d. Put the K-9 down by deadly force.
3. If both the handler and K-9 are seriously injured:
- a. A supervisor will arrange to have the injured K-9 transported to an approved veterinary hospital.
 - b. The transporting officer shall remain at the hospital until relieved by a handler or supervisor.

F. REQUEST FOR DEPARTMENT K-9 FROM AN OUTSIDE AGENCY

1. A shift commander will make the determination if a request for an on-duty K9 team for an unplanned event will be approved. The commander will ensure the requesting agency is notified of their decision.
2. An off duty K-9 team may be called in to assist another agency with the approval of a shift commander.
3. The request and shift commander's response will be documented in the Shift Commander's Daily Report.

G. REPORTING K9 USE OF FORCE OR UNINTENDED INJURIES

1. A use of force investigation will be conducted whenever injury, alleged injury or accidental injury is caused. A use of force investigation will be conducted any time a department K9 is deployed to apprehend a suspect.
2. The K-9 handler will notify their immediate supervisor who will initiate a preliminary use of force investigation in accordance with the Resisting Arrest/Use of Force procedure.

3. The handler will complete a K-9 Use/Arrest Report after **any** deployment intended to control or apprehend a suspect. If any force other than the deployment of the K-9 is used, the handler will include that force in a Use of Force/Resisting Arrest report.
4. Photographs of individuals involved in either an intentional or accidental K-9 use of force shall be taken whether or not the individual was injured. Photographs of any wounds attributed to or inflicted by the K-9 will be taken both before and after treatment, if possible.
5. The K-9 sergeant(s) will track the number of K-9 deployments, the number of K-9 apprehensions, and the bite ratio of each K-9 and for the unit as a whole. They will submit a report yearly through their chain of command. Any bite ratio that exceeds 20% will be cause for further scrutiny.

H. DOCUMENTING K9 DATA

1. All K9 handlers are required to document K9 use, K9 team individual training, K9 team group training, public appearances, grooming and care. Documentation must be accurate, up to date and in the format required.

I. K-9 CARE

1. All K-9 owned by the Akron Police Department will undergo physical examination once every 6 months by a veterinarian specified by the department.
2. K-9 handlers will be responsible to ensure all vaccinations are kept up to date.
3. During the summer months, precautions will be taken to prevent the canine from contracting heartworm with medication as prescribed by a veterinarian.
4. K-9 handlers will groom their dogs daily to ensure a clean and healthy coat. During the summer months they will remove the under down to provide adequate body ventilation.
5. Handlers will regulate the K-9's diet in order to maintain proper body weight.

By Order Of,



Kenneth R. Ball II
Chief of Police

Date September 29, 2020