



Office Of The Sheriff
Allegany County
Maryland

GENERAL ORDER NO: **3-600.00**

TO: All Patrol and Judicial Personnel

RE: **CANINE UNIT**

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for the orderly and efficient operations of support activities for and within the Allegany County Sheriff's Office.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 2004

REVISION DATE: 3/1/2016

3-601.00 Canine (K-9) Activities

.01 Canine Handler Requirements and Selection

- A. Handler must be employed with the Allegany County Sheriff's Office. Selection will be based on experience, education, and work performance. Final selection will be determined by the Sheriff.
- B. Handler must be in adequate physical condition to meet the rigors of K-9 training and subsequent strenuous activity often involved in K-9 operations.
- C. Applicant for handler, (or current handler), must have and maintain an acceptable performance evaluation.
- D. Handler must own property or have a rental property agreement suitable for canine housing.
- E. Handler must erect a departmentally approved kennel and dog box on property before receipt of the dog. Approved kennel consists of:
 - 1. Concrete Pad - 13' x 7'
 - 2. Woven Wire Kennel Fence Enclosing Pad - 6' high with covered top.
 - 3. Dog Box - 37 ½ inches wide by 42 inches long.

- F. Handler must agree upon K-9 working conditions with his/her spouse.
- G. Handler must be able to complete “Basic Utility K-9 School” or equivalent training for the type of dog utilized.
- H. Handler must show an interest and be well versed and motivated in K-9 activities.
- I. Compensation for the maintenance of the dog kennel, food and care will require a written contract between the individual canine handler and the Sheriff’s Office.

.02 Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Canines

- A. Dogs selected for training will be selected from the general public or from other law enforcement agencies.
- B. German Shepherds, Bloodhounds, or any other breed selected, should be between 12 and 24 months of age, in excellent health, and of good temperament. A physical will be administered to the dog by a local veterinarian, Chosen by the K-9 handler, before the K-9 Team commences its basic training.
- C. Departmental K-9's are the property of the Allegany County Sheriff’s Office and will remain so if the handler should leave the K-9 program. In the event that a handler leaves the program, the Sheriff will make a final determination as to the reassignment, retirement or sale of the dog. If the dog is reassigned to another handler, the new team will complete an approved basic training program. If the dog is to be retired, 41-601.02E will apply.
- D. K-9 In-Service Training, as specified by the basic training facility, will be attended by the K-9 Team. Dates of in-service training will be given to the Shift Lieutenant at least two weeks in advance of the training. All training records and evaluations of the team will be forwarded to the Sheriff and after review, will be sent to the K-9 handler for inclusion into their training file.
- E. When age or any physical impairment becomes a factor in the performance of the dog, and in-service evaluations indicate the K-9 is no longer suitable for active service, the dog will be retired. Upon retirement, the dog will be given to its current handler, if desired and all bills will become the responsibility of the individual handler, to include food, veterinary expenses, etc. If the handler chooses not to keep the canine, the Sheriff will make a final determination as to disposition of the dog.

- F. Dogs will be housed in clean quarters to include bedding, feeding utensils, and watering bowls. Living area will be inspected daily by handler, and yearly by the Sheriff, or his designee.
- G. Specified K-9 Sheriff's Office Kennel and Box will be used by departmental K-9 dogs only, and will be cleaned with disinfectant at least once a week.
- H. Dogs will be fed twice each day, before and after the completion of their tour of duty. Fresh water will be maintained in the Kennel at all times.
- I. The handler will be responsible for the care and feeding of the dog. If the handler cannot provide proper care for the dog for any reason, i.e., vacation, sickness, injury; arrangements will be made to kennel the dog at an appropriate facility.
- J. All dogs will be kept clean and well groomed at all times. One hour per work day will be allotted the handler for maintenance of the canine.
- K. Dogs will never be permitted to run loose without the direct supervision of the handler.
- L. Family members may not handle, exercise, feed, or care for the K-9.
- M. Handlers will not use another handler's dog except in an emergency situation.
- N. In the event a departmental K-9 is killed or injured, the Shift Lieutenant will be notified as soon as practical and a detailed report will be submitted. Any injuries to a departmental K-9 will also require a veterinarian report.
- O. At any time, if a K-9 handler is unable to control the K-9, another handler will be called to take control of the dog.
- P. Any type of medication given to the K-9 will be the responsibility of the handler and will be given in prescribed doses. All veterinarian treatments and medications will be recorded and kept on file by the handler.

.03 Utilization of Allegany County Sheriff's Office Canine (K-9)

- A. The use of a K-9 unit will be in accordance with General Order No: 3-400.00, (Use of Force/Weapons Policy). While the K-9 is not considered a deadly force weapon, it can be used with deadly force. The K-9 handler will allow the dog to use only that amount of force necessary to effect an arrest or to defend the life/safety of the team or others, to apprehend and render safe a fleeing, hiding, or combative suspect. The seriousness of the incident or situation will be evaluated by the handler in determining the amount of force to allow the dog to use. Generally, the refusal of a suspect to move when ordered, or the commission of a minor misdemeanor is not justification for an attack by the K-9. The K-9 will not be used against mentally retarded subjects, (when the handler is aware of the condition), except in extreme life/safety threatening situations. The dog may be used in situations where relatively minor crimes have been committed if it becomes evident the suspect is contemplating violence or escape; but again, only with the amount of force necessary to effect the arrest.
- B. In every instance where the K-9 will be utilized and a possibility exists of injury to a suspect, a verbal warning will be given first. The warning will consist of "Sheriff's Office Canine. Give up or the dog will be released". This warning will give innocent parties times to exit the area, and a chance for the suspect to surrender.
- C. Departmental K-9 will only be used for crowd control at the direction of the deputy in charge at the scene. Crowd control will be accomplished with the dog on leash. During crowd control operations, at least one deputy will accompany the K-9 unit to make any necessary arrests.
- D. When moving or dispersing a crowd, the dog will be moved in a slow and steady forward movement, giving the crowd time to move.
- E. If a bite results from a crowd control incident, every effort will be made to arrest the person bitten, and a detailed report of the incident completed, along with the "Maryland State Health Department Animal Bite" form.
- G. Dogs may be used to conduct interior building searches that will be conducted off leash with the handler in close proximity. A verbal warning will be given as in "B." of this section, before conducting the search.
- H. A K-9 unit may be used for tracking; an attempt by the dog to find persons or articles outside of a building. Tracking for suspects or articles will be performed on leash using a tracking harness. After confronting a suspect, it may be necessary to release the dog off leash to affect the arrest.

- I. When a K-9 is requested for tracking or building searches, it is necessary to secure the scene to preserve the scent of the person or object being sought. If a building is discovered with open doors or signs of forcible entry, the exterior of the building will be secured to prevent possible escape from the structure. No entry will be made into the building prior to arrival of the K-9. If the K-9 is requested in a tracking situation, the known direction of travel or “track” will be secured so as to prevent subjects or vehicles from crossing it. The area will be secured at the direction of the deputy in charge of the scene who will also direct incoming support units away from the track to prevent contamination.
- J. A K-9 Unit may be requested to maintain order at the Allegany County Detention Center in the case of a disturbance. In such cases, the dog will be worked on leash and the K-9 Team will not enter hostile areas without backup support.
- K. Requests for departmental K-9 to be used outside of Allegany County must be approved by the Shift Lieutenant or higher authority.
- L. Requests for utilization of the K-9 by other law enforcement agencies within Allegany County, may be approved by the on duty Shift Supervisor or higher authority.
- M. Requests for demonstrations of the K-9 will be addressed to the Sheriff, in writing.
- N. The ranking deputy at the scene, where a canine is utilized, is in charge of the scene. The ranking deputy will take the handler’s expertise and opinion into consideration, to effectively complete the K-9 mission.
- O. K-9 Personnel will be available for routine calls except time allotted for K-9 maintenance. Discretion will be used, however, by the Duty Officer/Dispatcher in assigning calls that may have potential transports. If the unit is on an assigned call and a need for the K-9 occurs, the unit will be relieved and freed for response to the K-9 request.

.04 K-9 Vehicle, Uniform and Equipment Maintenance and Expenses

- A. All K-9 vehicles will be kept clean and free of odor and hair collection and will stand inspection with that shift to which it is administratively assigned.
- B. Each K-9 vehicle shall be equipped with a cage mounted in the rear of the vehicle in place of the back seat.

- C. Whenever the handler leaves his vehicle unattended, the center sliding window will be secured if it is apparent the dog will not be needed.
- D. When securing the vehicle, the handler will lock all doors and utilize the air conditioner/heater to maintain proper temperature for the K-9.
- E. Each handler will be equipped with an operable portable radio at all times in case of emergency call out. If available, the K-9 handler will also be assigned a pager, with the understanding that he be available at all times, if needed.
- F. The K-9 “Uniform of the Day” will be designated by the Sheriff. (Refer to General Order No: 1-400.00). Court appearances by canine handlers will require the wearing of the Class “A” uniform.
- G. K-9 materials/equipment, excluding medical treatment, will be purchased with the approval of the purchasing Lieutenant, who will maintain an inventory of all equipment issued to handlers.
 - 1. Upon leaving the K-9 program, the handler will return all K-9 related equipment/uniforms to the purchasing Lieutenant.
- H. Standard K-9 Equipment shall consist of:
 - 1. Six foot leather leash
 - 2. Leather attack collar
 - 3. Choke chain
 - 4. Leather muzzle
 - 5. Six foot ground chain
 - 6. Tracking harness
 - 7. Dog kennel and box
- I. K-9 materials, such as leather gear, shall be oiled and kept in good condition at all times.
- J. Dog food will be purchased at a local commercial feed outlet with a receipt obtained for departmental billing.

.05 Records and Training

- A. A “K-9 Team Work Report” will be filed each time the K-9 is utilized, including training and demonstrations.
- B. Additional forms will be maintained by the department for utilization by the K-9 Unit.

3-602.00 Actions by Support Personnel Which Will Enhance K-9 Capabilities

- .01 There has been past cases, both criminal and domestic, which if the following rules had been applied, would have resulted in using only half the time and manpower in regard to use of a K-9 Team. The dogs are only as good as the situation presented to them. In most cases, the scene of a crime or a tracking situation is fouled by the police officer or the public present at the scene. This is not done intentionally, but is due to the lack of knowledge of what precautions and actions should be taken to preserve the scene for the dog.

The following steps will be taken by those involved in an incident where a K-9 Team may be used for tracking and, if followed, will enhance the possibility for a successful operation:

- A. Upon arrival at the scene, turn off the vehicle engine and direct others in the immediate area to do so. Carbon monoxide emitted will neutralize the scent.
- B. Do not establish a command post in close proximity to the scene. The deputy and others should stay away from the area of a crime or lost person as far as reasonably practical. Do not permit anyone to enter the immediate or adjacent area of a crime scene or location where a lost person was last observed. Their scent will carry across the area to be searched and contaminate that area. Once a K-9 Team has started a search, allow approximately 20 minutes, and then continue your investigation at the scene.
- B. If a suspect is chased on foot into a wooded or other type area, mark the area where the chase or search was terminated. Do not permit anyone to enter this area, if at all possible. The K-9 Team will be directed to the scene by the deputy initiating the investigation.

- C. If a scent article is needed, endeavor to locate freshly worn underwear, socks, t-shirt, recently used sheets or pillowcases, etc. **DO NOT TOUCH OR PERMIT ANYONE TO TOUCH THE SCENT ARTICLE.** Do not place the articles in a plastic bag or container, as they are chemically treated and will neutralize the scent. Place the scent article in a paper bag and seal by rolling up tight. If the article is touched contrary to these instructions, bring the person who touched it to the scene, along with the article, if no other article can be found.
 - E. Do not follow the K-9 Team unless instructed to do so by the K-9 handler. Do not place departmental vehicles in the area of the search to observe the K-9. This distributes foreign scent in the area of the search; again carbon monoxide creates a problem. Stay on patrol in and around the area to be searched. Do not stop or get out of your vehicle in the area unless absolutely necessary or directed to do so by the K-9 handler.
 - F. If the sought after subject is observed, mark the exact area where observed and establish security for a K-9 Team tracking situation. Contact K-9 immediately and apprise them of the situation.
 - G. When organizing search parties and entering the search area, do not follow in the direction of the K-9 Team. Establish a search pattern best suited to the area, after the K-9 Team has exhausted its efforts.
 - H. If there are other dogs in the area of the tracking operation, request their owners remove them or restrain them in some manner.
 - I. In the event of a stolen vehicle, permit the K-9 Team to start their track from the vehicle before your search of the vehicle. The seats of the vehicles are a good article. Again, it is imperative no one is permitted in or around the vehicle prior to the K-9 Team. If at all possible, remain in your vehicle until tracking is underway.
- .02 The dogs may or may not be successful, however, their potential of being successful will be increased approximately 50% if the above rules are followed. Remember, the dogs will only be as good as you allow them to be.

3-603.00 Accidental Bites

- .01 An accidental bite may be defined as an attack by a department canine not directed by the handler, and not in defense of the canine handler.
- .02 In the event of an accidental bite, the following procedure will apply:
 - A. Medical attention will be administered to the subject. If the subject refused medical treatment, he/she will be asked to sign a statement to that effect.
 - B. A supervisor will be assigned to investigate the bite. A “Health Department Animal Bite” form will be completed. A “K-9 Team Work Report” will be completed before the end of shift for submission to the Sheriff by the investigating supervisor, detailing the circumstances of the bite.
 - C. A photograph will be taken of the wound.
 - D. The Shift Lieutenant or higher authority will be advised of the bite as soon as practical. The severity of the bite will influence the urgency of the notification.
 - E. If the Canine Handler is not aware of the incident, he/she will be made aware as soon as possible. The K-9 handler will complete a “Record of Bite” form.
 - F. The Shift Lieutenant will coordinate necessary action with the Allegany County Division of Human Resources.

3-604.00 Canine Ballistic Vests

- .01 All Sheriff Office K-9 units have been donated a ballistic vest for their dog.
 - A. K-9 handlers shall use their professional judgment when deciding whether or not to use the canine ballistic vest and foot covers. The vests shall be used when the K-9 is utilized in any raid or arrest situation where there is a likelihood of an armed encounter.

By Order Of:

Craig A. Robertson, Sheriff