



*Kern County Sheriff's Office*  
**Policies and Procedures**

<b>TITLE: SHERIFF'S CANINE SECTION DEPLOYMENTS</b>		<b>NO: Q-300</b>	
<b>APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner</b>			
<b>REFERENCE:</b>			
<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> March 1, 2021	<b>REVIEWED:</b>	<b>REVISED:</b>	<b>UPDATED:</b>

**POLICY**

Due to their unique capabilities and training, Sheriff's canines are ideally suited for searching and locating suspect(s). They should not be considered as a **"last resort"** but should be considered as a **primary** resource for this type of activity. In addition to their ability to search and locate suspect(s), Sheriff's canines also possess the capability and training to physically seize suspect(s) who are violently resisting or have committed a serious or violent felony and are actively resisting and/or hiding or lying in wait. In this capacity, the deployment of the Sheriff's canine becomes a use of force, subject to the use of force policy contained in the Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures Manual, Section F-100. For all intents and purposes, due to the training of Sheriff's canine teams, such deployments are considered a **less lethal** use of force. As a use of force, Sheriff's canine handlers alone will make the decision to deploy their canines in this capacity, based on the totality of the facts they possess and current use of force policy considerations.

All Sheriff's canines shall be trained in the "Guard and Bark" (also called the "Bark and Hold" or "Find and Bark") technique. The "Guard and Bark" is not a deployment term. The term is a training method the Sheriff's Office Canine Unit utilizes, and under this method, a properly trained and maintained canine may provide stronger alerts on inaccessible suspects, thus increasing officer safety, public safety and afford the suspect an opportunity to surrender. Sheriff's canines will only be deployed off lead/leash in situations where a bite or other physical contact is reasonable based on the totality of the circumstances and our deployment policy.

Based on "Guard and Bark" training techniques, it is possible that if a suspect(s) are accessible during an off lead/leash deployment and the suspect(s) do not move, attempt to escape, or take an aggressive action toward the canine, the canine handler, or others, that the canine may contain (by guarding) the suspect(s) and barking. The barking will alert the handler and potentially provide the canine handler the opportunity to recall the canine, thus preventing physical contact by the canine with the suspect(s), and give the suspect(s) an opportunity to comply with deputies and be taken into custody without further incident. The "Guard and Bark" training technique does not guarantee that the suspect(s) will not be bitten by the canine, as deployments are often dynamic and may rapidly change.

Sheriff's Office Canines shall be deployed on lead/leash for all searches, unless a specific circumstance makes the utilization of the canine on lead/leash a threat to the handler, other

deputies, or the public. Canine handlers shall limit off-leash canine deployments, searches, and other instances where there is an increased risk of a canine bite to a suspect to instances in which the suspect is wanted for a serious felony or is reasonably suspected to be armed based upon individualized information specific to the subject, based on the totality of the circumstances, the Sheriff's Office Deployment Policy (Q-100) and applicable case law.

A canine handler shall keep his or her canine within visual and auditory range during deployments at all times, except when a canine clears a threshold (e.g., rounding a corner, entering a room, ascending/descending a stairwell, or entering a confined space, such as a crawl-space), or when canine deployment beyond the handler's visual and auditory range is necessary to ensure the immediate safety of others.

All Sheriff's canines are also trained in the detection of either controlled substances or explosives. As such, they are extremely useful in searching buildings, rooms, containers, vehicles, etc., for controlled substances or explosives. Sheriff's canines will not conduct searches of person(s) for controlled substances or explosive materials/precursor chemicals.

Sheriff's canines can sometimes be successful in crowd control situations. Due to variable conditions involved in these situations, Sheriff's canines will only be deployed for crowd control as directed by a command/ranking officer.

Sheriff's canine teams also serve a significant public relations role. Public demonstrations by the Sheriff's canine teams are a highly visible way to show the public the high level of training, control, and overall quality of the teams that serve within their community.

## **DIRECTIVE 1. TYPES OF CALLS SUITED FOR CANINES**

Sheriff's canine teams should be primarily dispatched to the types of calls which best suit their abilities. These calls include, but are not limited to:

- Prowlers
- Controlled substance searches/explosive material/precursor searches
- Burglaries/alarms in progress
- Calls involving tracks
- Building/area searches
- Violent or resisting suspects
- Warrant service (arrest, bench, search)
- Back up unit
- Crowd control (with approval of a command/ranking officer)
- Searches for non-criminal person(s) (i.e.; missing/lost person)

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- Assisting other departments (with approval of a command/ranking officer)
- Canine teams should not be dispatched to report calls or other routine assignments, which would cause them to be unavailable for extended periods of time. See **Directive 2** for exceptions.

## **DIRECTIVE 2. CANINE ASSIGNMENTS/PRIORITY 3 CALLS**

Sheriff's canine teams should not normally be used as primary, investigative units. Extensive investigative calls for service and the requisite reporting, is best suited to patrol units. Due to their limited numbers and special skills, canine units should remain available for canine support activity.

Canine teams can assist when calls for service are backlogged, and patrol units are unavailable for assignments. One manner of assistance is in the handling of minor, non-complex, Priority 3 calls under the following circumstances:

- Communication Center supervisor contacts and obtains approval from the on-duty command/ranking officer
- Assigned patrol units are unavailable due to assignments
- Priority 3 call is non-complex and does not involve arrest situations (canine unit cannot transport), or does not involve extended down time
- A canine unit assigned to a Priority 3 call, will listen to their portable radio for possible re-assignments to a canine-related call. Should a canine unit be re-assigned to another call, the handler will advise the reporting party that either he/she will return later to complete the report/investigation, or another unit will be dispatched. In the event the canine unit is unable to return to the report/investigation call, the handler will notify the Communications Center that a patrol unit needs to be dispatched.

## **DIRECTIVE 3. DEPLOYMENT BY SUPERVISORS**

Command/ranking officers may direct that a Sheriff canine team be utilized on any given situation, bearing in mind:

- Officer safety
- Canine team safety
- Sheriff's Office use of force policy
- Canine handlers may use their canines to protect themselves, other officers, and citizens from death and/or serious injury

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- Tactical considerations. The actual tactics to be utilized by the canine team will be determined by the handler based on his/her training and knowledge of the canine's training, characteristics and capabilities
- Attempts should be made to control contamination of the search area(s) as such contamination severely reduces the team's effectiveness. Rapid containment of the search area is the key to successful canine searches
- Utilization of canine teams for primary reports/investigations is an inefficient use of the team and should be avoided. See **Directive 2** for exceptions
- Canine teams shall never be used to satisfy a civil process without prior approval from the Sheriff
- Canine teams shall not be used to transport prisoners except in severe emergencies

#### **DIRECTIVE 4. DEPLOYMENT BY HANDLERS**

The primary mission of the Sheriff's canine teams is to serve as a support function to line operations. Their focus will be to provide canine assistance where appropriate. The secondary mission will be to provide uniform law enforcement service as required. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Building/area searches for suspect(s)
- Backup assistance to other officer(s)
- Tracking, both for criminal suspect(s) and non-criminal person(s)
- Apprehension of violent or resisting suspect(s), within Use of Force Policy (KCSOPPM, F-100)
- Warrant service (arrest, bench, search)
- Narcotic searches (See section Q-600)/Explosive Material/Precursor Searches (See section Q-700)
- Respond to canine related calls for service in the Substation response areas. Handlers will notify the on-duty patrol sergeant and/or watch lieutenant when leaving the Metropolitan Patrol area
- Assisting other departments (with approval). Sheriff's office policies and procedures will be followed when assisting other departments. In addition, canine teams shall be apprised of all relevant information on the incident, prior to deploying their canine
- Public demonstrations (with approval of the Canine Section Manager/Coordinator)
- Canine handlers may use their canines to protect themselves, other officers, and citizens from death or serious injury

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- Canine teams shall never be used to satisfy a civil process without prior approval from the Sheriff
- Canine teams shall not transport prisoners except in severe emergencies
- Crowd control: Canine handlers shall avoid use of the canine in crowd control situations, due to the variables involved in each circumstance, without a supervisor. Canine teams shall only be deployed in crowd control situations at the direction of a command/ranking officer and only after a review of the situation and development of a tactical plan with input from the handler. Canine teams may become involved without a supervisor if non-intervention would endanger officers or innocent person(s). **Crowd control will only be done “on leash” (6’ or less).**

**DIRECTIVE 5. CANINE TEAM CALL-OUTS**

Since there are a limited number of canine teams, we are unable to provide 24-hour coverage. Also, since the canine teams are assigned to the Metropolitan Patrol Division and their primary work activity takes place within those boundaries, there may be occasions when a canine team is not available for other Sheriff’s Office work units. On these occasions where a canine team is needed, but one on-duty is not available, the call-out of a canine team may be required. The on-duty command/ranking officer has the authority to authorize a canine team call-out.

The command/ranking officer should contact the Communications Center and request the next on-duty canine team be called out. The Communications Center has a copy of the Metropolitan Patrol Division schedule for identifying this unit. When a canine team is called out, the Communication Center should attempt to notify the Canine Coordinator of the call-out. If there is a problem with the team being called out, the Canine Coordinator will have final say in the authorization of the call-out. Because of canine fatigue and feeding schedules, calling out a canine unit who has just ended a shift should be avoided. After the canine has been fed, the team will be unavailable for a minimum of three (3) hours.

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