



Kern County Sheriff's Office

Policies and Procedures

TITLE: SHERIFF'S CANINE UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES		NO: Q-400	
APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner			
REFERENCE:			
EFFECTIVE: March 1, 2021	REVIEWED:	REVISED:	UPDATED:

POLICY

Due to the special relationship that is inherent in a canine team, the specialized training, and unique work environment that canine teams operate in, Sheriff's canine handlers have a very important responsibility for the care, training, and proper deployment of their canine partners. In most cases, it is only the Sheriff's canine handler who can and must control the actions of their respective canines. It is a violation of policy for any person to purposely agitate, tease, or distract a Sheriff's canine, without the express permission of the assigned canine handler. Only the trained Sheriff's canine handlers should attempt to command a Sheriff's canine, except for canine staff for training purposes or an exigent circumstance such as a handler becoming incapacitated. Safety and control of the canine are priority responsibilities for the handlers.

DIRECTIVE 1. CANINE HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES-GENERAL

The Sheriff's canine handler responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Remaining alert to and avoiding unsafe situations with the canine. Handlers should never allow their canines into an unsafe situation where person(s) or the canine could be unnecessarily injured. This includes the handler's residence, vehicle(s), or any such place where the canine may be present
- Maintaining command and control over their assigned canine at all times. This includes the handler's residence, vehicle(s), or any such place where the canine may be present
- Never allowing any other person to purposely agitate, tease, or distract a Sheriff's canine, except during training exercises and with the express permission of the assigned canine handler. Handlers will immediately notify their immediate supervisor of such incidents and will forward a detailed memorandum to the Canine Section Coordinator as soon as possible
- Ensuring that their residence is kept in such a condition to not bring discredit to the Sheriff's Office or the Sheriff's Canine Program. The outside areas housing the Sheriff's Office canine are subject to inspection by the Canine Unit Coordinator or Manager to assess suitability with reasonable notice, prior to inspection, given to the handler
- Ensuring that the canine's kennel, five (5) foot fence, and all gates are secure

- Providing their assigned canine with proper grooming, medical care, and proper feeding/watering
- Ensuring that all assigned equipment is kept clean, neat and functioning
- Providing and ensuring adequate training is administered. Continued training deficiencies or deficiencies which affect the ability to perform, will be immediately reported to the Canine Coordinator. The Canine Coordinator will confer with the Sheriff’s Office Trainer for determination of further action, including remedial training and/or if warranted, suspension from work until such time as the performance is acceptable
- Promptly preparing and submitting all reports as may be required
- Accurate and timely reporting of monthly training and stats

DIRECTIVE 2. CANINE HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES-INJURY

Whenever a Sheriff’s canine injures any person(s), including an officer, the assigned canine handler shall:

- Immediately notify the on-duty Command/Ranking Officer and provide the details surrounding the injury. This information will be included in a C.I. report
- If the injury is to a person(s) arrested, the involved canine handler shall **require** that the arrested person(s) be taken to Kern Medical (or local hospital if in the outlying areas) and that treatment is either obtained or refused
- If the injury is to any other person(s), the involved canine handler shall **request** that the injured person(s) seek medical treatment
- Conduct an investigation into the injury, seeking statements (audio and video record if possible) from any witness(es) and the person(s) injured
- Photograph, or request Technical Investigations respond and photograph the injury (after the wound(s) is cleaned, prior to bandaging) and any other relevant evidence
- Ensure that a C.I. report is completed; pulling a new case number if one does not already exist. If a case number already exists, the involved canine handler will complete a supplemental report containing detailed information. The information shall include at a minimum:
 1. Date/time of injury
 2. Location injury occurred
 3. Personal information on injured party (age/DOB, home address, phone number, etc.)
 4. Type and extent of injury
 5. Hospital where treatment was sought
 6. Person providing treatment

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7. Witness(es) and statements
8. Circumstances surrounding the injury
9. Deployment/tactics used
10. Involved canine handler/canine
11. Which supervisor was notified
12. Who took photographs or which Technical Investigator responded

Such reports shall be completed by the end of the shift, unless approved by the Canine Manager or Canine Coordinator. The report will be processed as a priority, with a copy requested for the Canine Manager and Canine Coordinator. The canine handler shall:

- Ensure that the Canine Coordinator is advised and briefed on the incident as soon as possible, either by phone, or in person.

DIRECTIVE 3. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES-INJURY

Upon notification by a canine handler of an injury, the on-duty Command/Ranking Officer shall:

- Ensure a supervisor-level investigation is completed
- Review the incident and offer assistance where needed
- Ensure that all reports are completed
- Ensure all reports are placed into the “Canine” role in LERMS, so they can be reviewed and approved by the Canine Coordinator.

DIRECTIVE 4. CANINE COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES-INJURY

Upon notification of an injury, the Canine Coordinator will:

- Ensure a supervisor-level investigation is completed
- Review all reports to ensure policies and procedures were followed and take corrective action where required
- Complete the use of force reporting procedure and document on the approved checklist
- Brief the Canine Manager of the circumstances and outcome of all injury incidents

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