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Canine Unit Responsibilities for Supervisors

To ensure compliance with the California Department of Justice Final Proposed Stipulated Judgment, the information in this training bulletin outlines supervisor and Watch Commander responsibilities as they relate to the use of Sheriff's Office canines. Information in the judgment regarding the Canine Unit is listed under section: B. Use of Canines. This section is contained on pages 10 through 13.

In addition, all prior Canine Unit divisional policies were updated and converted into department policies. The 16 updated policies became effective on March 1, 2021. These policies are: Q-100 to Q-1500 and K-485. Since these policies may contain updated information, it is important you read each of them. The following policies are particularly important, and you are expected to have a good working knowledge of these specific sections:

Q-100-Deployments

Q-300-Deployments

Q-400-Responsibilities

Q-500-Searches

An overview of some of the newer procedures are as follows:

Approval is now required for the deployment of a canine. The canine handlers will request approval from a patrol supervisor, usually over the radio, for authorization to utilize their canine. There are a wide range of activities that are acceptable for canine deployments. These activities are listed in the policies mentioned above and at the end of this training bulletin. It is important to understand that authorizing the deployment of a canine does not mean you are authorizing the canine to bite (apprehend) someone. The decision to use a canine on an actual apprehension lies with the handler, and their actions will be thoroughly reviewed for compliance with policy.

In the event a canine apprehends someone, the on-duty patrol supervisor is required to go to the scene. That supervisor will gather all relevant facts surrounding the apprehension, view any available video and gain a good understanding of the incident as a whole. This will be the initial supervisor investigation into the use of force incident. After this occurs, notifications are required. The on-duty Watch Lieutenant and Canine Unit Supervisor should be notified.

The Watch Lieutenant will create a Watch Log entry detailing the incident and forward any additional information to the Metropolitan Patrol Commander and Canine Unit Manager. After notifications are made, the patrol supervisor will ensure all reports related to the use of force are completed, prior to the end of the shift and placed in the "Canine" Command Role.

Once the procedures above are completed, the Canine Unit use of force review process will begin. The Canine Unit Sergeant will approve all reports detailing a canine apprehension. The Canine Unit Sergeant will be the only sergeant authorized to approve these reports. The Canine Unit Sergeant will also complete the Use of Force Report Packet and forward it to the Canine Unit Manager for review. The Canine Unit Manager will present the information to the Metropolitan Patrol Commander. Their combined review will result in a determination on department policy compliance and whether the apprehension was an appropriate use of force.

In the event a Sheriff's Office canine bites a civilian other than a suspect, a supervisor SHALL go to the scene. After gathering all pertinent information surrounding the incident, phone notification shall be made as soon as practical, to the Canine Unit manager and/or the Metropolitan Patrol Commander. They will confer with the Law Enforcement Bureau Chief to determine what additional steps are necessary, such as a potential Litigation Specialist response.

If you have any questions about the Canine Unit or any of the procedures referenced above, please do not hesitate to contact the Canine Unit Supervisor or Canine Unit Manager. We are committed to the continued success of the unit and providing quality canine support to the Sheriff's Office and our community.

Listed below are acceptable situations for authorizing a canine deployment:

- Crime prevention/suppression via high visibility patrol;
 - 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 (DPPM, F-100);
 - Assisting on vehicle pursuits;
 - 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
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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.

Listed below are circumstances where a canine deployment would be inappropriate, or only appropriate under limited circumstances:

- 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).**
 - 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.
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