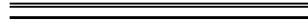


**The Bill Blackwood  
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**



**Implementing a Canine Division in a Small Agency**



**A Leadership White Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Required for Graduation from the  
Leadership Command College**



**By  
Kevin Rooney**

**Willis Police Department  
Willis, Texas  
July 2013**

## **ABSTRACT**

Implementing a canine division for a small agency is needed in today's law enforcement because of what a canine can do for an agency. Canines can be used for narcotics detection, explosive detection, apprehension, search and rescue and many other uses. With careful planning and execution of the implementation, the agency will have a greater chance of success and minimize their civil liability. It is relevant to contemporary law enforcement because the senses of a canine are much more than that of a human and can detect smell and sound when humans cannot.

Agencies should implement a K-9 program to enhance their department's ability to deter crime in their jurisdiction for long term policing effectiveness and have the community involved in the process. The canine will not only enhance the department, but it will enhance the community. Canines can be used in numerous ways to get the community involved such as community events and demonstrations.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	
Introduction . . . . .	1
Position . . . . .	1
Counter Position . . . . .	6
Recommendation . . . . .	10
References . . . . .	14
Appendices	

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of a canine unit is to enhance the officers' ability to prevent and or deter crime relating to illegal drug activity. Several topics will arise as to whether or not a canine division would be appropriate for a small agency and the citizens in which they serve. The concerns that arose included cost, liability, breed, legal use and non-use, and if the canine should be a single or dual purpose dog.

The objective of implementing a canine unit is to detect hidden drugs and deter illegal activity by enhancing the offender's fear of discovery through presence while on duty, and at public functions and appearances. Depending on what the canine will be used for, it can also assist in the apprehension of fleeing suspects, thereby giving the officers a tactical advantage over the suspect. When performing a search for a lost child, the canine has a greater advantage over officers simply by their sense of smell and keen hearing. The cost of developing and maintaining a canine unit can be minimized by using outside resources. This is helpful especially for smaller departments wanting to start a canine unit that do not have the financial resources. The liability aspect of having a canine unit can be greatly reduced by having an appropriate canine for what needs are to be met. Agencies should implement a canine program to enhance their department's ability to deter crime in their jurisdiction for long term policing effectiveness.

## **POSITION**

There are so many reasons for a small agency to implement a canine division. One of the reasons why a small agency should implement a canine division is to deter crime by their training and simply mere presence. In each city that has a canine

division, it was reported the crime rate dropped (United States Police Canine Association, n.d.). A canine sense of smell is close to 700 times greater than a human's sense of smell (Basich, 2003a). When dogs sniff for an odor, it is a disruption of their normal breathing pattern, which allows the dog to recognize a scent and follow the trail (Correa, 2011). The psychological advantage of having a canine in a department is tremendous. Patrolling in a fully marked K9 patrol vehicle makes a strong statement of the department's intent to deter crime. It has been reported that burglaries in a certain areas dropped by 80% in a year's time when K9 units were actively on patrol in the area. Canines can clear areas such as schools, parks, and corners where gangs hang out and keep them out with random patrol tactics. According to Mesloh (2003), approximately 600 students were surveyed on a college campus, and it was found that 70% said the presence of a canine could deter drug use on campus. Sixty percent of students stated having a bomb dog made them feel secure, and 67% stated the canine reduced crime. Handler assaults when the canine was with the handler are also very rare. The well trained canine with the proper handler should have the highest arrest rate compared to other officers (Conway & Watson, n.d.).

Another reason to implement a canine division is that canines can assist in tracking lost kids or elderly people, or they can help apprehend a suspect. According to Conway & Watson (n.d.), tracking is a prime function for a canine as it can track suspects from any crime where a suspect flees on foot. Even if a suspect was not apprehended after a crime, the canine could tell a lot of information just by where the track ended the direction, or even located evidence used in the crime.

Courts have established that the canine bite is a less-lethal use of force, and canines can be used to prevent a deadly force situation, and this can be seen in the evidence of former litigious claims (*Matthews v. Jones*, 1994) and (*Vera Cruz v. City of Escondido*, 1998). In *Vera Cruz v. City of Escondido*, Officer Distel and his K9 responded to a disturbance call from employees at the Del Taco. The disturbance call was that man with a knife was tearing up the restaurant. Distel arrived on scene and spotted Vera Cruz in the rear of the Del Taco, throwing objects out of the restaurant. Distel identified himself, and Vera Cruz began walking away. Distel then warned Vera Cruz to stop or he would release the dog, and Vera Cruz started running. After Distel gave Vera Cruz another warning to stop and he refused to stop, Distel released his K9. The K9 caught up to Vera Cruz and bit him on the right arm and brought him to the ground. After Vera Cruz dropped the knife, Distel ordered the K9 to release his bite and the K9 immediately complied. Vera Cruz sustained a large laceration and several puncture wounds on his upper right arm that required surgery and hospitalization. A summary of the court's decision was that a properly trained police dog could kill a suspect but does not convert otherwise non-deadly force into deadly force.

The court also referred to *Robinette v. Barnes* (1988), where a police dog actually killed a suspect. In *Robinette v. Barnes*, the suspect bled to death after a police dog bit him on the neck. The dog was trained to bite whatever part of the anatomy was nearest if an arm was unavailable. That court held that the use of the dog did not amount to deadly force. All uses of force would be subject to *Tennessee v. Garner's* (1985) deadly force requirements. To be entitled to a deadly force instruction, the plaintiff must present evidence that the force used in a particular situation posed more

than a remote possibility of death. Because Vera Cruz presented no such evidence, the court did not give a deadly force instruction.

The inclusion of a canine program can also assist with some of the most vulnerable members of a community. Lost children or elderly adults can take a lot of resources from a small department, but in the majority of circumstances, the canine can be utilized. This allows a small agency to do more with less if it has a canine division. It would take a canine team far less time to find a lost person than a group of officers. It all comes down to the sense of smell a canine has. Canines can smell a scent up to a few hundred yards away simply with a slight breeze. Agencies can also utilize the canine in building searches as it would take a canine far less time to clear a building and apprehend anyone inside than officers can.

Another reason for a small agency to implement a canine division is simply they find hidden narcotics. According to Bulzomi (2000), there is no doubt that this country has been fighting the war on drugs for more than 30 years, and the canine is the most effective tool an agency can use. Canines have been used to sniff luggage, buses, vehicles, trains, packages, warehouses, motel rooms, houses, and apartments to detect hidden contraband. According to Walker (2001), there are numerous court cases that show the use of a canine sniff is not a violation of the fourth amendment. Certified canines in the detection of narcotics, firearms, or explosives give officers probable cause to search, which may have been absent if the canine was not utilized. The use of the canine could also lead to seizures that include property and currency, which, in turn, will pay for the entire canine program.

Another great reason to implement a canine division is community and public relations. According to Conway & Watson (n.d), getting the community involved will benefit the department by letting citizens be a part of the process and informing them of what a police dog can do for them. Most citizens are not aware of a canine's capability, so public demonstration is a great way to show what canines can do. Most people who recognize and understand the need for a K-9 are involved in the process and are more willing to contribute both with financial donations and donations of their time to the cause. The canine can go to public functions, such as career day at schools, Boy or Girl Scout meetings, and crime prevention meetings. The majority of the kids and adults will remember the canine's name and relate their experience as a positive one.

Often, law enforcement officers are cast in a negative role through the media. Not enough credit is give to law enforcement officers for the good things that are done. K9 demonstrations are an excellent method to combat the negative and help bring back the old idea that police officers are friends. This is very important because the community could make or break the canine division's existence when administrators attempt to disband the canine division. Citizens have rallied behind the units and through political pressure, the canine units have survived. Canine officers should try to allow time for a question and answer session after any demonstration because there are always questions to be answered about the canine. Many officers arrange for the courts and their governmental leaders to observe a demonstration so they see firsthand what a K9 can do to gain their respect and support. If they understand the K9's abilities and the training the team went through, the canine team's credibility in court will be much stronger and more respected among the legal community. If the demonstrations



are recorded by video or there are photos that show the community interacting with the canine, it could be useful if it comes to court issues. The community is the same group of people that can be used to combat any claims that the agencies canine is vicious or a deadly weapon. This will be beneficial as these are the citizens of the community who will be sitting on the jury. The most important thing to remember is to leave a positive image; otherwise, the demonstration is useless. Due to all of the community interaction, it is important during the handler selection that the handler be an officer that is a good public speaker.

## **COUNTER POSITION**

One of the reasons why small agencies do not have a canine unit is because it costs too much to get started and maintain. Initial start up cost should be concentrated on because maintenance is far less critical and can be worked into the yearly budget. According to the United States Police Canine Association (n.d.), insufficient funding is the number one cause for canine programs to fail. Startup costs may include leashes, collars, cages, bite suit, bite sleeve, toys, food and water bowls, patrol vehicle equipment, and the dog. All of the equipment can be purchased at local stores or purchased over the internet from companies that specialize in canine accessories. According to Basich (2003b), the initial cost, of course, will be the dog, and depending in which area the agency is and which source is picked to purchase the dog, this will determine a starting price. There are several ways to reduce or eliminate costs completely through creative thinking and hard work.

The internet is a useful resource to use to see if any available grants are available through companies, like Milk-Bone Canine Heroes Police Dog Donation

Program. According to Basich (2003a), there are also alternate forms of donations, such as fund raisers, donations from citizens, and local businesses that may also donate money or supplies. A local veterinarian may be willing to help out with any fees associated with food and health care. The media can also be an essential tool when trying to get the community to donate. Another resource is the 341<sup>st</sup> Training Squadron ("Law Enforcement Agency Information," n.d.), which is based at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. According to them, they provide military working dogs at no cost to law enforcement agencies. The military working dogs that are available did not pass the rigorous training program Lackland Air Force Base has but most dogs have received some training. It is very easy for any law enforcement agency to acquire a working dog to call their own by means of adoption. According to Lackland Air Force Base, German Shepherds, Dutch Shepherds, and Belgian Malinois have proven to be the best choices for patrol and detection work. However Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, and other sporting breeds have been used and may be available ("Law Enforcement Agency Information," n.d.).

Another reason small departments do not have a canine unit is because there is too much liability. It is true that there is liability in having a canine unit, but officers can be a liability factor just as much as a canine if not properly trained. A canine, if not used properly or if not trained adequately, could cause a civil suit against the department. There will always be liability issues in anything an officer does in the department while acting under the color of law. Departments have to weigh the liability factor and decide what is best for the department. If the department decides to proceed with a canine division, then the following ways will help greatly reduce the chance of being sued.

According to Basich (2003a), liability issues for a department are largely unfounded when handlers and canines follow strict policy and procedure. If the handler conducts proper training and keeps proper records and uses good judgment when deploying the dog, the chances of a lawsuit are minimal.

According to Conway and Watson (n.d.), through documentation and proper record keeping, it is reported that 97% of the work that a canine does is with its nose and not its mouth. There have been few lawsuits filed and won against law enforcement canine teams that were properly qualified and trained by a professional law enforcement canine trainer. One example is *Robinette v. Barnes* (1988). In this case, the court decided in the officer's favor. On July 10, 1984, the K-9 team of Officer Barnes and Canine Casey was dispatched to a car dealership in Nashville, Tennessee. A burglar alarm inside the building had been activated. Barnes and Casey entered the building and Barnes shouted a warning that he had a police dog and that anyone inside the building should come out or he would turn the dog loose. Approximately 30 seconds later, Barnes repeated the warning. Barnes and the dog then began to search the building. Eventually, Barnes followed Casey into a darkened bay area of the car dealership. His flashlight revealed that Casey had the suspect's neck in his mouth. The man was lying face down on the floor with half of his body underneath a car. Barnes ordered Casey to come to him, leashed the dog, and then called for an ambulance. The court ruled that the use of a properly trained police dog to seize a felony suspect does not constitute deadly force. The court also ruled that even if the use of a police dog could constitute deadly force, the circumstances of the suspect's apprehension justified the use of such force in this case (*Robinette v. Barnes*, 1988).

Another reason for a small agency not to implement a canine division is because of lack of having the proper personnel to start the program and maintain it. This would include a handler with extensive training and knowledge of canines and case law. It would also include selecting the appropriate dog and whether it is a single or multi-purpose canine. The lack of having the proper personnel is easily fixed by choosing or hiring the right person for the job. The handler is the most important part of the canine team so the interview process should be rigorous and should consist of a list of questions that include all aspects of the job. There should also be questions about the officer's family life and how it can and will be affected by having a canine at home. The officer should not want to be a handler because he wants to or because he thinks it is cool. The officer should have several years of experience and has to be capable and has shown a good work ethic both on and off duty. The handler must take responsibility for the canine's actions both on and off duty and be able to control the dog. The handler should want to train with the canine more than required because just like with officers and their firearms, officers who do not train with their firearm lose proficiency over time. This is true with a canine team also. The handler must train on every aspect the canine is used for so the dog does not lose his proficiency when asked to find narcotics or a lost person.

Another issue would be the proper selection of and what type or breed of dog to choose that will ultimately reach the goals of the department. There are many breeds to choose from, so the department should possibly consider making it a joint decision of the chief and the handler as they will need to decide what the canine will be used for and which breed will better suit those needs. When the proper person is chosen, then

finding the right dog is the job of the handler. When choosing the canine for the agency, it should be based off the goal of the department. When choosing a proper canine, numerous factors should be a part of the process. According to Bradshaw (2012), the agency should start with a reputable kennel and that kennel should provide the officer with a handler course to get acclimated to how to handle canines. The kennel should provide numerous dogs that meet the needs of the department and have pre-selected the dogs for the handler to view and interact with.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Implementing a canine division for a small agency is a great asset to the department and the community in which they serve. The issues addressed in this paper are designed to assist small departments to start a canine unit and gives references to cut down costs. It also gives an inside as to what can be done to help start and maintain a canine unit by getting the community involved. Agencies should implement a K-9 program to enhance their department's ability to deter crime in their jurisdiction for long term policing effectiveness and have the community involved in the process. This gives information about what a canine is capable of and the senses they use to surpass officers in finding hidden narcotics or lost persons. Canines can also assist in the apprehension of a suspect as well as in building searches by tracking. If a suspect is found, the canine will bite and hold the suspect. The handler who is chosen should write good reports as there are training logs that need to be maintained and filled out after every training session, whether that is obedience or apprehension. The handler should not be chosen simply because the department wants to start the canine program so badly it overlooks things or thinks it can get the canine team trained at a later date.

If the agency decides to purchase or obtain a dual purpose dog, there are numerous things to look for. The kennel should provide numerous dogs that meet the needs of the department and have selected the dogs for the handler to view and interact with. Several attributes to look for would include how the dog works with the trainer and how the dog interacts with other people in the testing area. The canine should be sociable and not hand shy. The canine should be able to be social yet solid when it is time for a fight. The new canine should not be shy or timid, and they should be willing to go into all areas of concern, from slippery floors to jumping off the handler's back when lifted to a ledge. A canine for a police department should not be easily startled with unfamiliar objects or territory. The canine should not be aggressive towards other dogs as this could be a problem when out on the street. The canine should have a high drive and always want to be in motion and not sitting or lying down.

Once the canine has been evaluated for its temperament, it should be tested in other areas of concern. The canine should be tested in whatever area it is being used for. For example, when purchasing for scent ability, preferably, a new handler should bring a toy that the canine will be training with when he is brought home. The handler can then test the canine's tracking ability by using the toy as a sight game (throwing it with the dog watching) or a smell game (throwing it without the dog watching). The canine should energetically get his reward every time and not give up or quit. If feasible, the dog should be taken to an unfamiliar territory and the same sight and smell game reviewed to ensure the canine will find it regardless of location.

The next test should be the patrol test and defensive evaluation. The kennel should have a decoy that is activated to show the handler how the dog reacts and gets

defensive. The decoy should be dressed in street clothes with a hidden sleeve so the dog is not seeing the protection equipment. The decoy should approach the dog to see how he reacts with the threat getting closer and how he handles the stress when his aggression does not scare off the decoy. A dog is going to do one of three things: fight, flee, or displace. The dog should be confident and move toward the threat with a showing of telling the decoy he will bite. The decoy should swing his arm as if he was going to strike the dog to see the reaction and to see if the dog will snap at the arm. The dog should turn all that defensive energy that has been built up to a desire to bite. Aggression must be met by the dog with more aggression to make sure he will not back down from a fight in a real world situation.

The decoy should continue and then weaken in their aggression to see if the dog gets more confident as he stops the threat. If the dog shows the aggression and willingness to bite when the decoy invades his space, then the canine could continue with the rest of the patrol test. Have the decoy put on the bite suit and use lots of movement to deliver the arm. The dog should bite the sleeve and hold the sleeve with a full mouth. If all is well, then move to the courage portion of the test. The dog should continue biting the sleeve even if the decoy creates noise or if there is a distraction of noise. This is important because it shows the dog is still willing to go to the fight and is not scared off; he stays neutral to the sound, not aggressive. This will show that in a gun fight, the dog will do his job but not attack back-up officers when he hears gunfire. If there is any shyness to gunfire, the canine should automatically be disqualified as a potential candidate. It is important to have the kennel help work the dog and help make

the right choice for the agency so the pick of the dog will be best. If the kennel has a poor reputation, then maybe a canine should not be bought from them.

Agencies do not have to get a dual purpose dog if that does not fit the needs of the agency, but liability should not be a primary factor in determining why a dual purpose canine is not chosen. Single purpose dogs are used in agencies all over the world that nothing other than detection. Canines are used worldwide in the fight against crime and drugs, and once an agency properly implements a canine unit, it can reduce liability by carefully selecting the right person for the handler's position. The good that canines can do for an agency with a properly trained team and a good policy outweighs the cost and liability factors by far.



## REFERENCES

- Basich, M. (2003a, February 1). How to start a K-9 unit. *Police*. Retrieved from <http://www.policemag.com/channel/patrol/articles/2003/02/how-to-start-a-k-9-unit.aspx>
- Basich, M. (2003b, February 1). The cost of starting a K-9 unit. *Police*. Retrieved from <http://www.policemag.com/Channel/Patrol/Articles/2003/02/K-9s-The-Cost-of-Starting-a-k-9-unit.aspx>
- Bradshaw, J. (2012, Spring). *Selecting a police dog candidate*. Retrieved from [www.tarheelcanine.com/wp-content/.../10/Spring2012.JB\\_.Tarheel.pdf](http://www.tarheelcanine.com/wp-content/.../10/Spring2012.JB_.Tarheel.pdf)
- Bulzomi, M. (2000, January). Drug detection dogs. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 69(1). Retrieved from <http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/2000-pdfs/jan00leb.pdf>
- Conway, W. & Watson, J. (n.d.). *Establishing a new K-9 unit for a small department*. Retrieved from <http://www.napwda.com/establishing-a-new-k9-unit-for-a-small-department>
- Correa, J. (2011, June). *The dogs sense of smell*. Retrieved from <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/U/UNP-0066/UNP-0066.pdf>
- Law enforcement agency information. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.37trw.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-120611-038.pdf>
- Matthews v. Jones, 35 F.3d 1046, 1051 6th Cir. (1994).
- Mesloh, C. (2003, January). Canines and community policing. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 72(1), 14-18.
- Robinette v. Barnes, 854 F.2d 909, (U.S. 6<sup>th</sup> Ct. App. 1988).

Tennessee v. Garner, 471 U.S. 1 (1985).

United States Police Canine Association (n.d.). *The forming of a canine unit*. Retrieved from <http://www.uspcak9.com/training/formingacanineunit.html>

Vera Cruz v. City of Escondido, 139 F.3d 659, 663 (9th Cir. 1998).

Walker, J. (2001, April). Using drug detection dogs. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 70(4), 25-32.

## **APPENDIX A**

Below is a list of questions to take a look at as well as a sample K9 policy.

1. Is the officer committed to the project of being a K9 Handler and understands that extensive training is involved?
2. Does the officer work well with little or no direct supervision?
3. Does the officer use an excessive amount of sick time?
4. Does the officer have any serious discipline problems?
5. Does the officer present a positive image of himself and the department?
6. Is the officer trustworthy in the aspect that he can be trusted with large amounts of narcotics, and working on sensitive cases?
7. Can the officer take direction well during the training class?
8. Is the officer in good physical shape so that the officer can endure the strenuous activity during the training and deployment activities?
9. Is the officer's spouse and family committed to having a trained Police Service Dog in the household?
10. Is the officer's home or apartment suitable to bring a Police Service Dog into?
11. Does the officer bring respect to himself while off duty?
12. Does the officer like to talk to the public including children and seniors, and is the officer willing to do K9 presentations?
13. Are the officer or any family members allergic to dogs?
14. Is the officer willing to make a seven year commitment to the department and the K-9 Unit.
15. Is the officer willing to work any shift and be on call?
16. Why do you want the K9 Position?

17. What does the K9 Position mean to you?
18. How long do you plan on being a K9 Officer?
19. What are your plans for the rest of your career?
20. How would you keep abreast on changes in K9 Case Law and Tactics?
21. What tools do you have or could you have to update yourself on K9 Case Law and Tactics?
22. Would you be willing to spend some of your own time on increasing your K9 knowledge on case law and tactics?
23. How do you show teamwork during your normal duties now?
24. Would you be available for call-out if given the K9 position?
25. Do you understand the care of the K9 is your responsibility 24/7?
26. Do you understand how much work having a large K9 is?
27. Do you have any other animals at home? If so, how will you cope with the entry of a large K9 into the family?
28. Have you spoke to your family about the position you applied for?
29. Does your family understand Police K9 and the amount of work it is?
30. Do they understand the stress placed on the family when a large K9 is introduced into the household?
31. What did they say?
32. Do you have enough space for a large K9 in your household?
33. How will you house or store the large K9?
34. Will the K9 have enough space for proper exercise?
35. Are you able to speak in front of large groups of people?
36. Do you think you are able to perform demonstrations in front of large groups of people?

## APPENDIX B

### City of Willis K9 Policy

<div>General Order</div> <div>Willis Police Department</div>	Order Number: 300.10	Date Issued: May 1, 2006
	Date Revised:	
Reference:		
<div>Subject: Police Drug Detector Dogs</div>		

#### 1. PURPOSE

This General Order establishes the objectives, policies, and procedures for the operation, deployment, and certification of drug detector dogs and handlers in the Willis Police Department.

#### 2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the drug detection canine teams is to use the superior senses of trained dogs to enhance the performance of police officers as they seek to enforce the laws relating to illegal drugs. The canine teams accomplish this objective by detecting hidden drugs, and by deterring illegal activity by enhancing the potential offender's fear of discovery through daily presence while on duty, as well as through demonstrations of capabilities at public functions and appearances.

#### 3. POLICY

It is the policy of the Willis Police Department to use trained canine teams in acceptable fashion to augment the traditional law enforcement and crime prevention functions of the department. The teams are used within these guidelines to prevent and detect criminal activity using legally and tactically sound methods.

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

- a. Handler – an officer selected by the Chief of Police to care for, train, and use a police drug detection dog.
- b. Police Drug Detection Dog – a service dog selected by the handler and qualified by recognized standards to perform searches for hidden substances.
- c. Canine – a police drug detection dog.
- d. Canine Team – the handler and the assigned drug detection dog
- e. Certified – a canine team meeting the performance standards of the department, or a recognized professional association, as evaluated by a qualified police service dog expert (such as the National Narcotics Detector Dog Association).
- f. Deployment – when a handler makes use of the assigned dog on duty in an official capacity.

- g. Community Contacts – social and physical contact with citizens of the community, such as informal visits in a neighborhood, presentations and demonstrations to civic groups, etc.
- h. Mutual Aid Request – a request by another law enforcement agency for deployment of the canine team outside the city limits of Willis.
- i. Training Aids – samples of illegal drugs legally obtained by the department, and used to train and maintain the canine's proficiency in locating contraband. This does not include pseudo drugs, which will not be used to train canines of this department.

## 5. HANDLER QUALIFICATIONS

- a. The handler is selected by, and serves at the pleasure of, the Chief of Police.
- b. Factors considered by the Chief in the selection of the handler include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - 1. Time in law enforcement service;
  - 2. Prior experience as canine handler;
  - 3. Level of training as a canine handler;
  - 4. Performance history as peace officer;
  - 5. Willingness to be a handler;
  - 6. Safety and attendance record for past twelve months;
  - 7. No substantiated complaints within the past twelve months;
  - 8. Ability to lift and carry the weight of the average police service dog as well as surmount routinely encountered obstacles;
  - 9. Willingness to work flexible hours, overtime, and be called out during off-duty hours;
  - 10. Reside within a reasonable distance to Willis;
  - 11. Have a suitable place to house the service dog and be willing to care for the animal until expiration;
  - 12. Must successfully complete any required training and certification courses.

## 6. DOG QUALIFICATIONS

- a. The breed of the canine should be one that has a history of performance as being suitable for drug detection work.
- b. The canine shall be obtained from a kennel or other supplier who has a verifiable record of satisfactory performance in providing canines to other law enforcement agencies.
- c. The age of a pre-trained dog should not exceed three years at time of acquisition. Consideration may be given for the dog's training, skill, experience, and health to permit the acquisition of an older dog, but no dog will be accepted that is more than five years old at time of acquisition.
- d. The age of an untrained dog will not be less than 1.5 years or more than 2 years at time of acquisition.
- e. The weight will be proportionate to size as determined by a veterinary examination. The veterinary examination will also include, at a minimum, an examination for the following:
  - 1. Displasia or arthritis to the hips, shoulders, and elbows;

2. Spondelosis – spinal problems;
  3. Hearing or eyesight problems;
  4. Missing canine teeth;
  5. General physical health including allergies;
  6. Inoculations including DHL, PPP, and rabies;
  7. Free of parasites or skin disorders;
  8. A blood workup for heartworms or other internal parasites;
  9. Stool analysis;
  10. Flexibility of limbs; and
  11. Conformation (general structure, appearance)
- f. The temperament evaluation will be conducted by a recognized expert and will include a measurement of the following traits:
1. Courage and confidence;
  2. Hunting/retrieval instinct;
  3. High energy or drive level;
  4. Recovery;
  5. Aggressiveness;
  6. Gun shyness or noise sensitivity; and
  7. Skin sensitivity.

## 7. HANDLER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The handler's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Perform all patrol-related functions, including responding to calls for service and completing reports, as directed by a supervisor;
- b. Be responsible for the actions of the assigned dog at all times;
- c. Be responsible for the proper care of the assigned dog at all times;
- d. Successfully complete initial and in-service training courses;
- e. Actively participate in public demonstrations as assigned;
- f. Be responsible for proper care and maintenance of all issued equipment;
- g. Maintain the canine at an acceptable performance level and point out any and all deficiencies to the Chief of Police;
- h. Respond to callouts for the canine team when off-duty, unless the canine team is on approved leave, such as vacation, sick leave, training, etc;
- i. Maintain a log of the team's training, deployments, and community contacts;
- j. Use the skills of the handler and the assigned canine to actively deter and detect criminal activity; and
- k. Complete annual inventory of issued equipment and training aids.

## 8. DUTIES

- a. Canine teams will be assigned general patrol duties.
- b. Working hours and assignments may vary according to the needs of the department. Canine teams shall be available on an on-call basis when off-duty, unless on approved leave. Callouts must be approved by a supervisor prior to contacting a canine officer.
- c. Canine units shall actively deter and detect criminal activity, including, but not limited to, crimes related to illegal drugs. Although they should not be

assigned as a primary unit unless necessary, canine units shall respond to calls dispatched to them. They shall also respond as assisting units when the call is of a nature that is typically handled by two officers.

- d. Canine teams shall be assigned to work five 7-hour shifts per week, with one hour each day devoted to training and care of the dog.
- e. Canine teams may transport prisoners in the front right seat with the prisoner's hands cuffed behind him, and seatbelt fastened. Except in an emergency, no one will be transported in the rear portion of the canine vehicle with the canine.

## 9. CANINE DEPLOYMENT

- a. All instances of canine team deployment shall be within departmental guidelines, and federal, state, and local laws. The handler is responsible for knowing the laws and court decisions related to the use of canines for drug detection.
- b. The canine team may deploy to search for illegal drugs, to deter illegal activity by its presence, and to conduct public demonstrations.
- c. The canine team may deploy on school property in response to a dispatched call. Otherwise, deployment to search on school property will occur at the request of the principal of that campus, or the superintendent of the school district. If a request is made by a school official for the canine team, the school official should be asked to consider keeping the impending visit unannounced if possible.
- d. The canine shall be confined to the patrol vehicle or kennel unless under the direct supervision of the handler. Canine vehicle windows may be left open while actively engaged in patrol duties to enhance ventilation, and to allow the dog to enter and exit the patrol car.
- e. The canine should not be left in the car unattended. If it is necessary to be away from the car, the canine should be with the handler. If the situation is such that the canine should not be with the handler, and the handler must leave the canine in the car unattended, the vehicle shall be secured with adequate ventilation.
- f. Except in an emergency, or unless approved by the Chief of Police, no departmental personnel will have contact with the canine in the absence of the handler.

## 10. TRAINING AND RECORDS

- a. New handlers and dogs will undergo initial training to certify them for active duty. Canine teams will renew training certifications each year according to the standards of the National Narcotics Detector Dog Association.
- b. Canine teams shall practice and train at least 15 hours per month, although exceptions may be made for approved leave. Training shall be devoted to increasing proficiency, new environments, new certifications, upcoming competitions, or other areas selected by the handler.
- c. Canine teams shall receive a minimum of 40 hours per year of specialized training conducted by outside agencies or organizations, such as



conferences, seminars, competitions, and annual certifications, to ensure that canine teams are kept abreast of current trends, practices, legal issues, and training techniques.

- d. Records shall be maintained by the handler of all training sessions, deployments, alert-to-find ratios, drug types and weights, certifications, medical check-ups, and other information deemed necessary to monitor the canine program. The handler shall prepare a monthly activity report for the Chief of Police by no later than the fifth day of the following month.

## 11. MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING AIDS

- a. The Property Officer shall be responsible for maintaining all training aids in a property locker, unless the canine officer has the appropriate license from the Drug Enforcement Administration permitting the handling and storage of controlled substances. In that case, the canine officer shall be responsible for management of training aids according to this policy and all applicable laws.
- b. The Property Officer shall maintain a ledger of all training aids on hand, documenting the quantity and type. The location and quantity of all training aids shall be known at all times.
- c. The handler shall check out training aids from the Property Officer. While the training aids are checked out, their security shall be the sole responsibility of the handler.
- d. No officer shall possess controlled substances, including, but not limited to, methamphetamine, cocaine, opiates, hashish, or marijuana, unless that officer possesses a valid Drug Enforcement Agency permit and/or Texas Department of Public Safety permit to keep and store controlled substances, or the controlled substances have been seized by a law enforcement agency and are legally possessed and made available for the purposes of training by that agency.
- e. The handler may keep training aids in a locked metal container in the trunk of the canine vehicle, or in his assigned locker at the police department.
- f. Under no circumstances will the handler store, or work the canine with, training aids inside his own residence.
- g. The loss of or damage to training aids shall be reported immediately via written memorandum through the chain of command.
- h. Any training aid lost or damaged due to suspected criminal activity shall be reported immediately in the form of an offense report. The location of the incident shall be treated as a crime scene. The on-duty supervisor shall be notified, but if there isn't one, then the on-call detective shall be notified.
- i. Any loss of training aids shall be reported by the Chief of Police or his designate to the DEA Diversion Section the next business day.
- j. In addition to unannounced inspections of training aids and related records, the Chief of Police shall cause an inventory of training aids and related records to be conducted annually.

## 12. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The following guidelines should be used by officers when a canine handler becomes incapacitated, and the canine is not contained, or the canine is injured:

- a. Remember that canines and their handlers have a special relationship. Depending upon the dog's training and that relationship, a canine may become protective of its handler if the handler is injured.
- b. Officers on the scene shall direct the dispatcher to contact another canine handler or Animal Control officers and have them respond to the scene.
- c. Officers shall follow the directions of the handler if the handler is conscious and able to direct their efforts.
- d. If the handler is not conscious, the officers shall consider the following:
  1. If at all possible, await the arrival of additional canine officers or Animal Control personnel.
  2. Do not approach the handler, unless absolutely necessary, as the canine may be protective.
  3. Do not approach the canine.
  4. Avoid direct eye contact with the dog.
  5. Avoid exciting the dog with loud noises or sudden movements.
  6. Try throwing a retrieve toy into the back of the canine vehicle or patrol car and securing the canine when it enters the car. Secure the door between the front and rear of the car prior to getting the canine in the car, or have another officer distract the canine while the partition door is closed.
  7. When the canine is contained, it shall be transported to the Willis Pet Hospital and temporarily kenneled there until it can be taken to the handler's residence.
  8. While Animal Control officers may assist in securing the canine, under no circumstances will the K-9 be kenneled at Animal Control facilities.
  9. If the canine can't be secured, consideration should be given to tranquilizing the dog if there is time.
  10. Only as a last resort, when human life is in jeopardy, destroy the canine with a single, well-placed shot, if possible. The canine should not be made to suffer for doing its duty.
- e. If the canine is injured, the department's veterinarian shall be notified. Another canine unit, if available, should transport the canine to Willis Animal Hospital. Prior to transporting the canine, it should be muzzled to prevent bites due to pain or fear.
- f. First aid may be used as needed with canines. Many of the principles of splinting, controlling bleeding, immobilizing the spine, and lifting people can be modified and used with canines to prevent further injury until medical care can be obtained. One must remember that canines can bite when in pain or in fear, so caution must be exercised.

### 13. DOG BITES

In the event the canine bites someone, the handler shall notify a supervisor, and complete an incident report detailing the facts, witnesses, and other pertinent information. Color photographs shall be taken of the bite site, and medical care should be obtained for the person bitten.

### 13. VETERINARY SERVICES

The department's veterinarian is Dr. Sherrie Hartke, DVM, located at the Willis Animal Hospital, 208 East Powell Street, Willis, Texas. The phone number is 936-856-7387. In an emergency after business hours, call 516-567-3366.

### 14. MAINTENANCE

#### a. Kenneling

1. At a minimum, the kennel should be 6 feet by 12 feet, consisting of heavy gauge cyclone fencing, a cement pad that will drain water, a water connection, a roof capable of withstanding the elements, solar shade material, a heavy duty dog house, and a fan or a misting system to help cool the dog in hot weather.
2. The kennel should allow for the acclimatization of the canine but also protect it from extreme weather conditions.
3. The use of insecticides, approved by the department veterinarian, will be used to control and prevent insect and parasite infestations in the kennel and yard area.
4. The handler is responsible for maintaining and cleaning the kennel, and for the security of the canine.
5. The canine may also be kept in a secure or locked fenced yard while the handler is at the residence or gone for short periods from the residence. If the canine is an indoor dog, the canine may be maintained inside the handler's residence.
6. Kenneling for the canine while the handler is away will be provided by the Willis Animal Hospital, or a professional kenneling facility. The handler will be responsible for providing the kenneling facility the contact information for the police department and the department's veterinarian. The kennel should provide adequate space for the canine with climate controls. The handler will inform the kennel staff of the nature of the canine, and it should be isolated from personnel or other individuals.

#### b. Diet

1. The canine will be fed a diet of high-grade dog food approved by the department veterinarian. Fresh water will be available at all times.
2. Only the handler or other designated caregiver shall feed the dog. Officers shall not feed the dog snacks, chocolate, table food, etc.

#### c. Equipment

1. The handler is responsible for the maintenance of assigned equipment and the canine vehicle.
2. In addition to regular patrol vehicle equipment and lighting, the canine vehicle will have an enclosure to secure the canine in the rear of the vehicle. It may have a door to allow the canine to enter the front portion of the vehicle if open. The canine vehicle will also be equipped with a heat sensor. The canine vehicle shall be marked with decals to alert everyone that a police service animal is in the car.

3. Equipment for the handler and the canine includes, but is not limited to, leather and metal choke collars, collar patch or badge holder, leather lead, food and water bowls for car and kennel, kennel for the office, K-9 first aid kit, retrieve toys, and coat brushes.
4. The handler's normal uniform shall be the regulation patrol uniform of the department, except that pressed black Battle Dress Utility (BDU) pants may be substituted for the normal uniform trousers. If the canine team is planning an extended deployment for a tour of duty, or the handler is called out while off-duty, the uniform may consist of black BDU pants and a black T-shirt or BDU shirt, with a badge patch and the word "POLICE" on the front and back of the garment.

#### 15. REQUESTS BY OTHER AGENCIES

- a. A request for assistance by the canine team shall be directed to the supervisor on duty, the Lieutenant, or the Chief of Police.
- b. When considering a request for assistance by another agency for the canine team, supervisors will consider that while it is the policy of this agency to assist any other agency to the degree possible, the needs of this department must be met first. If it is not possible to assist at that time, supervisors should inquire about the requesting agency rescheduling their actions, if possible, so that the team may assist later.
- c. While assisting another agency, the handler will act in accordance with this order at all times.

---

James Nowak  
Chief of Police