

**THE BILL BLACKWOOD
LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE OF TEXAS**

**Narcotic Detection Canines "Getting Started"
in the White Settlement Police Department**

**A POLICY RESEARCH PAPER
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ABSTRACT

In the history of law enforcement usage of canine narcotic detection dogs, there were many methods of training. Many handlers have believed that only dogs at the minimum age of twelve (12) months had the ability to properly work as narcotic detection canines. It has been proven that a narcotic detection canine can be trained as young as nine (9) to twelve (12) weeks of age and can be utilized as a narcotic detection canine with little cost.

The purpose of this paper is to show that when a canine has been properly trained, and utilized, there is positive information showing that a narcotic detection canine unit can and will be a cost effective method of fighting the illegal narcotic activity in our society today. The research methods included personal experience, personal interviews with canine trainers and handlers, and a review of literature.

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Introduction

The use of Canines in the daily activity of Police Departments of today are a major concern of both Law Enforcement officials and the public. Past narcotic arrests have magnified the concerns of liability and cost consideration for a Narcotics Canine Unit. The purpose of this research project is to develop a competent and comprehensive knowledge of obtaining, training and cost considerations. In the past, Canines were used early as the 1800's. As time progressed, the idea of training for Canines has drastically changed. Through the years, as we have increased our education and experience in the field of the Canine, we have learned that the Canine can be trained as a Narcotic Detection Canine, as young as nine (9) weeks of age with very little cost. The issue to be examined in this research paper is the adaptability of a Narcotic Canine Unit, to be adapted to the Police Department's needs and possibility incorporate this information into a Police Canine Policy guideline. Having a complete and comprehensive written guideline including (approximate) cost options is essential to the Police Department and City Administrators. Therefore, the intended audience of this research project includes Police Department Administrators, policy makers, trainers, and police officers. It is crucial that police departments train their officers in all aspects of the law: options, strategies, risks and liabilities. The sources of information used in this research were police policy reviews, current training information guidelines and journal entries. The use of Canine policies and procedures should address the proper usage, training, utilization and

cost utilization to the officers and citizens. It is the intended outcome of this research to develop a comprehensive use of a versed Canine Unit.

Historical, Legal and Theoretical Context

"Is There a Future for the Police Canine" (Zwickey). In this independent study and research, the author has found that the canine has been used by many governmental as well as law enforcement agencies for several years. During my research, I also found that the canine was used as far back as the 1800's. During this time man used the canine to act as a protection devise. Man would feed and care for the canine, and in return the canine would protect man. I also learned that before the early 1960's, the Germans armed forces would use the canine by training the canine to alert to the human scent. In this time the canines were sent out as part of the follow up to the battle zones to find the Americans, then to alert and advise the Germans that the enemy was near. As time progresses, we have learned that the method of training and the use of the canine has drastically changed. Due to their keen sense of smell and ability to learn at a young age, the canine has been trained for narcotic detection, tracking and officer protection. The incorporation of a Canine Narcotic Detection Unit is a novel idea for some police departments who have little or no experience in this area (Henderson). After the experience of being associated with a Narcotic Unit which deals with the every day use of Narcotic Canines, it has become more clear that the best way a police department to maximize narcotic enforcement is when a properly trained and utilized Narcotics Detection Canine unit is in place. A department that has little or

no experience to the use of a Narcotics Detection Canine can and will be more expectable to the use of canines. These departments will be more open minded to the facts and not to the "war stories" and fears of other departments that have tried, with out proper guidance and training and that have failed. Through the years, there has been several police departments as well as other entities that have attempted to start and maintain a Narcotics Detection Canine Unit with out the proper knowledge, understanding and training for a successful unit. This has cause the abortion of the Narcotics Canine Unit in many agencies and caused a very negative outlook in the field of Narcotic Detection Canine Enforcement. A properly developed and maintained Narcotics Canine Detection Unit will not only deter the flow of illegal Narcotics into our security, but if properly coordinated, will assist in the seizure of much needed funds, as well as seizable illegal tainted expandable items of value which would be exchanged for funds. for narcotic enforcement use. Since the introduction of the Narcotic Detection Canines there have been several millions of dollars seized as well as a unknown amount of illegal narcotics that would have been brought into and introduced to our sociality (VanderLeest). There has been several agencies that have attempted to enforce the flow of narcotics that have been very unsuccessful with out a Narcotics Detection Canine. A police officer is only human and can only use the human abilities that they possess. A properly trained Narcotics Detection Canine has a greater sense of smell than a human and has the ability to work for long periods of time. Further, the canine can position themselves into places that a police officer

can not in order to properly conduct a search for illegal narcotics (Grimmer). Some time narcotic interdiction work must be done on the side (Koury). There have been officers that have worked Narcotic Detection Canines on narcotic interdiction as a part time basis to show the city or county officials that a Narcotic Detection Canine Unit is a workable concept. In these cases where the narcotic detection canine program was implemented, there has been several large amounts of illegal narcotics and money found and seized that other wise would not have been.

Review of Practices

The department must choose a officer that is genuinely interested in the program (Henderson). Placing a officer into a canine position without a proven commitment could be professionally fatal for the officer, the canine and the Narcotics Canine Unit. There have been several officers that were placed into a canine handler/trainer position that did not fully understand the responsibility of being a canine handler/trainer. The trainer/handler must be willing to learn when to utilize the canine and when not to utilize the canine. There must be time dedicated to the canine that goes above and beyond on duty time, you must constantly train (Gregg). Along with training, the handler must be able to keep accurate records. This is another area that a officer must be able to maintain is record keeping. Positive and currant record keeping is essential for Narcotic Detection Canines. Departments that have purchased a qualified pre-trained canine sometime have found it difficult to match the purchased canine with the pre-chosen handler. Therefore it was found that the funds that was used for the

purchase were lost and the canine was in vain. Other departments that have carefully chosen an officer that is animal orientated, have found it more profitable to use the "Puppy" technique (Grimmer). Ideally, we should start with a young dog for any scent training. Starting with a young dog means that you will have far less bad habits to overcome. Furthermore, in using the "Puppy" method, the training and bonding can be insured if both the handler/trainer and canine are acceptable. It is suggested that if a puppy is to be used, it should be started as young as nine (9) to thirteen (13) weeks of age. Canine to human year equivalents are, when a canine is six (6) months of age, it is four (4) to five (5) years of age to a human. When a canine is one (1) year of age, it is fifteen (15) years to a human. This is why it is easier to train a puppy than it is to train a grown canine. This would be in comparison to our children, you would not wait until your child is fifteen (15) years of age to teach them to read (Grimmer). Other trainers have voiced that a fourteen (14) week old puppy should not be certified as a Narcotics Patrol Dog (Frawley). There is too much in the real world that can stress and confuse the puppy. An officer must be willing to spend the time that is needed in order to have the proper bonding and training to produce a well trained Narcotic Detection Canine. Research supports that a Certified canine must be at least twelve (12) to fourteen (14) months before it is used as a Certified Narcotic Detection Canine. Although it takes a Canine about twelve (12) months to mature, and during this time the canine should not be used as probable cause, the canine should and could be used in assisting the officer in locating narcotics. The majority of Narcotic

Detection Canine handlers/trainers interviewed stated that during the first twelve (12) months of the canine's life should not only be used as a assist to the officer, but time to become more efficient in training itself. The more training that a canine can receive, the more accurate the training records can be kept, the less of a liability the team will be. A canine unit can be a powerful public relations tool with the proper direction (law and Order P79). During the first twelve months, not only can the canine assist the officer in actual searches, but can be used as a public relations tool. This can be done in the form of presentations to get the community for support. Using the first twelve (12) months of the canine's life, while in training, to produce positive bonding, make a excellent canine/handler team.

'With out bonding, a canine won't want to please the handler", (law and Order, P49). Bonding is one of the most important issues of training any type of canine for any type of work. The canine must have bonding with its handler just as if it was a child. The more bonding between the canine and its handler the more the canine is going to want to perform and please the handler. During the first twelve (12) months, there has been different opinions in the area of time verses cost. Most departments have been concerned that the time that it would take to train and get a "Puppy" up to the proper condition and to the stage to where it could function as a working Narcotic Detecting Canine, the cost in general would be out of reach. Other Narcotic Detection Canine handlers have expressed their concerns that they wanted a Narcotic Detection Canine that was ready and properly trained. A handler should have a canine that is ready when it is received

for duty. "I have watched and heard how the "Puppy" program has advanced and I am impressed" (Novak). Most police departments that enter into the Narcotic Detection Canine program and purchase their canines trust that a working relationship can be developed between the canine and the handler. Although there have been times that the initial training of the canine, and the new training environment has not been accepted by the canine. This has proven to be a situation that can be over come with time, additional training and bonding by the new handler. Training of a future Narcotic Detection Canine should be, first, obedience then scent. Obedience training is very important to both the canine officer and the canine. A trainer should be patient while training obedience. The second part of the narcotic detection should be the scent work. This can be accomplished very easily and should not take a great amount of time. As the canine becomes familiar with a scent, then it should be contained as a game. To groom the canine as it ages, the scent should be increased. Therefore, when the canine is used for probable cause it will be able to locate not only small amounts of illegal narcotic substances, but will also locate the larger amounts. If a canine is trained only on small amounts of illegal narcotics, after the canine is placed in a working environment, the canine will have a more difficult time pin pointing the larger amounts.

Discussion of Relevant Issues

There are a majority of the smaller cities and counties that are already in a Narcotic Detection Canine program. These cities and counties have found that it

is not financially feasible to maintain a separate Narcotic Detection Canine. With this in mind, some counties and cities have joined together with larger counties and smaller cities, and have agreed to share a Narcotic Detection Canine. "It's part of our mandate to help other municipal forces" (Law and Order P 50). When there are two or more cities or counties that share the financial responsibility, the canine can be utilized most of the time at a minimal expense. As it appears that the illegal narcotic traffic has only began to worsen in our communities, there is a great need shown that the police officer alone can not successfully win the narcotic problems of today with out the assistance of a Narcotic Detection Canine. Further more, with the seizable money and real properties that have been tainted by the unity of illegal narcotics, a Narcotic Detection Canine is the best possible answer for our law enforcement of today. (Law and Order P 50). There are two (2) answers to the most asked question when attempting to adopt a Narcotic Detection Canine Unit. First, "Where is the best place to get a canine?" And the answer is "Some of our best dogs have come from homes where there are children" (Law and Order P49). Several police departments have followed the Ontario police Department in adopting canines that would normally be put to death, and trained these canines to be very successful Narcotic Detection Canines. There is a theory that a Narcotic Detection Canine must be a full blood, registered canine. This theory has been proven not true. A normal household pet can and has been trained for narcotic detection with very good success. If the canine is to be used for narcotic detection work, there are no real hold backs to a

better breed. The second (2) question is , "How much will it cost to operate a Narcotic Canine Unit?" And it has been found that the cost is low. There are many merchants that will donate many if not all of the items that are needed to get a Narcotic Canine Unit started (see Appendix I attached). If a narcotic detection unit is implemented on a part time bases, using a officer that is already employed, has a canine or obtains a free canine, and obtains many of the items needed from area merchants, then the cost of the program would be very low. As a Narcotic Detection Canine Instructor, I have found that there are many other Narcotic Detection Canine Instructors that are with in our area that will assist in the training of a handler or canine at little or no cost. There have been issues of training time, cost, and case law pertaining to canine training. This can be a cost factor. Several handlers have entered into an agreement with city governmental, that agrees that the handler will accept an number of hours of training time. When this type of agreement is reached, it will solve any type of overtime issues in the future. 'Too often there are no real communications between the members of a K-9 unit and the Administration" (Law and Order P79). When a police department or a governmental agency are uneducated to the operations of a narcotics detection unit, it is very crucial that the lines of communication remain open. In most departments, it is mandatory that daily, weekly and or monthly activity reports be obtained. Without open communications to the administration the narcotics detection unit can not operate properly. If a Narcotic Detection Canine team is

properly trained there is no reason why the narcotic canine detection unit would not be self supported.

Conclusion

Illegal Narcotics have faulted our society today and has become our downfall in life. Illegal narcotics have distorted our homes, lives, jobs and the future generation. Our police departments and governmental agencies have attempted to stop the flow of illegal narcotics with some success but the wave has gotten bigger and bigger. Since the implications of the Narcotic Detection Canines, our law enforcement agencies have seen that the battle of the illegal narcotics has been much easier to fight. It has been proven that the use of a Narcotic Detection Canine has in fact been a profitable and workable tool for law enforcement in years past and will be in years to come. There have been many departments that have decided that a canine program is not for them, it is too costly, the liability is too great. Now there is a program that is readily available and can be utilized and adopted into any type or size of law enforcement agency today. The problems of cost have been exhausted, the fear of liability can be eased with the proper training and the proper narcotic detection team. It seems evident that implementation of a narcotic detection canine unit would only enhance law enforcement productivity in the battle of illegal narcotics in the City of White Settlement.

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APPENDIX I

The following information is an approximate cost factor to a Narcotic Detection Canine using a free or donated canine, existing employee and existing vehicle.

PROJECTED COST:

Salaries:	\$40,570.00
Training of Canine	\$ - 0 -
Insurance	\$1,500.00
Vehicle Maintenance and Make Ready	\$ - 0 -
Canine Supplies	\$ -0
<u>TOTAL PROGRAM COST</u>	<u>\$42,070.00</u>

The above entries include all benefits and payments that would be paid to a regular officer.