

**Sacramento County**



**Probation Department**

## **GENERAL ORDER**

### **Canine Handler**

#### **Purpose and Scope**

This order establishes standards for the care and use of a detection canine in locating narcotics and firearms/ammunition.

#### **Affected Personnel**

All Sworn Employees

#### **Authority**

Administrative Directive  
Health & Safety Code § 11367.5

#### **Effective Date**

September 16, 2021

#### **Definitions**

**Canine Team:** refers to the officer (handler) and canine.

**Handler:** an officer appointed and certified to assume responsibility for the care and use of a detection canine.

#### **I. General**

- A. This order shall comply with the Canine Handlers Section of the Agreement between the County of Sacramento and Sacramento County Probation Association-Probation Non-Supervisory Unit. Any hours worked outside the handler's regularly-scheduled shift shall be compensated in accordance with the applicable provisions of the MOU.
- B. Handlers shall conduct their duties in a manner that allows for maximum and efficient use of the canine and benefit to Probation-related operations.
- C. Requests for canine assistance may be made directly to the handler and shall be handled in the order they are received, unless the supervisor and/or manager determines urgency.
- D. The final decision to utilize a canine shall remain with the handler, who is most knowledgeable of their canine's capabilities and limitations.

- E. Interacting with the canine is prohibited unless the handler grants permission or the handler is otherwise incapacitated.

## **II. Handler Appointment**

- A. Appointment to the position of handler requires the officer:
  - 1. Be an armed Senior or Deputy Probation Officer cleared to carry a firearm with successful completion of the Field Training Program for at least two (2) years;
  - 2. Commit to a minimum of three (3) years as a handler;
  - 3. Reside in a single-family residence with a minimum six-foot high fence, locking gates, and adequate space for a fenced-in dog run;
  - 4. Provide space to park a department-issued vehicle on their property and off the roadway; and
  - 5. Allow their supervisor to conduct on-site inspections with 24-hour advance notice of affected areas of their residence to verify conditions and equipment conform to this order.
- B. Once appointed, a handler shall:
  - 1. Be available after hours, as approved by their supervisor;
  - 2. Participate in demonstrations, as approved by their supervisor; and
  - 3. Meet the training requirements set forth in this order.

## **III. Handler Responsibilities**

- A. Handlers shall maintain control over their canine to ensure maximum safety.
- B. Handlers are responsible for the health and welfare of the canine and shall ensure the canine receives proper nutrition, grooming, training, medical care, and living conditions. Handlers shall:
  - 1. Not expose the canine to any unreasonable risk of harm;
  - 2. Maintain canine equipment in a clean and serviceable condition;
  - 3. Take the canine to the nearest available veterinarian if the canine is seriously injured or requires immediate medical attention. Notify their supervisor as soon as reasonably practicable;
  - 4. Take all necessary precautions to ensure breeding does not occur;
  - 5. Inspect vehicle temperature monitoring systems for functionality prior to beginning their shift;
  - 6. Ensure a proper ambient temperature is maintained while the canine is in the vehicle and the canine is not left in the vehicle for excessive periods of time;
  - 7. Make an announcement prior to the utilization of a canine for search purposes, when reasonable; and
  - 8. Inform their supervisor of:
    - a. Any changes in living status which may affect the lodging or environment of the canine;
    - b. Any injury or illness of the canine; or
    - c. Scheduled routine examinations or minor medical problems of the canine.
- C. Handlers shall be responsible for keeping track of daily statistics and completing a monthly statistics report.

#### **IV. Supervisor Responsibilities**

- A. The handler's supervisor shall be responsible for the following:
1. Assume supervision of the canine team;
  2. Authorize participation in demonstrations and outside agency requests;
  3. Conduct on-site inspections of the handler's residence and provide at least 24-hour notice prior to the inspection;
  4. Designate a recognized group, time, and location for ongoing training;
  5. Periodically inspect, weigh, and test controlled substance training samples;
  6. Respond to incidents at their discretion;
  7. Arrange for the relocation of the canine if needed; and
  8. Review written electronic reports associated with the canine team.

#### **V. Outside Agency Assistance**

Upon request from an outside agency, the handler shall obtain all necessary information (e.g., location, incident type, suspect description, and contact person), advise their supervisor, and proceed with canine assistance if authorized.

#### **VI. Certification Training**

- A. Before assignment in the field, a canine team shall be trained and certified to meet detection canine standards for the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) or California Narcotics Canine Association (CNCA).
- B. Annually, each canine team shall be evaluated and recertified with a "pass" in:
1. Obedience- obedience and control of the canine;
  2. Search- control, location and recognition; and
  3. Firearm Location- location and recognition.
- C. The handler may be assigned to field duties until certification is achieved. Failure to complete training may result in termination of the canine handler assignment.

#### **VII. Ongoing Training**

- A. Each canine team shall also participate in ongoing training:
1. Weekly training sessions shall be conducted with a recognized group approved by their supervisor;
  2. Training shall occur during their regularly scheduled shift unless otherwise approved by their supervisor; and
  3. Training shall take place at locations deemed safe and non-disruptive to the population of the surrounding area. A variety of locations may be used to maintain performance levels as required.
- B. Following each week's training session, handlers shall be responsible for completing a canine training log and forwarding the log to their supervisor. The log shall be retained in the canine program file for five (5) years.

#### **VIII. Controlled Substance Training Aids**

- A. In compliance with state and federal laws, controlled substances may be utilized

for narcotics detection canine training.<sup>1</sup>

- B. Handlers shall be responsible for maintaining the canine training kit, which includes controlled substances obtained from the Sacramento Sheriff's Office (SSO) property warehouse and additional training aids.
- C. All controlled substances utilized for training shall be weighed, tested, and recorded by the SSO prior to dispensing them to the handler and twice per year thereafter.
- D. When not in use, handlers shall secure all controlled substance training samples in a locked trunk vault inside of the canine vehicle.

### **IX. Reporting Injuries**

- A. If a canine causes an on-or off-duty bite or injury, the handler shall:
  - 1. Promptly provide and/or obtain medical care for person(s) injured;
  - 2. Notify their supervisor or designee as soon as reasonably practicable;
  - 3. Take photographs of the scene and person(s) injured or, if directed by their supervisor, request Crime Scene Investigators respond to take photographs;
  - 4. Obtain a statement from the person(s) injured, when possible, and obtain witness statements when available;
  - 5. Complete a written electronic report for the incident.

### **X. Injured Canine**

- A. Depending on the severity of the injury, the canine shall be treated by the designated veterinarian or transported to the nearest available veterinarian for treatment. If the handler and canine are out of the area, the handler may use the nearest available veterinarian.
- B. The injury shall be documented in an event report and, if applicable, all other related reports.
- C. If an injury requires immediate removal from the field, the handler's supervisor and Watch Commander shall be notified.

### **XI. Vacation Leave/Time Away**

- A. Whenever a handler anticipates taking a vacation or extended number of days off, it may be necessary to relocate the canine. The handler shall give reasonable notice to their supervisor so appropriate arrangements can be made.
- B. In any instance where the handler will be away from the canine for more than 24 hours, the canine shall be kenneled.

---

<sup>1</sup> Health and Safety Code § 11367.5

Canine Handler

- C. The handler may designate up to two (2) responsible adults to provide basic, off-duty care for the canine in their absence of less than 24 hours. The names and contact information of the designated adults shall be reported to their supervisor.

**Amends/Replaces**

N/A NEW

**Attachments**

N/A

**Authorized By**



*Marlon Yarber, Chief Probation Officer*

**Date** August 31, 2021