



**Baltimore County Sheriff's Office
Towson, Maryland**

**Sheriff
R. Jay Fisher**

General Order

Subject: K-9 Operations	Effective Date 03/04/11	Number B-14
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Purpose:

To establish procedures and policies for the administration and operation of the Baltimore County Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit.

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I. Policy

Recognizing the benefits derived from the utilization of trained K-9 teams, it is the policy of the Sheriff's Office that the primary goal of the K-9 Unit is to assist in the detection of explosive devices, and to search for firearms and ammunition.

II. Duties and Responsibilities of Canine Handlers

- A.** Subject to availability, handlers must respond to all authorized requests for K-9 assistance.
- B.** Handlers must always exercise good judgment and effective control of the canine. They are responsible for the control, performance and lack of performance, use and condition of the canine.

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III. Operational Guidelines

- A. Canine teams may be utilized to:
 - 1. Search for explosive devices and firearms.
 - 2. Search for evidence or lost property.
 - 3. Conduct presentations and demonstrations of canine capabilities.
- B. Handlers may use the canine to protect themselves or others from death or serious bodily injury.
- C. The canine may not search facilities that will expose the canine to substances potentially harmful to the animal unless there is a present overriding risk to human life.
- D. The use of a K-9 team for any purpose not specifically authorized is permissible only with the express approval of the Sheriff or his/her designee.

IV. Availability of Canine Teams

- A. When available, a Sheriff's Office K-9 team must respond to members in need of canine assistance.
 - 1. Should an incident arise when a Sheriff's Office team is not available, members should request a team from the Baltimore County Police Department.
 - 2. If no other teams are available, a Sergeant or above has the authority to authorize a call out a Sheriff's Office team.
- B. A Sheriff's Office K-9 team may be utilized to assist other jurisdictions in bomb detection and patrol operations with the approval of the Sheriff, or his/her designee.
- C. If a handler is contacted directly by the Baltimore County Police Department or another outside agency with a request for a call out, the handler must ensure the Chief Deputy or his/her designee is advised.

V. Procedures for Requesting Canine Assistance

- A. The following procedures are established to guide members in requesting canine assistance:
 - 1. Members may request a K-9 team to the scene of any incident where a canine may be useful.

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- a. If members are unsure if a K-9 team can be helpful, they should request K-9 assistance and allow the handler to determine if the canine should be utilized.
2. Once a K-9 team is requested, the senior-ranking member on the scene must direct Deputies to secure the premises or area.
 - a. Members should not enter a building or area once a K-9 team is en-route.

VI. Deployment Procedures

- A. When a K-9 team arrives on the scene, the senior-ranking member must provide the handler with enough information regarding the facts and circumstances of the incident that would lead the handler to believe, as a reasonable and prudent Deputy Sheriff, that the search is appropriate.
- B. The canine handler has exclusive control over the tactical use of the canine.
 1. The supervisor or senior-ranking member on the scene can only assess the situation and determine if the use of a canine team is warranted.
 2. If the handler, based on the situation, determines that the canine is to be used, the handler will decide how it is to be used.
- C. The handler must ensure, as far as practical that all innocent persons are out of the search area before the canine is released.
 1. Before releasing the canine, the handler must issue a verbal warning except in incidents where Deputy safety is in jeopardy.
- D. The handler must coordinate as much as possible, the search or tracking progress with the Deputies or Officers on the scene and the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) if appropriate.
- E. If it is determined that the canine will be utilized, the deployment of Deputies or Officers on the scene must be coordinated between the handler and the senior-ranking member or Officer in charge. The senior ranking member must:
 1. Advise all Deputies and/or Officers on the scene of the decision to utilize the canine and advise when the team enters the search area.
 2. Ensure that no person enters the search area once the search has started unless specifically requested by the handler.
 3. Assign at least one Deputy or Officer to remain on the scene until the K-9 activity is complete.

- F. If the handler becomes injured and unable to control the canine, members must call another handler, from the Sheriff's Office or other agency, to respond and take control of the canine.

VII. Canine Bites

In the event the canine bites a person the handler must:

- A. Obtain medical attention for the person.
1. In all incidents of visible injury in an alleged canine bite, the person shall be taken to the hospital for treatment.
 - a. The handler shall not transport the person to the hospital. The person is to be transported by ambulance or by another Deputy or Officer.
 2. If treatment is refused, the handler will have a Deputy or Officer respond to the scene to witness the refusal.
- B. Photograph the bite area.
1. All photographs shall be taken after the wound has been cleaned to accurately represent the extent of injury.
 2. If the location of the bite is in a sensitive area, the photographs shall be taken by a Deputy of the same gender as the injured person.
- C. Promptly notify the Sheriff's Office of **any incident** that results in death or injury.
1. During normal working hours, notification must be made to the handler's Sergeant. The Sergeant is responsible for notifying the following individuals of the incident:
 - a. Internal Affairs
 - b. Lieutenant.
 - c. Chief Deputy.
 - d. Undersheriff.
 2. During the evening or weekends, notification must be made to the Night Commander. The Night Commander is responsible for contacting the following individuals and notifying them of the incident:
 - a. Internal Affairs
 - b. Chief Deputy.
 - c. Undersheriff.
 3. Complete required reporting per Section IX. Reports, of this directive.

VIII. Explosive Detection Assignments

- A.** When assigned an explosive detection or bomb threat search the handler must:
1. Upon responding to calls for bombs and bomb threats ensure that you turn off radio transmitters, any personal electronic equipment that transmits a signal (e.g., cellular phones, pagers, etc.) and activate the GPS/KDT “kill switch” 500 feet from the location of the threat. Ensure that GPS/KDT “kill switch” is inactivated when the call is complete and record the times that the device was activated and inactivated in the required Incident Report.
 2. View all threats as serious and potentially dangerous to the team, citizens and property.
 3. Record all necessary information given at the time of the assignment.
 4. Upon arrival at the scene, contact the supervisor in charge and obtain all information involving the suspected explosive device or bomb threat, to include:
 - a. General location.
 - b. Area to be searched.
 - c. Detonation time, if given.
 5. If appropriate, advise the supervisor to establish a communications liaison between the search area and ECC, and if possible secure the area.
 - a. The communications liaison will advise ECC when the search is going to commence, and instruct them not to communicate with the canine team on the radio.
 - b. The handler must enter the area keeping in mind that they can monitor the radio, but cannot transmit.
 - c. The handler shall not use a cell phone or other electronic device.
- B.** If the total area cannot be searched before the detonation time, advise the supervisor of that fact and request ECC to assign additional K-9 Explosive Detection Team(s), if available, to assist.
1. If no other teams are available, search as much of the area as possible, leaving enough time to exit the area no less than thirty (30) minutes before detonation time.
 2. When a search cannot be started or completed thirty (30) minutes before detonation time, the team should wait thirty (30) minutes after the intended detonation time before conducting the search.
 3. When no detonation time is given, the handler should take the necessary time in preparing the canine and commence the search.

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- C. Conduct the search using the most efficient techniques. The K-9 team must search the requested area as well as possible when presented with difficult or abnormal situations.
 - 1. If the threat search is on a vehicle, only the exterior may be searched. K-9 teams will not enter the interior or cab portion of any vehicle.
- D. If the canine indicates at any point during the search that an explosive odor is present, the handler must leave the immediate area and request and confer with the Baltimore County Police Bomb Squad. The handler must advise the Bomb Squad of the description and location on which the canine indicated.
 - 1. Once the Bomb Squad makes the indicated area safe, the team must complete the search using the same procedure for each indication given.
- E. When the search has been completed or temporarily suspended, the handler must notify the supervisor and provide them with the results of the search.

IX. Reports

- A. Each time a canine is deployed, the handler must complete an Event Report (Form 10), before the end of their tour of duty. The report must include, but is not limited to the following:
 - 1. Activity type.
 - 2. Type of deployment.
 - 3. Agency requesting the deployment.
 - 4. Time deployment requested.
 - 5. Activity location.
 - 6. Time canine team cleared.
 - 7. Deputies or Officers involved.
- B. If the canine is involved in a use of force incident the handler must comply with the reporting requirements of General Order B-1, "*Use of Force/Discharge of Firearms.*"
- C. Photographs of injuries will accompany reporting.
- D. In the event of a canine bite whether accidental or intentional, in addition to the above reporting, the handler must:
 - 1. Complete a Canine Bite/Health Risk Warning Form 153 and provide a copy to individual bitten.
 - 2. Complete a Health Department Notification Form 151 and notify the Health Department.

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- E.** The handler must maintain copies of all submitted reports and records throughout the working life of the canine.
 - 1.** Upon separation from service, all reports and records concerning the retired canine must be packaged and kept in storage.
 - 2.** Supervisors shall ensure appropriate reporting is properly completed and submitted in a timely manner.

X. Care of the Canine

- A.** Handlers must ensure that the physical well being of the canine is maintained through proper feeding, exercise, and veterinarian care.
- B.** The canine must be groomed and inspected daily, provided with adequate, clean quarters and fresh drinking water.
- C.** The canine must be given time out of the kennel during the handler's shift.
- D.** Overnight kenneling of the canine at the Sheriff's Office is prohibited.
- E.** The handler must ensure that the canine is licensed as required under Article 88B, Section 70, of the Annotated Code of Maryland. A collar, with the tags attached, must always be on the canine except when under the direct control of the handler or confined in a kennel.
- F.** Kennels and cruisers are to be in a clean and sanitary condition. No animal, other than the canine, may be placed in or tied to the kennel. Kennels and cruisers are subject to inspection by the handler's Sergeant.
- G.** The canine must be fed daily the amount of food to maintain the proper weight.
 - 1.** The public or unauthorized employees may not feed canines.
- H.** The canine may not be used for breeding purposes.
- I.** Punishing the canine by beating or kicking is prohibited.
- J.** Any member who mistreats, abuses, or mishandles a canine may be subject to disciplinary action.
- K.** Members must refrain from:
 - 1.** Approaching, petting or agitating the canine either in the company of the handler or while in a vehicle or kennel, except when participating in authorized training or demonstrations.
 - 2.** Making physical contact (horseplay) while the canine is present.

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3. Giving commands to the canine or interfering with the commands of the handler.
- L. Handlers must ensure that whenever the canine is left in a vehicle unattended, adequate ventilation is provided and the vehicle is secured.
- M. When off duty, the canine must be properly confined in the residence, or locked in a fenced area, unless under the direct control and supervision of the handler. Removal of the canine from the property by household members is prohibited.
- N. When the handler is away on vacation, the canine must be housed at an appropriate kennel unless under the direct control and supervision of the handler. The kennel must have Office approval. If the handler intends to board the canine, he/she must notify the Chief Deputy in writing. An Administrative Report Form 125 will list the location of the kennel and the dates of boarding.
- O. The handler will utilize an Office approved veterinarian.
- P. The veterinarian must give all canines a complete physical once a year.
- Q. When the handler deems it necessary to seek emergency medical treatment for the canine, they must immediately contact the designated veterinarian and arrange for the treatment.
 1. The canine may only receive medical treatment from the designated veterinarian, except in an emergency.
 - a. When such an emergency exists, the handler must attempt to contact the Chief Deputy or his/her designee and advise them of the emergency.
 - b. If the handler is required to pay for the veterinarian's service, the Office will make reimbursement.
 2. All non-emergency medical treatment must be discussed with the Chief Deputy or his/her designee before treatment.
- R. The canine handler must submit all medical records or bills related to the care of the canine to the Chief Deputy.

XI. Uniforms and Equipment

A. Uniforms

1. The handler's uniform is a two-piece black BDU utility shirt and pants, boots, baseball type hat and during the winter months a duty jacket and black knit hat.

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2. Handlers must wear the black uniform except when performing duties where the regular Sheriff's Office uniform or civilian clothes are more appropriate.
3. Handlers must wear the issued duty belt.

B. Vehicles

1. Vehicles assigned to canine handlers are considered issued equipment. Handlers are responsible for the condition and maintenance of the vehicle. Vehicle must be utilized and operated in accordance with established Office policies.
 - a. The transportation of prisoners is prohibited.
 - b. The handler is permitted to use the vehicle during off-duty hours for canine related maintenance activities.
 - c. Except in emergency situations, only canine handlers are permitted to operate the vehicle when the canine is present.

C. Equipment

1. All equipment must be clean and in good working condition. The Office issues certain equipment to the handler. They are as follows:
 - a. Traffic lead, leather
 - b. Patrol lead, leather
 - c. Tracking lead, leather
 - d. Collar, leather
 - e. Collar, choker
 - f. Water bowl (2)
 - g. Feed pan
 - h. Comb, metal
 - i. Brush, slicker
 - j. Brush, bristle
 - k. Fur rake
 - l. Shedding blade
 - m. Warning signs for property and vehicles
2. Any damage to, malfunction, or loss of issued K-9 equipment shall be reported to the handler's Sergeant as soon as practical.
3. Requests for supplies or the repair of equipment must be made to the Chief Deputy.
4. All issued K-9 equipment shall be returned to the Office by the handler when he/she leaves the K-9 Unit.

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XII. Training

All handlers, in coordination with the Chief Deputy or his/her designee, must participate in required initial training and retraining of their canine to maintain an acceptable level of performance.

A. Initial Training

1. All canine teams must receive initial training under the supervision of a qualified instructor approved by the Sheriff or his/her designee.
2. If during the initial training, a handler or dog fails to demonstrate the qualities required, the instructor must recommend to the Sheriff that the handler, the dog or both be removed from training.
3. Prior to graduating, each team must be tested and evaluated by the training instructor and must display the required proficiency in each exercise to qualify for duty. If a team fails to display the required proficiency, the Sheriff or his/her designee must determine if the handler, the dog or both be removed from the assignment or must participate in additional training.

B. Retraining

1. Each canine team must participate in monthly retraining as required by the Sheriff's Office. A qualified instructor approved by the Sheriff's Office must conduct retraining.
2. It is the responsibility of each handler to inform the instructor of any problems they may be experiencing with his/her canine.
3. NO aggression training or practice may be conducted with any canine except under the supervision of, or at the direction of, an authorized instructor.
4. Each handler must actively participate in the retraining exercises and must assist the instructor in organizing and conducting the exercise.
5. It is the responsibility of each handler to ensure no unnecessary damage is done to any areas used for training purposes.
6. Handlers may not use civilians or Deputies not assigned to the K-9 Unit in training exercises without prior approval of the Chief Deputy.
7. All exercises must be realistic in nature and benefit each team participating.

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- C. Certification of all training received must be forwarded to the Chief Deputy or his/her designee in a timely manner for inclusion into the handler's training file. Recertification records will be maintained by the Baltimore County Police K-9 Unit at their offices.

XIII. Selection of New Canine Teams

- A. The selection of new handlers must be consistent with Sheriff's Office policy and may include an oral interview. The following minimum requirements must be met. The applicant must:
 - 1. Be a sworn Deputy.
 - 2. Satisfactorily complete all required training programs.
 - 3. Own or rent a private house or townhouse and be permitted to maintain a dog at the residence.
 - 4. Have no pending disciplinary action and his/her current performance appraisal must be of a satisfactory nature.
 - 5. Be recommended by his/her immediate supervisor.
- B. All canines are subject to approval by the Sheriff or his/her designee prior to being accepted for training.

XIV. Acquired Canines

- 1. Canines will be purchased through kennels or dealers contracted by Baltimore County.
- 2. The Chief Deputy and handler(s) will review all pertinent medical and training information prior to a purchase and advise the Sheriff of any findings.
- 3. The Chief Deputy will maintain the documents and receipts of a purchase.
- 4. The Sheriff has final approval of all purchases.
- 5. A canine purchased for use in the K-9 Unit must be registered and licensed with the Maryland State Police Licensing Division and in accordance with state and local laws.

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XV. Release From Service

A. Canine

1. A canine removed from active service may be offered to the handler first.
2. If the assigned handler wishes not to retain the canine, an appropriate home or placement will be located.
3. An offer will be made to Sheriff's Office personnel, the public or an allied agency for K-9 use.
4. A new owner will be required to sign a Waiver of Liability and Release Agreement, releasing the Baltimore County Government, Baltimore County Sheriff's Office or Sheriff's Office personnel from all liability or responsibility for anything which concerns the canine from that day forward.
5. As a condition of accepting the canine, the new owner must license the canine in accordance with state and local laws.
6. Copies of all pertinent medical information will be given to the person or agency receiving the canine.

B. Handler

1. When a handler retires or is transferred from the K-9 Unit, a determination will be made by the Sheriff as to retain or retire the canine from active service. Factors to be considered, but not limited to, are the age and health of the canine and a projection of the remaining years of use.
2. If it is determined to retain active service, the canine will be reassigned to another handler.

XVI. Expiration of A Canine

In the case of a death to a canine, the following procedures shall be followed.

A. Line of Duty or Accidental Death

1. Notify the Chief Deputy or if unavailable, another supervisor.
2. The Chief Deputy/supervisor may notify the Internal Affairs Unit and advise them of the circumstances.

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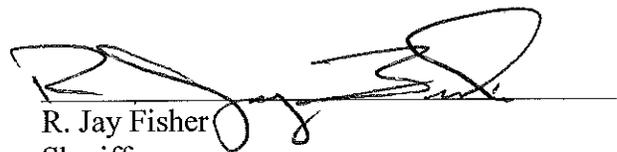
3. The Chief Deputy/supervisor and/or Internal Affairs Unit may respond to the scene.
4. The canine may be taken to the Sheriff's Office veterinarian until the disposition is determined for the canine, i.e. burial, cremation.
5. If Sheriff's Office personnel do not respond to the scene, the handler will obtain all necessary information and an Event Report, Form 10 made.
6. An investigation by the Internal Affairs Unit will be conducted to determine if negligence existed in the death of the canine.

Rescissions

K-9 Unit, Standard Operating Procedures, undated memorandum

Distribution

Sworn Members



R. Jay Fisher
Sheriff

**BALTIMORE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
K-9 UNIT**

Canine Bite / Health Risk Warning

Date: _____ **SD#** _____

As a person who has been bitten by a Baltimore County Sheriff's Office canine, you should be made aware of the following information.

1. Even healthy dogs carry certain bacteria in their mouths.
2. A person who does not have a spleen has a reduced ability to fight infections.
3. If you do not have a spleen, you should seek immediate medical attention to prevent the possibility of a serious infection as a result from this dog bite.

I certify that I have read and received a copy of this warning.

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Date: _____

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Appendix II**

**BALTIMORE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
K-9 UNIT**

Health Department Notification

1. Date of K-9 Bite: _____ **S.D.#** _____

2. Location of Occurrence: _____

3. Suspect's Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

4. K-9 Handler/K-9 Name

Name: _____ **I.D.#** _____

Address: 401 Bosley Avenue
Towson. Md. 21204

Phone: 410-887-3151

K-9 Name: _____ **I.D.#** _____

5. Member Reporting Incident to Health Department

Name: _____ **I.D.#** _____

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

How in formation was left with Health Department:

Answering machine ___ **Personal Contact** ___ **Fax** ___ **Mail** ___

*** Note: If information was provided to Health Department by any means other than personal contact a follow up MUST be completed.**

Member Conducting Follow Up

Name: _____ **I.D.#** _____

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

6. Health Department Representative Contacted (410) 887-2724

Name: _____

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Case #: _____