

	Operational General Order	11.14 Canine Utilization	PAGE 1 OF 3
	SUBJECT		EFFECTIVE DATE
	Virginia Beach Police Department General Order Chapter 11 - Patrol Operations		08/22/2018
			ORIGINATOR/REVIEW
DISTRIBUTION		CALEA: 41.1.4 A	Special Operations
ALL			
BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:		<i>James A. Cooper</i>	

Purpose

To establish guidelines for the proper utilization of trained Police Canine Teams.

Policy (CALEA 41.1.4 A)

The primary goal of the Police Canine Teams is to enhance the Police Department's objectives in providing quality police service to the community. A Police Canine Team shall consist of a trained canine handler and a certified canine dog.

The utilization of a Canine Team is authorized, without additional supervisory approval, for the following purposes:

- Tracking Operations: To locate criminal suspects who have fled the scene of a crime.
- Evidence Recovery: Canines are capable of locating property or evidence, which has been abandoned or hidden, by using a directed search of an area or while actively tracking a suspect.
- Building Searches: Canine Teams may be used to search buildings believed to have been burglarized, or buildings being used by a felony suspect(s) in an attempt to escape apprehension. Using a Police Canine Team to search a building minimizes the possibility of a police officer being injured. Canine handlers shall ensure multiple warnings are given before searching any building, structure, or premises unless it is tactically unsafe to give such warnings beforehand. Sufficient time must be given for a response before the canine search is commenced. When searching a large building or a structure with more than one floor, warnings will be repeated at each hallway or floor unless it is tactically unsafe to give such warnings beforehand.
 - Canine handlers will consider the following criteria before determining if an off-leash search is appropriate:
 - Nature of the call;
 - Method of entry (forced or insecure);
 - Any other credible information from possible occupants or residents of the building.
- Calls for Service: Whenever possible, Canine teams should be dispatched to all serious crimes in progress. Canine Teams should also be dispatched to assist on high risk vehicle stops should the suspect(s) abandon the vehicle and flee, or to clear vehicles of possible armed suspect(s) who may be hiding inside. The utilization of a canine is considered force and must comply with General Order 5.01, (Use of Force). The following factors shall be considered by the Canine Handler, or Canine Supervisor, before using the canine to apprehend a suspect: (1) the severity of the crime; (2)

whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of officers or others; and (3) whether the suspect is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight.

- High Risk Arrest and Warrant Cases: Whenever possible Canine teams should be dispatched to assist on high risk arrests and warrant cases.
- Protection of Police Officers or other Persons: Police Canine Teams may be utilized to protect the canine handler, other police officers, and/or other persons from injury or death.
- Search and Rescue: Police Canine Teams may be used to search areas that would require large numbers of personnel to locate lost or missing persons.
- Misdemeanor Arrests: Canine handlers will evaluate the severity of the offense before determining if the use of a canine is appropriate to assist in locating a suspect who has committed a misdemeanor.
- Narcotics Detection: Canines certified for narcotics detection will be available for the detecting and locating narcotics, or identifying narcotic contaminated contraband such as U.S. currency. Requests for the use of a Narcotics Detection Canine will be made to Special Investigations.
- Area Searches: Canines may be utilized to locate suspects hidden in large areas, such as fenced in compounds, fields, etc.
- Alarm Calls: Whenever possible, a Canine Team should be dispatched as a back-up unit on alarm calls.

Patrol Dogs are search tools. Their single best virtue is their ability to locate things by use of keen senses, especially smell. They enhance not only the police mission, but most importantly the safety of both officers and suspects. Patrol Dogs are trained to defend themselves, their Handlers, and apprehend suspects. Accordingly, the appropriateness of force will be resolved by the Handler on a situation by situation basis, before the Patrol Dog is deployed. Handlers will exercise sound judgment in the use of their Patrol Dogs. It is essential that handlers obtain all necessary and relevant information before determining the appropriate use of the canine. To properly evaluate the decision to deploy a Patrol Dog a Handler must be guided by General Order, 5.01 (Use of Force), and the factors from *Graham V. Connor* which include the following:

- A. The severity of the crime.
- B. Whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of officers or other
- C. Whether the offender is actively resisting or evading arrest.

Police Canine Teams may be utilized for the following assignments with prior supervisory approval:

- SWAT and Tactical Operations: Police Canine Teams may be utilized in tactical operations to maintain perimeter control as part of the SWAT/K9 Integration Program. Canines may also be utilized in other tactical situations with the approval of the highest-ranking department supervisor present at the scene where the Canine Teams are to be deployed and with the advice of the handler and/or K9 Supervisor.
- Public Relations: A Canine Team may be used as representatives of the Department, to various community service groups, schools, churches, etc.

- **Crowd Control:** Canine Teams will not be used for crowd control at peaceful gatherings or demonstrations. Canine Teams may be used for crowd control upon approval of the Precinct Commander or senior police official present to protect life or property during a riot or other major unauthorized gathering that cannot be controlled by other means. In these situations, canines shall:
 - Be short-leased at all times unless no other means are available to protect an individual(s) from serious injury; and,
 - Not initiate any offensive actions unless to guard against imminent loss of life or serious bodily injury.
- **Bombs/Explosives Detection:** Canines certified in the detection of bombs and/or explosives may be utilized to conduct searches for bombs and/or explosives.
- No Canine Team will be used outside the city limits of Virginia Beach for any reason without prior approval of the K9 Supervisor or, during after-hours, an on-duty supervisor in accordance with the criteria contained in the K9 Field Guide. The K9 Supervisor should be advised by the handler as soon as practical. All such uses shall be documented and forwarded to the Commanding Officer of Special Operations.

Use of Force

Deployment of the canine in a use of force situation shall be done in accordance with the provisions of General Order 5.01, (Use of Force) and shall be at the discretion of the canine handler, or the canine supervisor if the decision to deploy the canine was made by the supervisor. However, any supervisor may preclude the use of, or may discontinue the use of, a canine at any time.

The Canine Unit Supervisor should be notified as soon as possible after a canine use of force situation. The use of a canine in a use of force incident shall be reported by the handler via a Department Use of Force Blue Team entry, an Animal Exposure Report and if there's an injury via a Riskmaster and/or Workman's Compensation entry. Additionally, when possible, photographs of any injuries shall be made and submitted with the reports. All reports and photographs shall be submitted to the Canine Supervisor for review, dissemination and storage.

Prisoner Transportation (CALEA 41.1.4 A)

Canine handlers will not transport prisoners in their vehicles unless they are unable to obtain transportation for the prisoner, and then only after all precautions are taken to ensure the safety of the prisoner.