

**STOCKTON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**GENERAL ORDER**

**POLICE CANINE UNIT**  
**SUBJECT**

**DATE:** February 1, 2019

**NO:** Q-1e

**FROM:** CHIEF ERIC JONES

**TO:** ALL PERSONNEL

**INDEX: CANINE UNIT**  
**USE OF CANINES**  
**POLICE CANINE BITES/INCIDENTS**

**I. POLICY**

- A. The Stockton Police Department will maintain and utilize a Police Canine Unit. The canines will be assigned to the Patrol Section of the Field Operations Division, or other sections as needed, and will be used to supplement police operations in the apprehension of criminal offenders.
- B. As with all community interactions, Stockton Police Officers will consider the four guiding principles of Procedural Justice as they relate to the use of police canines. Those principles are:
1. Respect – treating all with dignity and respect
  2. Voice – listening and allowing residents to be heard
  3. Neutrality – making decisions in a fair and impartial manner
  4. Trustworthiness – acting in ways that foster trust, are perceived as legitimate, and exemplify fairness of process
- C. A police canine may be used to locate and apprehend a suspect if the canine handler reasonably believes the individual has either committed or is about to commit a serious criminal offense and if any of the following conditions exist:
1. There is a reasonable belief the individual poses an immediate threat of violence or serious harm to the public, the canine handler, or other police officers.
  2. The individual is physically resisting arrest and the use of a canine reasonably appears to be necessary to overcome such resistance.
  3. The individual is believed to be concealed in an area where entry by police personnel would pose a threat to the safety of the officers or public.
  4. It is recognized that situations may arise which do not fall within the provisions set forth in this policy. In any such case, a standard of reasonableness shall be used to determine if a canine should be deployed.
- NOTE: Absent the presence of one or more of the above conditions, mere flight from pursuing officer(s) will not provide adequate justification for the use of a canine to apprehend a suspect.
- D. Canines may be used for public relations demonstrations with the intended purpose of highlighting the skills and obedience of police canines and developing an atmosphere of confidence and trust between the public and our canine handlers.
- E. A police canine shall not be used to apprehend a juvenile who is known to officers to be under 14 years of age (exception: in the defense of an officer or other person's life that is in immediate danger).

- F. Stockton Police canines may be used to assist outside law enforcement agencies with the approval of the Watch Commander or an on-duty supervisor.
- G. A police canine shall not be used if a person is passively resisting, not following orders, not aggressive, or not posing an immediate threat to the safety of officer(s) or others around.

**II. PROCEDURE**

**A. Staffing the Police Canine Unit**

- 1. The Stockton Police Canine Unit will be directed by a designated lieutenant who will report to a designated captain of the Field Operations Division. Working in cooperation with the lieutenant will be a designated canine sergeant(s), the Department trainer, and/or the in-service trainer. The canine sergeant(s) will be responsible for, but not limited to, the following duties:
  - a. Liaison with Stockton Police Administration staff.
  - b. Liaison with other police agency canine unit coordinators.
  - c. Maintain accurate records, including a Canine After Use Log, to document police canine activities.
  - d. Recommend and oversee the procurement of needed equipment.
  - e. Be responsible for scheduling all police canine-related activities.
  - f. Ensure the police canine team is scheduled for continuous training to maximize the capabilities of the team according to P.O.S.T. standards.
  - g. Ensure all canine training records are properly and accurately maintained.
  - h. Conducting a review of each suspect apprehension which involved a police canine to determine if the deployment was within Department policy. The review and approval will be placed in the Canine After Use Log. The canine sergeant(s) will submit a memorandum to the program lieutenant if additional comments or follow-up are needed.

**B. Obtaining Canines:**

- 1. Canines considered for use by the Canine Unit will be obtained by one of the following methods:
  - a. Private citizen donation
  - b. City/County Animal Control Shelter
  - c. Private purchase by handler
  - d. Purchase by the City of Stockton with approval of the unit lieutenant
- 2. Ownership:
  - a. Any canine purchased, donated, or obtained from the Animal Control Shelter shall become the property of the City of Stockton.
  - b. Purchases and donations shall be pursuant to a contract addressed in subsection "b" of this section and must be entered into by and between the City of Stockton and the transferor or donor of the animal in question, setting forth the rights and obligations of both parties.

3. Care for the Police Canine and Equipment:
  - a. The City of Stockton will provide a kennel to be used at the handler's residence.
  - b. Services of a veterinarian, grooming, and kenneling of the animal shall be paid for by the City of Stockton.
    - (1) Routine medical services and kenneling services shall be conducted by the current authorized veterinarian and kennel service.
    - (2) Prior approval must be obtained from the program lieutenant if a situation arises that necessitates the services of a veterinarian other than the current authorized veterinarian and it is not deemed an emergency.
  - c. Dog Food:
    - (1) Food will be provided by the City of Stockton until the dog is no longer utilized as a canine officer. Under no circumstances will food be provided to more than one dog per handler without prior approval of the program lieutenant.
    - (2) The amount of food shall be reasonable for the dog's size and weight.
    - (3) A canine handler will obtain dog food from a designated distributor as directed by the program lieutenant.
    - (4) A handler in need of any additional equipment or supplies shall complete a Requisition Form PD1132 and submit the form to the program lieutenant for approval. Once approved, the handler will take the approved requisition form to Stores at the City Municipal Service Center and obtain the requested items.
      - (a) Other than dog food, no additional equipment will be issued without the approved requisition form.
  - d. Canine Vehicles
    - (1) Canine handlers shall ensure their assigned vehicle is clean and in good working order. The canine handler will conduct a daily check of his/her vehicle, including a check of the heat alarm system. If an issue with a vehicle is located, the handler shall advise a canine sergeant and fleet maintenance immediately.
    - (2) The canine sergeant(s) will be responsible for conducting a check of each canine vehicle at least bi-annually. If any deficiencies are found, the canine sergeant(s) will notify the canine lieutenant and fleet maintenance immediately.
4. Approval must be obtained from the lieutenant in charge of the Canine Unit prior to taking any of the following actions:
  - a. Designation of a dog as officially in training for use in the Canine Unit.
  - b. Obtaining food and/or veterinarian services provided by the City of Stockton.
  - c. Designation of a dog as "Field Ready" for use in the Canine Unit.
  - d. Any training of a police department canine and/or handler through any source or agency other than the Stockton Police Department or its designated trainers.
  - e. Canine demonstrations.

C. Officer Assignment to the Police Canine Unit:

1. An officer desiring to become a canine handler shall submit a written request stating reasons for wanting to join. The request shall be accompanied by a written recommendation from the officer's supervisor (directed to the program lieutenant) and should include a specific description of the officer's understanding and application of the four core concepts of Procedural Justice. The lieutenant, the canine sergeant(s), and the trainer will review the request and recommendation. A joint recommendation will then be forwarded to the Chief of Police for approval or denial of the request.
2. An officer who desires to join the Canine Unit shall submit complete general history and background of his/her canine. This information must be verifiable.
  - a. The general history and background must include, but is not limited to the following:
    - (1) Canine's place and date of birth.
    - (2) Any and all training the canine received prior to being obtained by the officer.
    - (3) Any prior employment of the canine by other agencies.
    - (4) Any incidents or canine demeanor that may be indicative of potential problem areas; i.e., bites, overly aggressive behavior, etc.
    - (5) Copies of any documents in support of the above.
  - b. Final approval of both canine and handler will be made by the Chief of Police.
  - c. The following are minimum qualifications for the assignment of Police Canine Handler:
    - (1) City of Stockton police officer currently off probation.
    - (2) Reside in an adequately fenced, single family residence which has a minimum five-foot-high fence with locking gates.
    - (3) Agree to be assigned to the position for a minimum three-year obligation. The Chief of Police may amend this commitment if necessary.
    - (4) Completion of a Departmental Procedural Justice training course.
3. Both handlers and canines will be certified on an annual basis in a manner following P.O.S.T. recommendations, based upon courses developed by the canine trainer(s).
  - a. The trainer(s) shall supply the program lieutenant with written documentation of the annual certifications.
  - b. Police canines shall receive training as defined in current contract with the Department's canine training provider.
  - c. Police canine handlers are encouraged to engage in additional training with the approval of the canine sergeant(s).
  - d. In order to ensure that all training is consistent, no handler, trainer, or outside vendor is authorized to train in a standard that is contrary to the policies of the Stockton Police Department.
  - e. No canine and/or handler failing P.O.S.T. Canine Certification shall be deployed in the field until certification is achieved.

When practical, pending successful certification, the canine handler shall be temporarily reassigned to regular patrol duties.

D. Preparation for Utilizing a Canine

1. In accordance with section 1C above, prior to the use of a canine to search for or apprehend a suspect(s), the canine handler and/or the supervisor on-scene shall carefully consider all pertinent information that is reasonably available at the time. The information should include, but is not limited to the following:
  - a. The suspect's age or estimate thereof
  - b. The nature of the suspected offense
  - c. Any potential danger to the public and/or other officers at the scene if the canine is used
  - d. The degree of resistance or threatened resistance, if any, the suspect has shown.
  - e. The potential for escape or flight if the police dog is not utilized
  - f. The potential for injury to officers or the public caused by the suspect if the canine is not utilized

E. Use of Police Canines:

1. Properly-utilized dogs serve as a valuable resource to the Department. Their use shall be administered with sound police practices in mind.
  - a. Canine use should be tempered with an awareness of the public's sensitivity and occasional outright fear of dogs.
  - b. Every effort must be made to prevent any unnecessary confrontation with the public. When reasonable, efforts to deescalate situations should be considered and employed, to include the application of Procedural Justice principles.
  - c. The following guidelines shall determine intended use of canines:
    - (1) Officer Personal Safety
      - (a) The police canine offers safety to the officer in that it can deter potential assailants. It also can come to the officer's aid when an assault occurs. As with any police tool, the canine should be used only when it appears obvious other less-aggressive measures of defense would not be effective.
    - (2) Apprehension of Fleeing Suspects
      - (a) The decision whether to send a police canine in pursuit of a fleeing suspect shall rest with the handler who shall consider the crime committed, urgency of apprehension, obvious age of the person fleeing. Unless it is impractical to do so due to particular facts of the apprehension situation, the handler shall verbally warn the suspect that if he/she does not halt the canine will be deployed and they may be bitten.
    - (3) Search
      - (a) If an officer determines that a need exists for a canine to search an area or building for a suspect, the officer shall first determine that the suspect is contained to a specific area.

The canine handler shall obtain permission from a supervisor prior to using a canine. Exception: A rapidly evolving situation that is within the deployment guidelines, but in which it is impractical to obtain prior supervisory approval.

(b) Once containment has been established, the officer should ensure that the area or building does not become contaminated with the scent of officers, alarm company personnel, or other persons. The canine's search will be more effective if other persons remain away from the search area prior to the canine's approach.

(c) Upon arrival of the canine unit, the officer in charge of the scene shall apprise the handler of the details of the incident. The canine handler will ensure that every reasonable effort has been made to ensure no one other than the suspect(s) is contained in the search area. Prior to release of the canine, the handler shall give a canine warning. The warning shall include the following:

Announce the presence of the canine unit. Order the suspect out of hiding. Warn that a canine will be sent to search and any person in the search area may be bitten. This warning should be loud enough so that it can be heard from anywhere in the search area. Shouting the warning or using a P.A. system should be considered

The warning shall be made at least twice, and it would be desirable at some point to have the canine bark. Care should be taken to ensure that barking does not obscure any responding voice from the suspect(s). After the warnings are given, the canine handler will wait a sufficient amount of time to allow the suspect to comprehend the warning and comply by making his presence known and surrendering peacefully before using the canine to search. If a suspect is located, the handler shall take steps to prevent the occurrence of unnecessary bites from the canine.

(d) If a suspect(s) flees from officers, other back-up officers should not go in foot pursuit, but should remain with the canine handler and await instructions. If the canine is sent in pursuit of the suspect(s), the canine shall remain under the visual and/or verbal control of the handler at all times.

#### (4) Mutual Aid Requests

Requests by another agency for use of Stockton Police canines shall be cleared through the Watch Commander. Final evaluation of the request shall be cleared with the handler. It is the handler's responsibility to know the capabilities and limitations of their canine. When possible, canine officers should attempt to assist another agency. If the request is beyond the capabilities and limitations, or is unreasonable, rejection reasons shall be communicated to the Watch Commander.

Should a Stockton Police Canine be utilized for another agency, under no circumstances shall it be done in a manner contrary to Stockton Police Department policies and procedures.

#### (5) Demonstration Requests

All requests for canine unit public demonstrations shall be made via the canine sergeant(s).

The coordinator will determine whether the demonstration is possible, and if so, will make appropriate arrangements.

One intent of demonstrations is to increase public confidence and trust in the police canine unit. To that end, handlers will apply the principles of Procedural Justice during all demonstrations.

(6) Use of Narcotic Detection Canines

A narcotic detection trained canine may be used in accordance with current law to:

- (a) Assist in the search for narcotics during a search warrant service.
- (b) Obtain a search warrant by using the detection canine in support of probable cause.
- (c) Search vehicles, buildings, bags, and any other articles deemed necessary.
- (d) A narcotic detection canine may be used to search persons for narcotics.

(7) Generally, the decision to deploy a canine shall remain with the handler; however, a supervisor sufficiently apprised of the situation may decide not to deploy the canine.

F. Securing Canines:

- 1. When a police canine is not directly involved in a police function, or imminent use is not reasonably anticipated, it shall be properly secured within the police vehicle. If a window is left partially open for ventilation purposes, it shall open only to the point at which the canine cannot extend its head outside the vehicle.
- 2. Off-duty Activity
  - a. When the canine is off-duty, it should be contained in a kennel provided for that purpose. This would not preclude the canine from being allowed outside the run at the handler's discretion when the safety of all persons, as well as the canine, is first considered. All efforts are to be exercised to prevent the canine from confronting the public while off-duty.
- 3. Reporting for Tour of Duty
  - a. Canine handlers reporting to work shall have their dogs with them. This will preclude returning to the handler's residence to pick up the dog while on-duty. The dog shall remain with the officer during the officer's shift.
  - b. The handler shall use sound judgment in the method of transporting the canine to and from work or other assignments. The canine shall be prevented from exiting the vehicle or biting. If the handler anticipates leaving the canine in the vehicle for a long period of time, the vehicle shall be secured to prevent confrontations with the public.
  - c. Canine handlers will not bring their canines in for duty when it is forecasted to be over 100 degrees Fahrenheit during their scheduled shift. When it is forecasted to be between 90 degrees and 99 degrees Fahrenheit, it will be the handler's discretion whether to bring the canine in for duty.

The handler will make every effort to ensure that they are not away from their canine vehicle for an extended time.

If the handler needs to work inside the police department for an extended amount of time, the canine will be brought into the building. The canine may be placed inside the kennels in roll call or the report writing room.

G. Dog Bites/Incidents:

1. Bites

- a. All bites suffered by a person that were inflicted by a Stockton Police canine, whether inflicted on or off duty, shall be reported immediately to a supervisor. Canine bites in the line of duty are considered "use of force" and must be reported accordingly.

2. First-Aid for Bites

- a. The canine handler is responsible for assuring that medical treatment is obtained for persons bit by canines. If circumstances are such that the handler cannot directly ensure treatment, the handler will notify an immediate supervisor who will ensure medical treatment is provided.

3. Incidents

- a. Any incident involving a Stockton Police Department canine which results in an injury, or the claim of an injury, shall be reported by the handler. The handler shall complete the appropriate written report.
- b. The canine sergeant(s) shall conduct a review of each incident involving a police canine to determine if the deployment was within Department policy. The review and approval will be placed in the Canine After Use Log. The canine sergeant(s) will submit a memorandum to the program lieutenant if additional comments or follow-up are needed.
- c. The canine lieutenant will conduct a comprehensive review of each canine deployment which results in a person being bitten. The canine lieutenant will forward a memorandum of the review to the field operations captain. This will normally occur within three business days after the incident. The canine lieutenant will maintain a copy of these reviews.

H. Canine Administrative Leave:

1. The Chief of Police may, at his discretion, place a canine on administrative leave. This may occur for a variety of reasons, the most obvious being questionable action by the canine or its handler.
2. Temporary administrative leave may be authorized by the Watch Commander and will be reviewed by the Chief of Police as to the length of leave. A canine handler is prohibited from using a canine placed on leave until the leave is lifted.

I. On-Duty Injury to police canine or handler:

1. Should a canine become injured, the canine should be taken to a veterinary office. If the injury is minor and during business hours, the canine should be taken to the dog's normal veterinary office by the canine handler. If the canine receives a serious injury, it should be taken to the nearest emergency veterinary office for treatment.
2. If the canine's handler becomes incapacitated or is unable to provide care for its canine, another on-duty canine handler should be summoned to provide care for the canine. In the event another canine handler is not available, a patrol supervisor and canine unit supervisor(s) should be notified.



J. Rules of Conduct While in The Presence of Canines:

1. Do's

- a. Treat the canine as you would a dog owned by a friend. Be friendly, but do not pet the canine without permission from the canine handler
- b. Respect the handler's wishes with respect to the canine
- c. Stay away from the canine during training unless assisting the handler
- d. Stand still if you are bitten or think you are about to be bitten
- e. Avoid furtive or sudden movements in the presence of a canine

2. Don'ts

- a. Do not tease a canine
- b. Do not try to entice the canine to break away or disobey commands
- c. Do not use any command you have heard the handler use
- d. Do not try to agitate the canine while in a police vehicle or elsewhere
- e. Do not feed a canine without the permission of the handler
- f. Do not engage in violent or simulated violent behavior with the handler in the canine's presence
- g. Do not bring another canine around a canine vehicle
- h. Do not enter a canine vehicle unless there is an emergency, or at the direction of a canine handler
- i. Do not stare intensely at a canine