

## **GENERAL ORDER 41.8.1**

### **Canine Unit**

**GENERAL ORDER CROSS-REFERENCE: 1.5.1**

### **SUMMARY**

Governs the use of police service dogs.

### **DISCUSSION**

Police service dogs are used for tracking, trailing, wind-scenting and building searching to locate evidence or suspects of crimes and suspect apprehensions. Police service dog teams provide support for all divisions within the Department. Each dog handler shall deploy the police service dog to its best advantage. Other officers should not contaminate an area to be searched and should take positions of advantage on the perimeter in the event a suspect tries to flee. Although the police service dog team is a specialized one, all handlers are required to maintain an active, proficient level of performance in all phases of law enforcement.

### **POLICY**

#### **I**

#### **Definitions:**

1. **POLICE SERVICE DOG** is a dog, which has been trained specifically for police service use. The dog must be tested and have passed Performance Standards described by the Oregon Police Canine Association before being deployed in police service use.
2. **POLICE SERVICE DOG HANDLER** is a law enforcement officer who has successfully completed basic training in tracking, obedience, searching and apprehension exercises with a police service dog. The handler will know the capabilities of his/her dog based on the dog's basic instincts, drives and senses, so the dog may be deployed to the department's best advantage.
3. **K-9 UNIT SUPERVISOR** is the supervisor designated the responsibility and authority over the members of the K-9 Unit.
4. **K-9 UNIT TRAINER** is the officer/supervisor designated the responsibility and authority to coordinate/supervise the training and certification of the department K-9 teams.

## II

### SELECTION OF POLICE SERVICE DOG HANDLER

The following are the minimum requirements for a police service dog handler applicant:

1. Police officer with the Springfield Police Department.
2. Two years full-time police officer experience (at least one year with SPD).
3. Reside at a location adequate to house the dog and allow for necessary uninterrupted rest for the dog during off-duty hours.
4. Agreement of the other adults residing on the premises.
5. Agree to work as a handler until the assigned police service dog retires.
6. Agree to replace any non-portable portion of the home kennel if the handler changes residences.
7. Have a reputation of excellent initiative and judgment.
8. Ability to perform duties in stressful situations with limited supervision.
9. Good physical condition, successfully passing a currently established physical fitness test in the good or better category for the applicant's age bracket. Maintain at least the same proficiency during all subsequent tests while assigned as a dog handler.
10. Reside at a location within 30 minutes standard drive of the Department
11. Assignments to the canine unit are at will, and members serve in that assignment at the pleasure of the division commander.

Springfield dog handlers shall continue to have the same responsibilities as other officers, with the additional responsibilities of handling the dog. All handlers are subject to call-outs, civic and school demonstrations, and specialized training.

Deployment of dogs is more frequent during nighttime hours. This carries with it the necessity of the handler to primarily work nighttime shifts. The handler must be willing to dedicate the necessary time and effort to maintain the dog's performance, care and health.

Selection of the best-qualified handler is, along with proper dog selection and training, absolutely critical to the integrity of the police service dog program. To achieve this goal, a board consisting of current handlers and canine program supervisor shall review all candidates meeting the above qualifications. Additionally, the board may review such records of the candidate's past performance and contact any persons as necessary to make the best selection. Applicants will be required to perform job related types of physical fitness tests involving the deployment of police service dogs. The supervisor in charge of the canine program shall make a recommendation to the Patrol Division Commander for appointment.

Involvement by a candidate in other specialized assignments shall be reviewed for any likelihood of time conflict.

### **III**

#### **CARE OF THE POLICE SERVICE DOG AND EQUIPMENT**

The handler shall ensure that the police service dog receives proper nutrition, grooming, training, medical care, socialization, and living conditions. The handler will be responsible for the following:

1. The handler shall maintain all department equipment under his/her control in a clean and serviceable condition.
2. When an on-duty Police Service Dog is outside the police car for exercise or other non-deployment purposes, verbal and/or physical control shall be maintained by the handler at all times. The Police Service Dog should be on-line unless the immediate area is observed to be free of citizens and animals.
3. When a handler is out of the area on vacation or an extended number of days off, the police service dog vehicle shall be parked at the Springfield Police Department.
4. Handlers shall permit the K-9 Unit Trainer/Supervisor to conduct spontaneous on-site inspections of affected areas of their residence as well as the police service dog unit, to verify that conditions and equipment conform to this policy.
5. Any changes in living status of the handler which may affect the lodging or environment of the police service dog shall be reported to the K-9 Unit Supervisor as soon as possible.
6. When off-duty, police service dogs shall be maintained in kennels provided by the City, within a fenced yard, at the homes of their handlers. When off-duty, police service dogs may be let out of their kennels while under direct control of their handlers or while inside a secure, fenced yard at the handler's residence.
7. Whenever a police service dog handler anticipates taking a vacation or an extended number of days off, it may be necessary to temporarily relocate the police service dog. In those situations, it is the handler's responsibility to arrange for safe, sanitary housing. The K-9 Unit Supervisor shall approve the arrangements.
8. After an absence from work one week or longer, the police service dog team shall report to the K-9 Unit Trainer or designated team member and subject the dog to any needed refresher training until the dog's performance level is satisfactory to resume regular duty.

### **IV**

#### **MEDICAL CARE OF THE POLICE SERVICE DOG**

All medical attention shall be rendered by the designated police service dog veterinarian, except during an emergency. All records of medical treatment shall be maintained in the police service dog's file.

Emergency medical treatment shall be rendered by the designated emergency medical treatment center or the police service dog veterinarian. If the handler and dog are out of the area,

the handler may use the nearest available veterinarian. The handler shall notify the K-9 Unit Supervisor/Trainer as soon as practical when emergency medical care is required.

Any indication that a police service dog is not in good physical condition shall be reported to the K-9 Unit Supervisor/Trainer as soon as practical.

## V

### Training:

Before being released for full duty, each police service dog team shall be trained and certified to meet OPCA Patrol Performance Standards.

### Continued Training:

Each police service dog team thereafter will be re-certified to OPCA standards on an annual basis.

Police service dog teams receive training on a twice-monthly basis as scheduled by the K-9 Unit Supervisor.

Police service dog handlers should engage in daily, on-duty, training to maintain the police service dog team's performance.

To insure that all training is consistent, no handler, trainer, or outside vendor is authorized to train to a standard that is contrary to the policies of the Springfield Police Department K-9 Unit.

All police service dog training shall be conducted while on-duty unless otherwise approved by the K-9 Unit Supervisor/Trainer.

### Training log:

Each dog handler shall maintain a current "dog log" book containing pertinent information regarding the dog's activities. The logbook shall record the dog's training and performance, public demonstrations and captures. Any changes in the dog's performance shall be noted in the training log. If additional training is necessary due to a change in the dog's performance, it shall be under the direction of the K-9 Unit Trainer.

## VI

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF POLICE SERVICE DOGS**

A police service dog may be used to locate and/or apprehend a suspect if the police service dog handler reasonably believes that the individual has either committed a crime or is about to commit a crime and if any of the following conditions exist:

1. There is a reasonable belief that the individual poses an immediate threat of violence or serious harm to the public, any officer, or the handler.

2. The individual is physically resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight and the use of the police service dog reasonably appears to be necessary to overcome such resistance or flight.
3. The individual(s) is/are believed to be concealed in an area where entry by other than the police service dog would pose a threat to the safety of officers or the 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 review the decision to use a police service dog in view of the totality of the circumstances.

Use of the police service dogs by handlers may, depending on the circumstances, be considered a use of force. When police service dogs are utilized in that manner, General Order 1.5.1 Use of Force shall apply.

The decision to apply the police service dog in any given situation shall be the sole responsibility of the dog handler. It shall also be the handler’s responsibility to know the capabilities of the dog and recognize any changes in the dog’s demeanor.

The use of a police service dog in muzzle should be considered in cases where deployment as a use of force tool does not fit the above criteria but the presence and/or senses of the dog could be utilized.

Police service dogs should always be on-leash when taken to an elevated area from which the fall would be hazardous.

The Springfield Police Department does not use police service dogs for crowd control except when necessary to prevent death or injury to innocent persons, or to prevent assaults on police officers.

Handlers shall complete a written report describing the dog’s performance, where substantive action toward the resolution of a case has occurred based on the dog’s deployment. Prior to going off duty, the canine handler shall complete all necessary reports associated with the use of a police service dog in a physical apprehension, unless authorized by the canine supervisor or on-duty watch commander.

In the event a dog handler becomes disabled or unconscious and is unable to give the dog necessary commands; the following persons should be asked to respond (in order or preference):

1. Another SPD dog handler.
2. An on-duty SPD employee familiar with the dog.
3. An EPD dog handler.
4. A member of the handler’s family.

### Preparations for utilizing a police service dog:

Prior to the use of a police service dog to search for and/or apprehend any individual, the police service dog handler shall carefully consider all pertinent information reasonably available at the time. The information shall include, but is not limited to the following:

1. The seriousness of the suspected offense.
2. The conduct of the individual being confronted.
3. Officer/subject factors (age, size, relative strength, known cautions, etc.).
4. The degree of resistance, if any, the subject has shown.
5. The potential for escape or flight if the police dog is not utilized.
6. The proximity of weapons.
7. Influence of drugs or alcohol.

### Warnings given to announce the use of a police service dog:

Unless it would otherwise increase the risk of injury to the Handler or Police Service Dog or escape of the suspect, a clearly audible warning announcing that a police service dog will be released (off-line), shall be made prior to deploying a police service dog.

### Request for use of police service dog teams:

Personnel within the department are encouraged to freely solicit the use of the police service dogs. When divisions outside of the patrol division request to use a police service dog team, the request shall be made to the K-9 Unit Supervisor or the on-duty Watch Commander.

### Call out procedures:

When circumstances dictate the need for a Police Service Dog Team and one is not on-duty, the Watch Commander or designated dispatcher should:

1. Call the Eugene Police Department for an on-duty K-9 team.
2. Call the Lane County Sheriff's Office for an on-duty K-9 team.
3. Call an off-duty Springfield K-9 team.
4. Call an off-duty Eugene Police K-9 team.
5. Call an off-duty Lane County Sheriff's K-9 team.

In rare cases more than one K-9 team may be needed. Considerations for the use of more than one K-9 team would include the terrain, weather conditions, size of area to be searched, number of suspects, severity of the circumstances and tactical issues.

### Request for public demonstrations:

All public requests for a police service dog team shall be approved by the K-9 Unit Supervisor prior to making any commitment.

Handlers shall not demonstrate any “apprehension” work to the public unless authorized to do so by the K-9 Unit Trainer and/or Supervisor.

Dog bites:

Whenever a police service dog bites, grabs, or seizes any person causing a laceration or puncture of the skin, other than during a controlled training exercise, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. Identify the person seized by the dog.
2. Ask permission to look at the affected area.
3. Transport the person to a hospital and have affected area examined by a doctor.
4. Take color photographs of the affected area.
5. Submit a written report to the K-9 Trainer, K-9 Supervisor and Patrol Division Commander.

If a person alleges an injury that is not visible, notification shall be made to a supervisor and the location of the alleged injury should be photographed. All dog bites shall be reported to the K-9 Trainer, K-9 Supervisor and Patrol Division Commander as soon as possible.

## VII

### ASSISTANCE TO OUTSIDE AGENCIES

A supervisor must approve all requests for police service dog assistance from outside agencies subject to the following provisions:

1. Police service dog teams shall not be used outside the City of Springfield to perform any assignment, which is not consistent with this policy.
2. Requests for assistance outside Lane County require the approval by the Patrol Division Commander or the Chief of Police.

Upon arrival at the scene, the handler has the ultimate decision as to whether or not the police service dog is to be used for a specific assignment.

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Richard L. Lewis  
Chief of Police