



# TYLER POLICE DEPARTMENT

## GENERAL ORDER: 05.500

	<b>CANINE POLICY</b>	
	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: 08-17-1994</b>	
	<b>REVISED DATE: 03-25-2024</b>	
<b>CALEA STANDARDS: 41.1.5</b>		

### 05.501 PURPOSE

- A. Establish procedures, regulations, authority, and responsibilities governing the use of police service canines, referred to as the Canine Team or Team throughout this policy. The purpose is also to define authority and responsibility for their use.

### 05.502 DEFINITIONS

- A. **Police Service Animal / Canine:** Any canis lupus familiaris that is recognized by the State of Texas as a Police Canine as defined by [Texas Penal Code § 38.151](#).
- B. **Handler:** A Law Enforcement Officer who has been specially trained in the care, handling, and utilization of a Police Service Animal / Canine as defined by Texas Penal Code § 38.151.

### 05.503 POLICY – [CALEA Standard: 41.1.5]

- A. Utilization of properly trained dogs represents a highly cost efficient police tool. This is accomplished by using the canine's acute olfactory and hearing senses for detection purposes.
- B. Areas of the responsibility include:
  - 1. Narcotic searches.
  - 2. Assisting outside law enforcement agencies with approved requests.
  - 3. Performing any other assisted function consistent with Department policies and procedures.

### 05.504 EMPLOYEE RESTRICTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Under no circumstances will department personnel tease, harass or annoy any police service animal / canine.

- B. Department members will follow the directions of the police service animal / canine handler when a canine team is directly involved in an incident or investigation.

05.505 CANINE UNIT SERGEANT AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY – [CALEA Standard: 41.1.5]

- A. The Canine Unit Sergeant shall report directly to the Community Response Unit Lieutenant.
- B. The Canine Unit Sergeant shall oversee the canine unit's function and be responsible for the following:
  - 1. General supervision of the canine unit's activities.
  - 2. Coordination of training for each Police Service Animal / Canine and their handler.
  - 3. Confirm that all deployment activity, training records, and related documentation are accurate and up-to-date.
    - a. Copies of the handler training records shall be forward to the Training Unit for inclusion in the employee's training folder.
    - b. Copies of the police service animal / canine deployment and training records shall be maintained by the unit.
      - 1) Each canine handler may keep copies of their designated police service animal's / canine's deployment and training records.
  - 4. Ensure that all Canine Handler and training equipment is in proper working condition, including the replacement of any narcotics used for training.
  - 5. Make recommendations during the department budget process for the planning and purchasing of any necessary or replacement equipment.
  - 6. Review and approve / deny requests for community / public relations demonstrations by Canine Teams.
    - a. All exhibition requests made by department personnel should be made as soon as possible to allow time for the Canine Team to prepare and schedule appropriate activities.
- C. When a Canine Team is assigned to a special detail or function and the Canine Unit Sergeant is not involved, the supervisor responsible for the special detail / function will exercise functional supervision over the Canine Team.

05.506 CANINE HANDLER QUALIFICATIONS, SELECTION, AND RESPONSIBILITES

[CALEA Standard: 41.1.5]

- A. Minimum qualifications to be met for a sworn employee to be considered for any open / vacant Canine Handler position:
  - 1. Has served a minimum of one (1) year with department following the closing date of their probationary period;

2. Be willing to be on-call;
  3. Be capable of working any shift or hours outside their assigned shift or hours for the purpose of working special details / events;
  4. Must be capable of responding to the Downtown or Faulkner Park stations from their residence within 45 minutes;
  5. Must reside in a single family dwelling with the area of containment for the canine surrounded by a minimum of a four (4) foot high fence. In addition, there must be sufficient yard space to construct a kennel of appropriate size to house and secure the Police Service Animal / Canine; and
  6. Be willing to submit to voluntary random drug testing as required by the department.
- B. The selection of a canine handler will be based on the qualifications listed directly above. Any sworn employee who meets the qualifications may submit a letter of interest (e.g. email, memorandum) through their chain of command to the Department's Interview Board once a vacancy for the position has been announced.
1. Upon receipt of the employee's letter of interest and their chain of command's recommendation the employee shall be schedule for an interview.
  2. Following the interview process the Board shall make their recommendation to the Chief of Police for review and approval.
- C. The Canine Handler shall be responsible for ensuring that their designated Police Service Animal / Canine receives proper year round veterinary care from a department designated veterinarian.
1. In the event a department designated veterinarian is unavailable, the Tyler Animal Veterinary Clinic located at 1401 Loop 323 WSW will be utilized.
  2. The normally used department designated veterinarian shall be notified of the emergency visit by the Canine Handler and/or the Canine Unit Sergeant.

**05.507 CANINE SELECTION AND TRAINING – [CALEA Standard: 41.1.5]**

- A. The selection of each Police Service Canine shall be based on an assessment of the canine conducted by the designated handler. The assessment shall consist of, but not limited to:
1. An initial review of the canine's health records (i.e. X-rays, blood scans, etc.), vaccinations, and a certification of health from a certified veterinarian as provided by the selected vender.
  2. A secondary review of the canine's health as performed by a Department designated veterinarian.
  3. A period of interaction between the handler and canine to determine compatibility between the handler and the canine.
  4. Any pre-service training completed by the prospective canine will be reviewed. Although there is no specific minimum training requirement, any training received prior to selection from a reputable and professional police canine facility will be

included in the overall assessment by the designated handler when presented to the Chief of Police for consideration.

- B. Once an assessment has been conducted the handler shall submit their recommendation through their chain of command to the Chief of Police for their review and approval.
  - 1. The Chief of Police or any member of the employee's chain of command may request that additional examinations be conducted or documentation be submitted prior to the canine being selected / approved.

#### 05.508 USE AND RESTRICTIONS OF POLICE SERVICE ANIMALS / CANINES

##### **[CALEA Standard: 41.1.5]**

- A. Searches
  - 1. Searches of structures (e.g. commercial buildings, residences) for suspects will not be conducted by any Canine Team.
  - 2. All searches or tracks shall be conducted "*On Lead.*"
  - 3. Police Service Animals / Canines will be used at the discretion of the canine handler and/or the Canine Unit Sergeant.
    - a. If a Canine Team is requested to conduct a track or search and the Canine Handler disagrees with the request of the employee / supervisor due to safety concerns or lack of necessity the Canine Unit Sergeant may be notified.
    - b. The final decision to utilize the Canine Team will be at the discretion of the Canine Unit Sergeant. In such cases the requesting employee / supervisor will acquiesce to the Canine Unit Sergeant's decision.
- B. Tracking of Criminal Suspects and Missing Persons
  - 1. When a suspect flees a scene, employees should not pursue unless a reasonable chance of apprehension exists.
  - 2. Scent tracking can be a useful application for the pursuit of fleeing suspects or missing persons.
    - a. Prior to conducting a scent track the Canine Handler should consider the physical presence of other persons, vehicles, and/or weather conditions that may have lessened the scent.
  - 3. Tracking requests for fleeing suspects or missing persons shall comply with subsection 05.506(A)(3)(a-b) noted directly above.
- C. Narcotic Detection
  - 1. Police Service Animals / Canines utilized by the Department shall be certified in the detection of narcotics. The capabilities of Police Service Animals / Canines to detect narcotics will include the following:
    - a. Marijuana;
    - b. Heroin;

- c. Hashish;
  - d. Cocaine;
  - e. Methamphetamine; and
  - f. Crack Cocaine
2. Canine Team search techniques shall be used in a manner consistent with federal and state search and seizure laws.
- a. The area or vehicle to be searched must be made secure and all unnecessary persons removed. The employee requesting a search shall be responsible for informing the Canine Handler of any potentially hazardous substance(s) or dangerous conditions prior to the search.
  - b. Police Service Animals / Canines will not conduct narcotic searches of a person's body.

05.509 TRAINING OF THE POLICE SERVICE ANIMALS / CANINES

**[CALEA Standard: 41.1.5]**

- A. Department Police Service Animals / Canines are required to obtain a minimum of sixteen (16) hours of training a month in order to maintain the Department's endorsed certification.
- 1. All newly established Canine Teams shall be required to attend a minimum of a 40 hour training course prior to deployment.
  - 2. Each Canine Team shall attend an annual training course to ensure the team's endorsement of certification through a certifying body.
- B. Any additional training will be assigned and coordinated through the Canine Unit Sergeant. This may include any identified remedial training for both the Canine Handler and the Police Service Animal / Canine.

05.510 GENERAL OPERATION PROCEDURES

- A. Canine Teams shall be deployed at strategic times in various locations to provide optimal response throughout the City of Tyler.
- 1. Requests from outside agencies to utilize on-duty department Canine Teams shall be forwarded to the Canine Unit Sergeant for approval.
    - a. In the absence of the Canine Unit Sergeant the request shall be forward to an on-duty supervisor for approval if the Canine Team is on-duty.
    - b. If the Canine Team is off-duty and the Canine Unit Sergeant is unavailable the request shall be forwarded to the Community Response Unit Lieutenant for authorization.
  - 2. Requests from outside agencies to utilize department Canine Teams for a special function / detail shall be forwarded to the Investigations Asst. Chief / Division Commander for review.

3. The Canine Handler will ensure that their conduct and use of the department Police Service Animal / Canine complies with all department policies and procedures.

#### 05.511 CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE TRAINING AIDS

- A. Requests by the Canine Unit for controlled substances training aids must conform to procedures set forth in [General Order 17.200 – Organized Crime and Vice Control](#) and [General Order 20.100 – Property and Evidence](#). All requests for controlled substance training aids must be in writing and submitted through the unit's chain of command via the Vice and Narcotics Unit Sergeant for approval.
  1. Once authorized by the Chief of Police the request is to be forward to a magistrate for approval to convert the narcotics to agency use purpose.
  2. Following a magistrate's endorsement that the narcotics be convert to agency use the narcotics will be moved from central property to the secure Canine Unit Training Locker.
    - a. Documentation of the authorized use of narcotics as training aids for the Canine Unit shall be maintained in the Canine Unit Training Locker.
  3. Narcotics no longer viable as training aids shall be destroyed in compliance with [General Order 20.100 – Property and Evidence](#) and the department's [Property Unit Manual](#).
    - a. Narcotics training aids being replaced shall be returned to central property in order to be properly destroyed.
    - b. The Property Unit Supervisor shall submit a request for destruction to any magistrate. Upon receipt of the court's Order of Destruction the narcotics will be schedule for destruction at the next available opportunity.
- B. The Canine Unit Training Locker shall be controlled by a two key system and the weight of the narcotics material shall be meticulously logged and maintained by the Canine Unit Sergeant per department policy and procedures.
  1. All controlled substance training aids checked-out from the training locker shall be done by the Canine Unit Sergeant or their designee and in the presence of the Canine Handler.
- C. Any controlled substance training aids used by the Canine Team that are destroyed as a part of training or no longer have a valid use shall be disposed of in the manner outlined in subsection 05.110(A)(3)(a-b) directly above.
- D. When a member of the Canine Unit transfers or resigns from the Unit or when a new member becomes part of the Unit, an audit of all the controlled substance training aids will be conducted. To avoid any allegation of impropriety and when possible, each member of the Canine Unit, including the outgoing and incoming members, will participate in the audit.
  1. The Canine Unit Sergeant shall submit a memorandum through the chain of command to the Chief of Police that provides an account of all controlled substance training aids, including their type and weight.

2. A listing of all personnel involved in the audit shall be included, along with an explanation of any discrepancy noted during the audit.
3. Additional audit reports may be required if any outgoing and/or incoming members are not present during the audit.

**05.512 POLICE SERVICE ANIMAL / CANINE VEHICLE – [CALEA Standard: 41.1.5]**

- A. The assigned Canine Handler's vehicle shall be a marked department vehicle modified to suit the utilization and transportation of the Police Service Animal / Canine. The vehicle shall only be used for police related activities.
  1. These vehicles will be the **only** vehicles authorized to transport a Police Service Animal / Canine except under unusual circumstances or during an extreme emergency.
- B. The training and qualification for the operation of the assigned Canine Handler's vehicle shall be the same as for all City of Tyler noncommercial vehicles.
  1. All applicable city and department policies regulating the use of city-owned vehicles shall be the same that governs the use of the Police Service Animal / Canine vehicles.
- C. The care and maintenance of the assigned Canine Handler's vehicle shall be the responsibility of the assigned employee. The Canine Handler shall be responsible for the vehicle's maintenance and any repairs that may be needed. The vehicle's interior and exterior shall also to be kept clean to ensure a professional appearance all times.
- D. Police Service Animal / Canine Vehicle Equipment
  1. Exterior Vehicle Equipment
    - a. Equipment installed on the exterior of the vehicle (e.g. lights, stripping) shall be consistent with all other marked department vehicles in accordance with [General Order 05.102 – General Patrol Duties](#).
      - 1) The only exception will be the placement of specific markings on the vehicle that clearly indicate that it is a Police Service Animal / Canine vehicle.
  2. Interior Vehicle Equipment
    - a. Equipment installed on the interior portion of the vehicle (e.g. police radio, siren system, in-car computer) only accessible to employees shall be consistent with all other marked department vehicles in accordance with [General Order 05.102 – General Patrol Duties](#).
    - b. Equipment installed to house the Police Service Animal / Canine shall be done in a manner that permits the safe and secure transport of the animal.
      - 1) A safety barrier will be installed to separate that portion of the vehicle accessible only to employees and that area designed to hold the Police Service Animal / Canine.

- 2) To facility the transportation of prisoners the area housing the Police Service Animal / Canine may be divided, separating the animal and prisoner.
  - i. If the rear area of the vehicle is configured in this manner than no more than one (1) prisoner shall be transported at a time.
- 3) A heat alarm will also be installed as a standard part of a Police Service Animal / Canine vehicle.

05.513 CANINE HANDLER UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT – [CALEA Standard: 41.1.5]


- A. Each Canine Handler will be provided with the equipment necessary to function in their assigned position, including, but not limited to:
  1. Six (6) foot Lead;
  2. Thirty (30) foot Lead;
  3. Harness system for leads;
  4. Bullet resistant harness system for high risk tracks / searches; and
  5. Collars and leashes;
- B. Additional equipment added and/or requested by the Canine Handler shall be approved by the Canine Unit Sergeant prior to its use.
- C. All food and food supplies (i.e. bowls, water containers) will be provided to the Canine Handler to ensure proper care is provided to the Police Service Animal / Canine.

05.514 DISPOSITION OF CANINES NO LONGER SUITABLE FOR DUTY

- A. Should a Canine Handler resign, retire, or be reassigned the outlook of the Police Service Animal / Canine will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police. The disposition of the Police Service Animal / Canine may include:
  1. Reassignment to another Canine Handler;
  2. Bestowed into the care of the departing employee;
  3. Donated to another department; or
  4. If necessary, euthanized.
- B. Any Police Service Animal / Canine unable to perform their duties due to terminal illness, permanent injury, age or failure to successfully complete department recommended re-certification training may, at the discretion of the Chief of Police, be:
  1. Retired to the care of the Canine Handler; or
  2. Euthanized



Approved: 03-25-2024



Jimmy Toler  
Chief of Police