



ANDERSON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GO - 211

GENERAL ORDERS

CANINE SERVICES

PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines for the use of agency canines. A well-trained canine can provide a tremendous service to law enforcement officers in the search for suspects or lost persons.

DECISION TO USE POLICE CANINE:

The decision to use an agency canine is an act of discretion based on reasonably available information at the time the decision is made.

PROCEDURE:

Prior to use of a police service dog to search for or apprehend any individual, the canine handler or scene supervisor is to carefully consider all reasonably available, pertinent information. This information includes, but is not limited to:

- Individual's exact or approximate age
- Nature of the offense
- Potential danger to police officers attempting to intervene or assist with apprehension
- Potential danger to the public resulting from the release of a canine

A verbal warning followed by a reasonable period of time is to precede release of any canine unless it would otherwise increase risk of injury or escape.

A police dog will not be used for breeding with other canines without approval from the Deputy Chief or the Sheriff. **Physical abuse of a police canine is prohibited.**

AUTHORIZED USE:

Canines are authorized for the following use:

- Crowd control
- Participating in community education demonstrations of a canine's abilities
- Searching for narcotics in vehicles, buildings, areas, parcels or other items; the dog's alert is probable cause for obtaining search warrants
- Assisting in narcotic search warrant service
- Tracking suspects or missing persons
- Locating lost or abandoned articles or hidden implements of a crime
- Searching buildings or areas (believed clear of innocent persons) for hidden suspects

Additionally, canines are authorized to search for, to prevent the escape of, or to detain a person who the canine handler has reasonable suspicion to believe has committed or is about to commit a serious offense, and one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. Reasonable belief that the person poses an immediate threat of violence or serious harm to the public, any officer, or him/herself;
2. The individual is physically resisting arrest by means of a use of force and use of a canine appears necessary to prevent injury to the arresting officer;
3. The individual is believed concealed in an area where entry by anyone other than a canine would pose a significant threat to the officer; this type of release should be used only after verbal commands to surrender have failed; and/or
4. In situations where conditions or variables not specifically identified in this policy exist. It is the responsibility of the canine handler to ensure that the circumstances support a reasonable decision to use a dog.

***NOTE:** Without one or more of the above conditions, mere flight from pursuing officers is insufficient cause for canine apprehension. However, a canine apprehension would be reasonable for flight of an offender wanted for offenses involving violent crimes, as identified in S.C. Code 16-1-60, and who has refused to stop after verbal commands. This level of force is used as a last resort to the use of Deadly Force as stated in General Order 205.*

CANINE TRACKING:

Tracking Operational Objectives:

1. The basic operational concept is containment and apprehension
2. The containment process is highly dependent upon the primary response by first responding deputies and supervisors assigned to the operation
3. Apprehension of a subject is a total team effort by the perimeter deputies and the Canine Handler

Operational Terms – Generally, there are three (3) distinct areas established during a situation:

1. **Crime Scene** - Location where the crime was committed
2. **Location Last Seen** - Where the suspect or lost person was last seen
3. **Perimeter** - A containment area surrounding the location where the suspect was last seen; the perimeter should be large enough to ensure containment of the suspect(s)

Canine Activation – If a situation exists where canines may be of use in tracking a suspect or lost person, the Communications Unit will contact the on-call Canine Handler. Communications maintains an on-call listing of all handlers. The Canine Handler, in conjunction with the supervisor on the scene, will determine if situation circumstances and weather are suitable for tracking operations.

Scene/Search Considerations:

1. If a hard rain occurred during or after the event, consult with the on-call Canine Handler to determine viability for use of the dog.
2. Never enter the area where the subject has been. The scene/trail should be contaminated as little as possible.

3. If the subject has recently been in a vehicle, do not enter it or touch any clothing left inside the vehicle or dropped outside on the ground. The canine can get a suspect's scent from a vehicle or from dropped clothing.
4. If an outside agency requests tracking services, the duty commander will approve or deny the request.
5. In a fugitive search operation, a perimeter will be set up to contain the suspect in the event a canine is requested. The handler on the scene will coordinate the perimeter with the supervisor on the scene to adjust the perimeter as needed during the search.

Search Operations – During the search for a criminal suspect, the handler and any accompanying deputy will wear body armor. The handler will coordinate the search with the scene supervisor. However, the handler will maintain authority over the control and use of the dog.

Canine Response Documentation – All canine responses are documented on supplemental report forms for in-county responses. Out of county and all other agency responses are documented on Code Five incident report forms. All reports are to be completed and turned into the unit supervisor within 24 hours.

Training – Training for Canines is conducted on a regular basis. Training is designed to maintain a handler and dog's ability to work in a state of maximum operational effectiveness. Training is provided to new handlers who work under the supervision of experienced members. The Division Commander is responsible for ensuring that canines and their handlers are properly trained and certified. Canine training records are maintained until the dog is retired.

Narcotics dog restrictions:

1. The narcotics dog **will not** be used for searches of persons.
2. Prisoners **will not** be transported in the same vehicle with the dog unless the vehicle is equipped with a separated prisoner transport seat.

**CANINE HANDLER
SELECTION:**

Canine Handlers perform their normal primary duties until they are activated. Deputies assigned as canine handlers do so voluntarily. They are selected using the following criteria:

- Two years experience in law enforcement;
- Good physical condition;
- Strong verbal and written communication skills;
- A commitment to the canine unit for at least the working life of the dog; and
- Live-on property suitable for placement of a kennel and dog housing.

Selection will be made by the affected Division Commander and the Sheriff or Deputy Chief.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF
CANINE HANDLER:**

The canine handler is responsible for:

- Maintaining kennel facilities at his/her residence
- Keeping the assigned canine in good physical health with regular veterinarian visits, exercise, and grooming to include up-to-date annual vaccinations and heartworm preventative
- Maintaining necessary equipment for the dog while on duty, to include a collar, leash, and food/water bowls
- Participating in regular in-service training of the canine and completing detailed training records
- Being available for call-outs, as needed
- Maintaining accurate training records on approved forms
- Kenneling the canine at an approved facility when circumstances such as leave or incapacitating injury exist preventing the handler from caring for the dog

NOTE: *A member that cannot perform duties of a handler without aggravating a past injury or illness is to be dropped from the position of dog handler and the canine re-assigned depending on the dog's age and health.*

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF
ANDERSON COUNTY:**

The County is responsible for providing:

- The canine and proper equipment
- Veterinary care
- Dog food and necessary supplies
- A covered kennel and proper flooring to house the canine at the handler's residence
- A dog house
- Time for the handler and his dog to train and attend schools for certifications

NOTE: *Anderson County Sheriff's Office complies with the US Supreme Court Decision regarding Garcia vs. San Antonio (1985) and, as such, provides compensation for Canine handlers working overtime.*

CANINE EQUIPMENT:

The following equipment is required for each canine:

- Tracking leash
- Collars (choke & pinch)
- First Aid Kit
- Traffic leash & harness
- Water bowl
- Grooming kit (undercoat rake & slicker brush)

**CANINE INFLICTED
INJURIES:**

The following applies to incidents involving an agency canine biting or otherwise inflicting injury on anyone:

1. Notify the supervisor in charge at the time of the incident
2. Obtain medical attention for the injured person
3. Request ID to respond and photograph any injury
4. Complete an incident report detailing all pertinent information

**AGENCY REQUESTS FOR
CANINE SERVICES:**

Canine services are available to other agencies within the county, and in some instances, to areas immediately adjacent to the county. Therefore, requests for such services are to be handled in a spirit of cooperation. The Sheriff or Deputy Chief must approve out-of-county requests for canine services.

Approved by:
John S. Skipper, Jr., Sheriff