



Ventura County Sheriff's Office
Patrol Services Division
Canine Unit
Standard Operating Procedure

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VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CANINE UNIT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

MISSION

The purpose of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit is to provide highly trained police service dog handler/dog teams to support the Sheriff's Office Mission of safeguarding the lives and property of residents of Ventura County.

STRATEGY

Our strategy for accomplishing this mission is to provide timely canine resources utilizing the superior senses and capabilities of our highly trained canines to assist our department and other law enforcement agencies within Ventura County in an atmosphere of cooperation. We are committed to providing the highest professional services possible to search for illegal substances, track adults and lost children, preserve the peace, prevent crime, apprehend offenders, and enforce laws in a fair and impartial manner.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Patrol Services Division

Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing Policies, Operation Procedures, and Standards for the Ventura County Sheriff's Canine Unit.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To clarify and ensure who is responsible for creating policies, operating procedures, and standards for the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

I. POLICY AND OPERATIONS

A. Policies

Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit Policies, Procedures, and Standards shall be developed, implemented, and approved by department personnel and staff. This is not designed to limit department personnel from seeking information or professional or expert help and opinions concerning development of policies, procedures, and standards. The final decisions on policies, procedures, and standards shall rest with department staff and personnel.

B. Operations

The canine teams will be assigned to the Patrol Services Division and deployed in clearly marked patrol vehicles. The canine teams are deployed as assigned or unassigned patrol units, with the ability to augment traditional policing services in the community.

The following guidelines are provided for evaluating when a canine team may assist, with a particular call for service.

1. The canine team can be assigned to calls involving any crime "in progress" or crime that has just occurred. They will handle specific report calls when the area unit is not available, and it would not be practical to wait for the area unit to go back into service or when the canine team is assigned to a regular beat area to patrol.
2. The canine unit should not be given cold paper calls that would take them out of service for extended periods of time unless they are fulfilling the role of a minimum deployment beat car.

3. Sheriff canine teams, in addition to the responsibilities of an assigned beat or area will primarily be utilized for:
 - a) Backup and assisting other patrol officers
 - b) In progress crimes
 - c) Robbery and burglary alarm calls
 - d) Suspect searches
 - e) Apprehension of fleeing suspects
 - f) Narcotics searches
 - g) Patrolling of high crime problem areas
 - h) Searching for and locating evidence
 - i) Lost person searches
 - j) Tracking persons
4. The canine handler will advise the dispatcher whenever they respond to any calls to which they are not assigned.
5. The canine handler should not be used as field training officers when possible

C. Transportation of Arrested Persons in Canine Units

1. Transporting arrested persons in the canine unit is generally discouraged. however, the canine unit may be used when other transportation is not reasonably available and the person is not violent. If the canine unit is utilized the person is to be handcuffed behind his/her back and seat belted into the front passenger seat. The canine is to be restrained to the canine portion of the unit.

D. Ride-Along in a Canine Unit

1. Each canine has a different personality; therefore, it will be left up to the discretion of the Canine Unit Supervisor or the Canine Program Manager and each canine handler as to the taking of a ride-along during a routine shift.

E. Canine Control in the Station and/or Jail Facility

1. While at the station, the handler has the option of leaving the canine in the locked canine unit, securing the canine in the station kennel, or having the canine accompany him/her. However, if the canine remains with the handler, the handler will always remain in control of the canine and will not allow the canine to disrupt station operations.

2. The canine will not be permitted inside any of the jail facilities unless requested by the Jail Facility Watch Commander.

K. Breeding of Department Canines

1. The Sheriff's canines will not be bred while under the ownership of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Patrol Services Division
Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing Deployment Procedures for the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To clarify and outline the deployment of personnel and canines within the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

II. DEPLOYMENT

A. Scheduling

1. Each canine team will be assigned to and deployed from local area stations throughout the Patrol Services Division. The respective area station supervisors will supervise a canine team's day-to-day operations.
2. The Canine Unit will assign the canine teams schedule or shift, unless the canine team is being used as minimum deployment, then the station scheduler will assign the canine team a particular shift in coordination with the Canine Supervisor to accommodate 24/7 canine coverage. Every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of the stations as well as making sure there is 24/7 canine coverage.

B. Shift Hours

1. Canine teams shall be assigned as cover units and not assigned in minimum deployment beat areas, unless department needs require different.
2. Canine teams will be assigned to a 12-hour patrol style shift unless the overall needs of the Department or Canine Unit require a change.
 - a) During 12-hour shifts the canine teams will generally be assigned to shift IV (1000-2230) or shift V (1500-0330), but shifts may vary depending on specific needs of the station and Canine Unit.
3. Training days are a part of the handler's normal workweek.

4. The handler may be scheduled to cover weekends and holidays in order to give maximum coverage at the times of highest activity.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Patrol Services Division

Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing the Chain of Command procedures for the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To clarify and outline the Chain of Command within the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

III. CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit is directed by the designated Captain, whose title will be "Canine Program Manager." The Canine Program Manager is selected by the Patrol Division Assistant Sheriff in collaboration with the Patrol Division Commanders. In the matters regarding the training, utilization, or reporting of the unit, the Canine Program Manager shall report to a designated Patrol Services Division Commander. The Canine Program Manager may designate a sergeant to act as the "Canine Unit Supervisor." Operationally, the canine team is under the direct control of the on-duty Watch Commander or other on-duty supervisor.

A. Selection and Requirements of Canine Unit Supervisor

1. The Canine Unit Supervisor will be of the rank of sergeant and will be selected by the Canine Program Manager.
2. The Canine Unit Supervisor should have a good working knowledge of canine behavior and how it pertains to deployment in a law enforcement capacity.

B. Duties of Canine Unit Supervisor

1. The Canine Unit Supervisor will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the unit and supervision of the canine team when dealing with canine issues.
2. The Canine Unit Supervisor will be responsible for attending and participating in weekly canine training. This includes the monitoring of all training for each of the Sheriff's canine teams, offering assistance and support when and where necessary.

3. The Canine Unit Supervisor will be responsible for completing Administrative Reports, when necessary, which covers the weekly activities, training and any other issues, which need documentation.
4. The Canine Unit Supervisor will be responsible for ensuring the accurate completion of all reports submitted by canine handlers, which deal with canine issues. Examples of reports would include Training and Deployment Reports, reports dealing with all canine incidents.
5. The Canine Unit Supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that all files relating to canine issues are up to date and maintained.
6. The Canine Unit Supervisor will be responsible for routine inspections of the canine equipment. This will include the equipment issued to the handlers, the equipment in storage, and any other equipment designated for canine use. This will also include regular inspections of kennel facilities built and maintained at each of the handler's home.
7. The Canine Unit Supervisor will be responsible for developing, maintaining, and providing a current list of canine demonstrations to the Canine Program Manager along with the designated station Captains/Managers. This list should be updated and provided to indicate personnel on the weekly basis or as the list is updated.
8. The Canine Unit Supervisor or his/her designee will be responsible for scheduling the canine teams and updating the canine schedule on the department intranet site.
9. The Canine Unit Supervisor will be responsible for ensuring the security of all training aids.
10. The Canine Unit Supervisor will also assist the Canine Program Manager in other areas of the canine program, as designated by the Canine Program Manager, (i.e., canine selection, handler selection, etc.).



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Patrol Services Division

Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing minimum training standards for the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit handlers, purpose of training venues and establish procedures for deputies or helpers injured during training.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To outline and ensure the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit meets established training standards, purpose of training venues and procedures for deputies or helpers injured during training.

IV. A. Training

1. Upon selection to the Canine Unit, the new handler will attend a six-week Basic Handler Course, which includes patrol and detection.
2. Upon successful completion of the Basic Handler Course, the new K9 Team will be assigned to a station within the Patrol Services Division and the handler will participate in a short K9 Field Training Program. The handler will be provided training on the proper deployment of a police canine.
3. While participating in the K9 Field Training Program, handlers will be instructed but not limited to:
 - a) Department K9 policies and guidelines
 - b) K9 case law
 - c) Apprehension and detection documentation
 - d) Equipment
 - e) Canine health and first aid
4. All K9 Teams are required to attend scheduled K9 training, unless the handler's absence has been approved by the Canine Unit Supervisor.

B. Training Venues

Canine teams are encouraged to locate and utilize a multitude of training venues. This enables a variety of experiences for both the handlers and canines.

C. Injury to Deputies/Helpers During Training Exercises

1. During canine training every effort should be made to safely conduct training. During canine training, injuries may occur. If such an injury does occur, the involved handler will provide immediate first aid and medical attention for the effected person'(s).
2. The involved handler will notify the Canine Unit Supervisor who will in turn notify the Canine Program Manager.
3. If the injured person is an employee for the County of Ventura, appropriate forms for the on-duty injury will be completed and submitted through proper channels.
4. If the injured person is not an employee for the County of Ventura, the Canine Unit Supervisor shall make sure that the effected person(s) agency supervisor is notified. It will be the responsibility of the effected person(s) agency to complete the necessary forms for on-duty injuries.
5. Depending on the situation, the Canine Unit Supervisor and/or the Canine Program Manager will determine if further documentation will be necessary.
6. As per current policy, the Commander in charge of the Canine Unit and the effected deputy's Division Commander will be notified of the injury. The Commander will in turn make appropriate notifications through the Chain of Command.

D. Explosive Detection Canine Training

Various agencies are currently deploying explosive detection canines in the field. Our canine handlers may have occasion to work and or train with these canine teams. Without the proper training and direction handling explosive training aids can be extremely dangerous.

1. Explosive training aids shall be handled by those deputies who have received approved departmental training in the proper handling of explosive compounds.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Patrol Services Division

Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing Canine Handler responsibilities for the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To outline and ensure the Canine Handlers with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office understand their responsibilities as handlers.

V. Canine Handler Responsibilities

1. Except as required during appropriate deployment, the Canine Handler shall not expose the canine to any foreseeable and unreasonable risk of harm.
2. The Canine Handler shall maintain all department equipment under his/her control in a clean and serviceable condition.
3. Any changes in the living status of the Canine Handler that may affect the lodging or environment of the canine shall be reported to the Canine Unit Supervisor as soon as possible.
4. The Canine Handler will permit the Canine Unit Supervisor or their designee to conduct planned or spontaneous on-site inspections of affected areas of their home, property and assigned canine patrol vehicle to verify that conditions and equipment are well maintained and in good condition.
5. The canine should be permitted to socialize at home with the handler's family for short periods of time and under direct supervision of the Canine Handler.
6. The Canine Handler shall ensure the assigned canine patrol vehicle remains inhabitable for the canine.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Patrol Services Division

Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing the guidelines for Canine Handlers physical fitness and wellness testing with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines and standards for Canine Handlers physical fitness and wellness while in the position of Canine Handler with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.

VI. Canine Handler Physical Fitness/Wellness

Current Canine Handlers with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office must complete the following physical fitness/wellness testing on a yearly basis:

The physical fitness/wellness qualification will consist of the following:

- a) 6' Wall Climb
- b) Chain Link Fence Climb
- c) Sandbag Lift - Lift 75 lbs sandbag over 6' wall wearing tactical vest, ballistic helmet and gas mask
- d) Balance Beam - Carry 75 lbs sandbag wearing a tactical vest, ballistic helmet and gas mask
- e) Weighted Sandbag Carry – Carry 75 lbs sandbag 100 yards wearing a tactical vest, helmet and gas mask
- f) 20 yard "Dummy Drag" wearing tactical vest, ballistic helmet and gas mask
- g) Fire Academy Tower stairs wearing a tactical vest, ballistic helmet and gas mask within 4 minutes
- h) 1 Mile Run within 15 Minutes

If a Canine Handler fails to successfully complete any of the part or all the physical fitness/wellness testing, he/she will be given the opportunity to re-test that portion or all the testing process they did not successfully complete within thirty (30) days. If he/she does not successfully complete that portion or all the re-testing process, they will not be allowed to respond to any SWAT related callouts or deployments. The Canine Handler will remain active for patrol and detection work.

If the Canine Handler fails to successfully complete the portion or all the physical fitness/wellness testing a second time, they will have an additional thirty (30) days to successfully complete that portion or all the testing. However, they will continue to be on suspension from responding to SWAT callouts or deployments. They will remain active for patrol and detection work.

If the Canine Handler fails to successfully complete the portion or all the physical fitness/wellness testing for a third time, they will be removed from the Canine Program. If the police dog still has several years left of service, the police dog will remain in the Canine Program and given to a new Canine Handler after a selection process has been completed.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Patrol Services Division

Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing Procedures for the Care and Kenneling of Department Canines Owned by the Ventura County Sheriff's Canine Unit.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To outline and clarify the procedures on the care and kenneling of canines that are owned and operated by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

VII. CARE AND KENNELING

A. Care of the Dog

1. The Canine Handler shall ultimately be responsible for the health and welfare of the canine and shall ensure the canine receives proper:
 - a) Nutrition
 - b) Grooming
 - c) Training
 - d) Medical Care
 - e) Affection
 - f) Living Conditions
2. It shall be the responsibility of the Canine Handler to keep their dog in such physical condition that the canine can perform the duties expected.
3. Any indication that the canine is ill or not in good condition shall be immediately reported to the Canine Unit Supervisor.
4. Feeding and general care instructions for department canines will vary between teams. Canine Handlers will consult with the vendor, trainer and their Veterinarian for the exact needs of their assigned canine.
5. Canines with the Sheriff's Office shall have current rabies vaccination and inoculations records on file.
6. The handler will routinely groom their assigned canine.
7. If the canine is injured basic canine first aid steps will be administered in accordance with current training and personal abilities. The Canine Handler

will then seek expert medical advice and treatment from an approved veterinarian.

8. If emergency veterinary service is required for the dog, the treatment shall be rendered, and the handler will notify the Canine Program Manager or Canine Unit Supervisor as soon as possible. The handler will also submit a memorandum regarding the incident to the Canine Program Manager, as soon as practical following the emergency.
9. All veterinary attention not of an emergency nature will be coordinated with the Canine Unit Supervisor and/or the Canine Program Manager, program veterinarian and the handler.
10. All procedures recommended or prescribed by a veterinarian will be followed.
11. Canine Handlers shall not attempt to diagnose illnesses, treat injuries and/or apply home remedies outside their training ability.
12. The canine handler may submit overtime for care and maintenance of their assigned canine, as established by the V.C.D.S.A. Memorandum of Agreement (3.5 Hours Weekly). The week's overtime for maintenance and care shall be submitted on one overtime slip.

B. General Handling

1. The Canine Handler will not involve themselves in any outside law enforcement activities or official conduct with their canine unless previously authorized by the Canine Program Manager or Canine Unit Supervisor.
2. Under no circumstances will the canine be allowed or encouraged to jump up or onto the exterior of the canine patrol unit.
3. When the canine patrol unit is to be left unattended, it will be locked with the front windows up. The rear windows with screens secured may be left down at the handler's discretion.
4. Under no circumstances will any member of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office tease, harass, or otherwise annoy the canine. Members of this department will refrain from any activity around the canine or the canine handler that might agitate or excite the canine, except for supervised training.

C. Kenneling

1. Care and handling of the Sheriff's canine are to meet the standard established by the canine manual. The handler and family must realize that the canine placed in their care is a 24-hour responsibility, seven (7) days a week. The canine must be an important part of the family's life and the family must understand that this canine is not a pet. It is a working police canine and must be treated as such.

2. When off-duty, the canine shall be maintained in the kennel, provided by the department, at the home of the handler. When the canine is kenneled at the handler's home, the gate shall be secured with a lock. Also, when off-duty, the canine may be let out of its kennel while under the direct control of its handler. The kennel shall be always maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.
3. When the handler is absent from his/her home for a reasonable period of time, the canine may be secured (locked) in its kennel and left unattended. The Canine Unit Supervisor and handler will determine what a reasonable period of time is based on the canine and the environment and shall not exceed twenty-four (24) hours.
4. If the handler is absent from his/her home and the canine will be left unchecked for more that twenty-four (24) hours, the handler shall seek permission of the Canine Unit Supervisor to kennel the canine at an approved public/private kennel facility. If a person, other than the handler, is responsible for providing periodic checks on the canine during the twenty-four (24) hour period, the person must be approved by the handler and Canine Unit Supervisor and qualified to do so.
5. Requirement for approved public/private kennel facility:
 - a) The Canine Unit Supervisor and Canine Program Manager shall approve the kennel.
 - b) The kennel facility should be a licensed establishment.
 - c) The size of the individual kennel used to house the canine shall be adequate for the size of the canine.
 - d) There should be both interior and exterior areas available to the canine.
 - e) The kennel shall be clean and well maintained.
 - f) Every effort should be made to allow for departmental canine to be kept separate from other animals at the kennel facility.
 - g) The kennel facility shall provide for the necessary care, feeding, and medical concerns of the canine twenty-four (24) hours a day, including weekends.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Patrol Services Division
Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing Equipment Procurement and Procedures for the Ventura County Sheriff's Canine Unit.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To outline and establish the procedures on procuring the necessary equipment for the canines and handlers of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

VIII. EQUIPMENT

- B. The Canine Unit Supervisor will make periodic inspections of the canine units, equipment, and personnel to ensure that the equipment is being properly maintained and is in good working order. While conducting the inspections the canine supervisor shall evaluate the need to replace worn materials. This does not relieve the canine handler's from routine equipment inspections and replacing worn materials when necessary.
- C. The Canine Unit Supervisor may, with reasonable notice, visit the handlers' homes on the yearly basis. This visit would be to inspect the conditions under which the canine is being kept, proper warning signage is displayed on the kennel and fencing and the condition of any canine equipment under the handler's control.
- D. Canine handlers are responsible for the care and condition of all equipment issued to them for training, use and care of the canine.
- E. The canine patrol units are to be kept in good operating order. The interior of the unit shall be kept clean, odor free, and disinfected. All other department regulations pertaining to the proper maintenance of county vehicles shall apply. Handlers are not to customize the canine units with unauthorized equipment, stickers, signs, or other devices.
- F. The canine patrol unit that is taken home by the handlers shall be used only for department approved activities.
- G. The Canine Program Manager or Canine Unit Supervisor will approve all equipment prior to use by the canine handlers.
- H. During off-duty time, the handler's assigned patrol unit will be kept on the handler's property and out of sight of the public.

- I. When the canine handler needs new equipment, it shall be requested through the Canine Unit Supervisor.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Patrol Services Division
Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing the Guidelines on Uniforms Worn by the Members of the Ventura County Sheriff's Canine Unit.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To outline and establish guidelines on all uniforms worn by canine handlers assigned to the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

IX. UNIFORM / UNIT IDENTIFIER

A. Uniform

1. Shirts

- a) The standard uniform for normal patrol duty will be the department authorized Class "C" utility uniform. The shirt shall have an embroidered badge on the left chest, deputy's name (first initial, last name) embroidered on the right chest.
- b) A short sleeve polo shirt is authorized (as described in the Uniform Regulations) for training days or a Unit T-shirt approved by the Canine Manager. The Polo shirt shall have an embroidered badge, deputy's name (first initial, last name) embroidered on the right chest, silk screened shoulder patches on each sleeve, and "SHERIFF" silk screened on the back.

2. Trousers

- a) Specialized trousers are authorized. The same trouser as authorized for the utility uniform except with cargo pockets (as described in the Apparel Specifications).

3. The standard uniform for public relations demonstration shall be a Class "A" uniform or the field uniform approved by the Canine Program Manager.

4. The standard uniform for training shall be the utility uniform consisting of the tan polo shirt and green utility pants or a uniform approved by the Canine Program Manager.

B. Canine Unit Pin

1. The department authorized Canine Unit Pin shall be worn on the right side of the right pocket flap of Class “A” and Field Uniform shirts.
2. If worn, the department authorized Canine Unit Pin shall be placed on the left side of the right pocket flap of the Class “C” utility shirt.
3. Personnel assigned as a canine handler for four (4) years, or more are eligible to retain his/her canine unit pin and continue to wear the pin after leaving the unit. Personnel must leave the unit in good standing with approval of the Canine Manager.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Patrol Services Division
Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing the Guidelines on Canine Handler Applicant Qualifications and Selection for the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines on the selection and qualification of all sworn applicants interested in becoming a canine handler assigned to the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

X. CANINE HANDLER APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS - SELECTION

A. Canine Handler Applicant Qualifications

1. Applicants shall be the rank of Deputy.
2. Possess strong character traits such as maturity, patience, initiative, flexibility, dependability, enthusiasm, and the ability to build relationships with their canine partner and fellow team members. The applicant should also have above average writing and communication skills, and good interpersonal skills.
3. Demonstrate the ability to work very complex assignments within team environments under sometimes-stressful conditions.
4. Have a minimum of one and one-half years of patrol experience, not including field training period.
5. Attend a certified decoy/agitator course and attending weekly Canine Unit training is highly desired.
6. Demonstrate the maturity, stability, and patience to care for, train, and reinforce the canine's training on a daily basis.
7. Perform a constant evaluation of the canine's readiness and fitness for duty.
8. Canine handler applicants may be asked to take a psychological examination as provided by the department.

9. Be physically fit and have no limitations on the physical activities of lifting and handling of a canine.
10. Reside within the County of Ventura or within a close proximity of the Ventura County line, and own or rent property appropriate for housing a department canine (i.e., house with an appropriate yard.) If necessary, the applicant must provide approval from the property owner for the installation of a canine kennel at the deputy's residence. Selection of a canine handler applicant who lives out of county is at the discretion of the Canine Program Manager.
11. Must provide secure, concealed off street parking for their assigned canine patrol unit.
12. Approval of the applicant's family who is residing in the home.
13. Notification of adjoining neighbors to the deputy's home.
14. Accept a three (3) year commitment to the Canine Unit Program.

B. Canine Handler Applicant Selection Process

1. A Transfer Request Form should be submitted to Sheriff's Human Resources no later than a date that will be provided.
2. Concurrently, a copy of the Transfer Request Form, current resume, examples of three (3) well written reports, and the last three (3) annual performance appraisals must be submitted to the Canine Supervisor no later than a date that will be provided.
3. Canine Handler Applicants will be required to complete the following physical fitness/wellness qualification. The test is designed to evaluate the candidate's coordination, stamina, strength, ability to follow directions and confidence. These physical fitness/wellness qualifications are pass/fail and Canine Handler Applicants will be allowed two opportunities to complete Each exercise. All elements of the test will be demonstrated before testing. The test will be conducted under the supervision of the Canine Unit Sergeant. Canine Handler Applicants must successfully complete the physical fitness/wellness qualification within the required time to continue in the Canine Handler Applicant selection process. If an applicant fails any portion of the testing process they will be disqualified from the selection process.

The physical fitness/wellness qualification will consist of the following:

- a) 6' Wall Climb
- b) Chain Link Fence Climb
- c) Sandbag Lift - Lift 75 lbs sandbag over 6' wall wearing tactical vest, ballistic helmet and gas mask

- d) Balance Beam - Carry 75 lbs sandbag wearing a tactical vest, ballistic helmet and gas mask
 - e) Weighted Sandbag Carry – Carry 75 lbs sandbag 100 yards wearing a tactical vest, helmet and gas mask
 - f) 20 yard “Dummy Drag” wearing tactical vest, ballistic helmet and gas mask
 - g) Fire Academy Tower stairs wearing a tactical vest, ballistic helmet and gas mask within 4 minutes
 - h) 1 Mile Run within 15 Minutes
4. Depending on the number of applicants, an initial screening may be conducted by the Canine Program Manager to reduce the applicant numbers to an acceptable level for interviews. The Canine Program Manager reserves the right to extend the open period for submitting applications if necessary.
 5. Successful Canine Handler Applicants will be invited to participate in an interview.
 6. A background investigation may be conducted to evaluate the applicant’s suitability for the position. This investigation may include a review of the applicant’s personnel file as well as contacts with their current and former supervisors.
 7. A numerical ranking of the candidates will not be established.
 8. The results of this application process will be utilized for the current vacancy, one back-up for the vacancy and future vacancies. Canine position openings beyond the current opening will be announced and the selection process will be repeated. However, an eligibility list may be maintained for two (2) calendar years from the last testing process at the discretion of the Canine Program Manager.
 9. The selected deputy will be required to attend and successfully complete a minimum of two hundred forty (240) hour certified canine training program prior to being assigned as a canine deputy.
 10. Canine Handler Applicants will be given the dates for the application process opening and closing.



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Patrol Services Division

Canine Unit

Standard Operating Procedure

SUBJECT: Establishing the Guidelines for the Retirement of Police Service Dogs owned by the Ventura County Sheriff's Canine Unit.

DATE: January 3, 2023

Prepared by: Sgt. Scott Duffner

Approved by: Capt. Dean Worthy

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines and procedures on the retirement and placement of Police Service Dogs owned by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Unit.

XI. RETIREMENT OF A CANINE

BACKGROUND/PROCEDURE

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office purchases canines to be utilized as Police Service Dogs (PSD) trained in law enforcement duties. Since its inception in 1986 the funding for the purchase of these canines is provided from private donations made by private persons, businesses, and organizations. On occasion, it is necessary to sell and/or retire canines. This policy outlines the procedure for such sales and transfers.

RETIREMENT OF A CANINE

A. Evaluation of Canine for Sale/Retirement

1. When determining if a police canine should be retired/sold, several criteria should be evaluated and taken into consideration:
 - A. Service record with the Canine Unit.
 - B. Current age of the police canine.
 - C. Age of the canine when purchased from the vendor.
 - D. Medical conditions during the service life.
 - E. Current medical conditions.
 - F. Recommendation of the trainers.
 - G. Estimated service life remaining vs. the cost to re-train the canine with another handler.
2. When a Sheriff's canine is going to be retired or sold, the ownership may, at the department's discretion, be transferred to a vendor, the canines last handler, or any previous canine handler if deemed qualified.

3. In order for a vendor or handler to take ownership of a Sheriff's owned canine that is going to be retired or sold, he/she must sign the release of liability an agreement prepared by the Sheriff's Office and fulfill those obligations set forth in the agreement. If the vendor or handler is unwilling to sign or abide by the agreement, final disposition of the canine will rest with the Canine Program Manager.
4. Canine Handlers shall have no expectation of purchasing the canine, which is assigned to them during their service with the Canine Unit. This does not disallow the handler from making a request to purchase the canine that he/she was assigned during their service with the Canine Unit.
5. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office reserves first option to keep any canine if the handler is promoted to the rank of sergeant, transfers to another assignment, or should decide to leave the Canine Unit.
6. If it is determined that a handler is unable or unwilling to continue to own and/or control the canine at any time, he/she may forthwith return the canine to the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Canine Program Manager for disposition.

B. Amortization of Canine

1. All handlers are requested to give at minimum a three (3) year commitment to the Canine Unit.
2. Considering the agreement signed between the person purchasing a police canine and the County of Ventura agreeing that the canine will not be utilized as a resource, in any way, or in the scope and course of his employment as an employee of this or any other law enforcement department, agency, or public entity, only the initial purchase price of the canine will be considered when amortizing the canine. Patrol training, detection training, urban tracking training, and any other training costs will not be added into the overall cost of the canine when determining amortization.
3. The canine shall be amortized over a period of six (6) years, which takes into account that handlers agree to make a three (3) year commitment.
4. At the end of the service life, estimated as six (6) years or longer, the canine may no longer have value and may be retired as described above. In complying with County Rules & Regulations, no property may be gifted, therefore the vendor or handler taking possession of the canine shall pay \$1.

C. Transfer of Ownership

The transfer of ownership from the Ventura County Sheriff's Office shall be conducted in contract form documented on either a "Police Service Dog (PSD) Retirement Agreement" or "Police Service Dog (PSD) Sales Agreement."

The Canine Program Manager, the General Services Agency, purchasing agent, and the vendor/handler, shall approve and sign the agreement.

1. Both GSA and the vendor/handler shall be provided original copies of the agreement.
2. The payment shall be made to the Ventura County Sheriff's Canine Trust Fund BU 4014/2316.
3. Upon signing the agreement, the handler shall no longer be entitled to compensation for care and maintenance of the police canine.
4. Refer to the following forms for processing:
 - A. Police Service Dog (PSD) Retirement Agreement
 - B. Police Service Dog (PSD) Sales Agreement

D. Veterinary Treatment

1. If a Sheriff's owned canine is retired or sold to a vendor or canine handler, the handler will assume all responsibility for the following:
 - A. All the canine's veterinary needs for all conditions, past, present, and future.
 - B. All the canine's vaccinations, including those required for licensing through the Department of Animal Control.
 - C. All medications needed by the canine's for any past, present, and future ailments.

E. Equipment

1. Kennel
 - A. When a canine is retired to the canine's last handler, the kennel and slab may remain at the handler's home. Once retirement has taken place and ownership has been transferred, the kennel and slab become the property of the handler. All costs for removal or transfer will rest with the handler.
 - B. If the canine should be sold to a vendor, no slab or kennel will be

provided. The vendor will provide all equipment necessary for safe control of the canine.

2. Grooming and Maintenance of Equipment

A. When a canine is retired to the canine's last handler, the only pieces of equipment the handler may keep, besides the kennel and slab, are the leather leash and fur saver collar. All other items will be returned to the Canine Unit Supervisor.

3. Food, Vitamins and Supplements

A. When a canine is retired, the handler will be responsible for all cost of food, vitamins and supplements for the canine.