



## *Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner*

Number 0.99  
Date: 07/19/07

### **SUBJECT: SERVICE DOGS**

#### **POLICY**

It shall be the policy of this office, under appropriate circumstances, to use the inherent abilities of a canine teamed with a highly trained deputy sheriff to locate lost persons or property, search for and apprehend criminal suspects and provide protection for law enforcement personnel and civilians alike through the use of proper and legally acceptable procedures.

#### **PURPOSE**

To provide general guidelines in the use of Sheriff's Service Dogs, training requirements, certification, records keeping, reporting requirements and procedures.

#### **REFERENCES**

Peace Officer Standards and Trainings (P.O.S.T.) Law Enforcement Service Dog Manual  
Sheriff's Office Service Dog Manual

#### **DEFINITIONS**

"Sheriff's Service Dog" - Law enforcement canine assigned to specially trained deputy sheriff dog handler.

"Sheriff's Service Dog Team" - A deputy handler and his/her assigned Service Dog.

"Service Dog Manager" - A Sheriff's Lieutenant assigned by the Operations Bureau Chief Deputy to be in charge of and oversee all aspects of the Sheriff's Service Dog Program.

#### **PROCEDURE**

- I. Canine Handler Duties and Responsibilities
  - A. Attend and successfully complete any Service Dog Handler/Service Dog Team training deemed necessary by the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office.

- B. Plan in-service training and attend training sessions as required by office standards.
- C. Maintain and prepare a training log for their respective Service Dog Team.
- D. Maintain a proper and secure kennel for the Service Dogs at the Service Dog Handler's home.
- E. Insure proper medical care for the Service Dog with the designated veterinarian.
- F. Maintain issued vehicle, service equipment and training equipment.
- G. Participate in scheduled Service Dog meetings and demonstrations.
- H. Participate in Service Dog certifications, and update training relative to the Service Dog Team assignment.
- I. Document all time spent caring for Service Dog outside scheduled working hours.

## II. Training

- A. In an effort to provide consistent training and education for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office and allied agencies, the Service Dog Team will offer training in their areas of expertise under the following guidelines:
  - 1. The training of the Service Dog Team will follow the guidelines set forth by P.O.S.T. Service Dog Teams will be trained in and utilize the guard and bark or guard and hold method.
  - 2. Certification of the Service Dog Team will be in conformance to the standards contained in the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Service Dog Manual.
  - 3. Training topics and course hours will be consistent and in keeping with standards set forth by the Sheriff's Office and guidelines set by P.O.S.T. Training will be coordinated with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Training Manager and the Service Dog Manager with approval of the Operations Bureau Chief Deputy.
  - 4. Topics for training should include, but are not limited to:
    - a. Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office policy on Service Dogs use and operations.
    - b. Proper conduct in the presence of the Service Dog Team.

- c. Purpose of the Service Dog Team, including areas of expertise for each Service Dog and Service Dog Handler.
  - d. Injuries to Service Dog Handler and/or Service Dog.
  - e. Allied agencies and use of Service Dogs.
  - f. Service Dog Team responses including:
    - 1) Protection
    - 2) Tracking
    - 3) Search and Rescue
    - 4) Crowd Control
    - 5) Suspect Location and Apprehension
5. General Information promoting interest in the program for future Service Dog Team Members.

### III. Use of Force

- A. The use of a Service Dog as a physical force is a viable option under the following circumstances.
- 1. A reasonable belief exists that the individual(s) poses an immediate threat of violence or serious harm to the public, any officer, or the Service Dog Handler.
  - 2. In situations where the escalation of force indicates lawful and reasonable use of the Service Dog. To affect the arrest of a resistive, combative and/or violent person when less forceful methods are deemed inappropriate or have been tried and failed.
  - 3. When the suspect(s) acts aggressively or violently toward the Service Dog, any officer, the Service Dog Handler, or upon command from the Service Dog Handler. This may include, but not limited to: an act of flight to avoid direct arrest for a felony such as murder, burglary, and assault with deadly weapon robbery or rape. Mere flight (Absent Probable Cause) shall not constitute an appropriate use of force under these guidelines.
  - 4. The individual(s) is believed to be concealed in an area where entry by any other means than the Service Dog would pose a threat to the officers or the public. All Service Dog Handlers and Sheriff's personnel assisting in Service Dog searches will abide by the Sheriff's Office use of force policy. Sheriff personnel shall evaluate each situation requiring an application of force in light of the seriousness of the facts and circumstances.

5. Situations may arise that do not fall within the guidelines set forth in this policy. When such a case arises, a standard of reasonableness will be used to review the decision to use the Service Dog in view of the totality of the situation.
6. Generally speaking, searches for known juvenile offenders will be limited to those instances where the severity of the crime, the subject's age and propensity for violence, whether or not the subject is believed to be armed, or the critical factors would reasonably justify the use of a Service Dog Team. In these situations, a Field Supervisor must first authorize the use of the Service Dog.
7. The Service Dog shall not be used to prevent, deter, intimidate, or threaten any person or group of persons gathered for the purpose of exercising their constitutional rights of assembly or expression in a lawful manner.
8. The decision to deploy the Service Dog is at the discretion of the Service Dog Handler. The Service Dog Handler will determine if in fact, the use of the Service Dog is feasible and in compliance with department policy. The ultimate decision not to deploy a Service Dog to a specific operation shall remain with the Field Supervisor unless emergency conditions dictate otherwise. The decision will be reviewed in the light of the information reasonably available to the Service Dog Handler at the time the decision is made. The ultimate disposition of any related criminal proceedings will have no bearing on determining the reasonableness of any such decision.
9. Prior to deploying a Service Dog the Service Dog Handler shall make an announcement. This announcement is intended to notify persons within the containment area of the intent to utilize a Service Dog and to afford the suspect(s) the opportunity to surrender to Sheriff's personnel. The announcement shall be clear, loud, and audible to all personnel within the area to be searched. Exceptions to this policy must be fully justified by conditions and circumstances in the specific incident, which create officer or public safety concerns exceeding those that may typically be associated with Service Dog deployment operations. A decision not to make a deployment announcement shall be made by the Field Supervisor when practical. Announcements, as well as decisions not to announce, shall be documented in all crime and/or incident reports.
10. All Mutual Aid requests for Service Dog assistance will be made through the Watch Commander.

#### IV. Duties

- A. The Service Dog Team's value is most effective by the number of hours saved and the increase in officer and citizen safety during the utilization of the Service Dog

**Team.** The abilities of the Service Dog, and training and experience of the Service Dog Handler, greatly increase the probability for safety and success when properly utilized. Service Dog Team members will be assigned/scheduled by the Operations Bureau Chief Deputy. The Service Dog Team duties as a unit, may include, but are not limited to the following list:

1. Attendance at training sessions, public relations demonstrations and meetings relative to the Service Dog Team.
2. Response to violent felony crimes (where weapons and great physical force are involved) and misdemeanors where weapons are present.
3. Response to burglary, robbery in progress, silent alarm, and felony in progress calls.
4. Searches for violent felony suspects, or armed misdemeanor suspects who present a clear danger to Sheriff's personnel.. Grand theft auto incidents alone, generally do not qualify as Service Dog deployment unless deployed for tracking.
5. Searches for articles, including weapons or other property, which may have value as evidence in criminal cases.
6. Vehicle and foot patrol for the purpose of crime suppression/prevention.
7. Searches for lost children or missing adults (if specialized training has been received).
8. Searches at disaster scenes (if specialized training has been received).
9. Calls requested by an officer or supervisor where the Service Dog Teams ability is an asset.
10. Service Dog Handlers will be primarily assigned to a beat and are expected to act in the capacity of a patrol deputy and be available for assignment to all types of calls for service. Depending on operational need, the Field Supervisor may assign a Service Dog Team to a special assignment. Service Dog Teams are directly responsible to their respective Field Supervisors.

**V. Service Dog Bites and Reporting**

- A. Whenever a Service Dog bites any person, the following procedure will apply.
  1. The on-duty Field Supervisor shall be notified immediately. The Team Watch Commander and Service Dog Manager will be notified as soon a

practical. A written report will usually be submitted no later than the end of the duty shift. An exception may be made by the Watch Commander allowing the Service Dog Handler to defer the report to tend to personal needs. In no case shall the report be submitted more than 24 hours after the incident. The report shall contain all of the circumstances surrounding the incident. The report shall be approved by a lieutenant. In any instance where a person is bitten by a Service Dog either on or off duty, the person bitten will be examined by qualified medical personnel immediately after the bite takes place. The Service Dog Handler is responsible for ensuring the treatment takes place and medical release forms are requested. Any refusal of treatment will be documented in the bite report.

2. In all bite instances the on-duty Field Supervisor or his designee will observe and photograph the affected area. Photographs are to be taken even if the affected area has no visible wound.
3. In situations where outside agency Service Dogs are used and a bite occurs, the on-duty Field Supervisor and Watch Commander shall be immediately notified. A follow-up investigation is to be conducted, photographs of the affected area are to be taken by the Field Supervisor or his/her designee, and the Service Dog Handler from the outside agency will be requested to write a detailed supplemental report for submission to the Watch Commander. The Service Dog Handler shall include in his report the full circumstances of the incident.
4. In any instance where the Service Dog Handler encourages the Service Dog to make any unjustified bite on any person, the Service Dog Handler will be subject to disciplinary action. Unnecessary biting by any in-service police canine will not be tolerated.

## VI. Vehicle Pursuits

- A. The safety of the police canine and the public should be constantly evaluated during the vehicle pursuit. The Service Dog Handler who initiates a pursuit will relinquish the primary pursuing vehicle spot to a patrol vehicle as soon as that vehicle arrives, and in any case, follow the guidelines as outlined in Santa Cruz County Sheriff Policy O.98.
- B. The Service Dog Handler may be given the latitude of trailing a pursuit (code 2) at the discretion of the Field Supervisor. The Service Dog Handler will notify dispatch of the intent to respond. Service Dogs, if needed, will be provided at the termination point of the pursuit.

VII. Terms of Assignment

- A. The following criteria will be adhered to for the term of assignment:
1. Deputies assigned as Service Dog Handlers will be required to sign a Service Dog Handler Agreement. The length of assignment will be year to year determined by performance, but generally the working life of the Service Dog.
  2. If a Service Dog Handler desires a transfer from the program prior to the end of the assignment term, a thirty-day notification is required and a six-month notification is encouraged.
  3. In the event that a Service Dog Handler is promoted to a supervisory position, he/she may not handle a general Service Dog without the expressed approval of the Sheriff.
  4. Removal from the Sheriff Service Dog Program for failure to perform job related duties or discipline, shall not be bound by time of service in the unit.
- B. The life of a Service Dog may exceed the useful working life of the Service Dog. The decision when to retire a Service Dog will be made by the Service Dog Manager after consulting with the trainer, a qualified doctor of veterinary medicine and the Canine Handler.

  
STEVE ROBBINS, Sheriff-Coroner



## *Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner*

Number: O.100

Date: 01/20/06

### **SUBJECT: EMERGENCY OPERATION OF SHERIFF'S VEHICLES**

#### **POLICY**

The California Vehicle Code exempts emergency vehicles from the "Rules of the Road" when in response to an emergency call, involvement in a rescue operation, or in the pursuit of a suspected violator of the law. However, due regard for the safety of all persons using the roadway will be exercised and emergency lights and siren utilized during the emergency response.

#### **PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines for the emergency operation of Sheriff's vehicles.

#### **REFERENCES**

Vehicle Code Sections 165, 21055, 25252, 27002, 21807, 21056, 21057, 27315.3  
Government Code Section 8558.  
Sheriff's Office Policy, O.98, Vehicle Pursuit Guidelines

#### **DEFINITIONS**

##### **"Code One"**

Code One driving consists of vehicular operation under normal conditions, in a courteous and safe manner, obeying all laws and rules of the road.

##### **"Code Two"**

Code Two driving consists of vehicular operation in response to a call for service. The response will be by the most direct route, obeying all laws and rules of the road without a red light or siren.

##### **"Code Three"**

Code Three driving consists of vehicular operation in response to an emergency situation. Code Three operation is limited to vehicles as defined in Section 25252 CVC (emergency lights) and 27002 CVC (siren).



