

WINTER HAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER: 41.3

CANINE UNIT

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: CALEA – 41.1.4; CFA – 14.11, 14.12

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 30, 1995

RESCINDS: G.O. 41.3 July 21, 2017 and all applicable Amended/Temporary Orders prior to April 10, 2018

LAST REVISED DATE: April 10, 2018

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POLICY

It is the policy of the Winter Haven Police Department to utilize the Canine Unit in a safe, cost-effective manner.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines for the utilization of the Department Canine Unit and provide a description of the Canine Officer's general duties and responsibilities.

SCOPE

This General Order shall apply to all Department members.

DISCUSSION

All members should understand the abilities and limitations inherent to this Unit, along with potential assets and liabilities incurred. The Unit will be available to other agencies as appropriate and consistent with this General Order.

PROCEDURE

I. Department Usage (CALEA 41.1.4a) (CFA 14.11a)

A. The Shift Supervisor on duty may request the canine unit's assistance for the following tasks:

1. Building and area searches;
2. Tracking;
3. Narcotic detection;
4. Criminal apprehensions;
5. Article/evidence recovery; or
6. Public relations assistance.

II. External Usage (CALEA 41.1.4a) (CFA 14.11a)

A. The canine unit is available to other agencies for any task listed above. Requests for usage by other agencies will be received by Communications and routed to the Shift Supervisor on duty. The Shift Supervisor shall evaluate the request and approve as appropriate. The canine handler shall complete a report detailing the use of the canine.

III. Special Usage (CALEA 41.1.4a) (CFA 14.11a)

A. Canines are not to be used for normal crowd control. However, in the event a critical situation arises (large crowd out-of-control involving possible danger to life, serious property damage), the ranking supervisor on the scene may give the order to utilize canine.

IV. Canine Patrol Function (CFA 14.11c)

A. A canine team is to be considered a one-person unit with regard to personnel needs and calls for police service.

B. Police canines shall not be used in any form of secondary employment.

C. In order to avoid the risk of injury to the canine, the canine handler, upon initiating a vehicle pursuit, shall relinquish the lead vehicle role to the first marked police vehicle to arrive.

D. Civilian observers shall not ride with the canine officer unless approved by the Bureau Commander.

E. Arrestees shall not be transported in a canine vehicle or any other vehicle in which a police canine is present.

F. Police canines shall not be used to threaten a suspect or arrested person. This does not prevent the use of police canines to guard someone, to prevent an escape, or to keep

someone from interfering in a police function. (CFA 14.11a)

V. General Guidelines for Canine Usage (CFA 14.11a)

- A.** The first officer at the scene should not touch, retrieve or handle evidence, articles or debris believed to be associated to or with the scene.
- B.** When conducting area searches, the canine handler should:
 - 1.** Know the perimeters of a search area and how these perimeters are contained.
 - 2.** Know how many people are inside of the perimeter.
 - 3.** Conduct the search with the police canine leashed, unless the canine handler can be assured that no other persons are inside the area, except the suspect.
 - a.** The initial officer on the scene shall secure the scene and establish a perimeter. The perimeter shall be maintained until the canine team has conducted the search. All attempts will be made by the initial officer on a scene to prevent the scene from being contaminated by the intrusion of people.
 - b.** Upon arrival of the canine handler, the officer in charge of the scene shall brief the canine handler on the current aspects of the situation. The canine handler shall make the determination if the deployment of the canine is justified.
 - c.** For officer safety, the canine handler shall have another officer accompany them during the search. It shall be this officer's responsibility to provide security for the canine team.
 - d.** Assisting officers on the perimeter should remain in a stationary position in or near their vehicles with the emergency lights activated. The officers should remain at their position until released by the canine handler or a supervisor.
 - 4.** Evidence recovered during the area search shall be turned over to the officer assisting the canine handler with the search or the officer assigned to the call.
- C.** Building Searches (CFA 14.11a)
 - 1.** A function of the canine handler at a building search is to verify that no one, other than the suspect(s), is within the building. Verification will be made that innocent persons are not in the building to be searched. This should be done by conferring with officers on scene, as well as the owners or representatives of the building to be searched.
 - 2.** If a building is to be searched, officers on the perimeter should stand away from and out of view of windows, doors and openings.
 - 3.** One officer should remain at the suspected point of entry to assist if suspects are located or if trouble ensues.

4. Building searches may be done with the canine unleashed unless there are innocent persons inside the building.
 5. Prior to the canine team conducting a building search, or where a suspect is contained in a small area, the canine handler shall issue a verbal warning unless there is an overt threat to the safety of the canine or the canine handler. The warning shall be given twice and the suspect afforded the opportunity to surrender.
 6. In the case of multi-level buildings, the canine handler shall give a verbal warning on each level.
 7. In the event a suspect is located, the canine handler shall control the canine and provide cover while the suspect is secured. The suspect shall then be escorted out of the building. Radio contact shall be made with the canine handler prior to the cover officer returning inside the building.
 8. Evidence recovered while inside the building shall be turned over to the officer assisting the canine handler with the search or the officer assigned to the call.
 9. Prior to making entry with the canine, the handler shall ascertain if hazards exist. If a structure is found to have hazards the handler shall conduct the building search with their canine on a lead.
- D. Tracking calls (CFA 14.11a)**
1. Police canines may be used to track suspects or missing persons.
 2. All tracking searches shall begin with the canine on a lead. Additional officers armed with an approved long gun (shotgun, AR-15, ect.) should accompany the canine team on the tracks for criminal suspects.
 3. If the person being tracked is to be arrested, the canine handler may release the canine from its leash, provided the suspect meets established criteria for a canine apprehension. The canine handler shall ensure that no innocent person is between the suspect and the police canine.
 4. If the situation allows, canine warnings/announcements shall be given when entering brush or when the canine shows interest in closing in on a possible suspect.
 5. When tracking for a missing person(s), the handler shall shorten the lead to 6-8 feet in length and have positive control of the canine at all times.
- E. Narcotic Air Sniffs (CFA 14.11a)**
1. Narcotic Air Sniffs shall be conducted using canines specially trained to detect and react to the odor of narcotics. Canine narcotic air sniffs of vehicles are not considered searches by the courts and may be done at any time.
 2. Prior to conducting the sniff, the vehicle should be checked for hazards that could

harm the police canine team. All doors, windows, or covers should be closed.

3. Police canines shall not be used to conduct narcotic air sniffs on people.

VI. Guidelines for Canine Apprehension

- A.** The canine may be used to locate and apprehend a subject(s) whom the officer has probable cause to arrest and only after all of the following conditions have been considered:
1. There is reasonable belief that the subject(s) poses a threat of violence or harm to the public, any law enforcement officer, or the canine handler;
 2. The form of resistance, including the attempt to flee by the subject(s); and
 3. The severity of the offense.
 4. When a subject flees, hides, or conceals themselves from law enforcement, they create a greater risk of ambushing pursuing officers. Officers should always be mindful of the subject's potential to ambush an officer while conducting searches for or while pursuing subjects.
 5. Application of a canine does not constitute the use of deadly force, but rather, is considered to be an intermediate response. In this, as in other cases, officers may only use that degree of force necessary to apprehend or secure a suspect(s) as governed by General Order 1.5 on the Use of Force.
- B.** The following conditions are situation where the usage of the canine is not justified:
1. To affect the arrest of a feeble person, highly intoxicated person, or a child who obviously cannot escape or resist the officer.
 2. To intimidate, to coerce or to frighten a suspect.
 3. Generally speaking, if an officer would not be justified in using the side-handled baton or ASP, the handler should not allow their canine to engage the suspect.
- C.** If the canine bites a suspect, the canine handler shall: (CFA 14.11c)
1. Provide first aid and summon medical assistance, if necessary;
 2. Notify the Shift Supervisor;
 3. Digital photographs shall be taken of the location on the body where the offender was bitten. An overall picture, showing not only the bite, but the subject's face, shall be taken. This may be done at the station or hospital, but shall be done after treatment has been provided.
 4. The canine handler shall print the photographs and attach them to the Use of Force Report. (CFA 14.11f)
 5. The digital photographs shall be logged into evidence per General Order 83.1.

6. In the event of severe injuries to the suspect, a crime scene investigator shall be called to take photographs.
- D. Members of this Department on the scene of an accidental bite or an apprehension with injury shall refrain from making any statement as to responsibility for the injury.
- E. Accidental bites shall be immediately reported to the supervisor on duty. A memorandum shall be forwarded to the Uniform Services Bureau Commander, via the chain of command, outlining the circumstances surrounding the accidental bite.

VII. Conduct around the Canine Team

- A. Sworn members should follow these guidelines when working in conjunction with or in the presence of the canine team:
 1. Do not accompany the canine team during a building search or tracking situation, unless specifically requested to do so by the canine handler.
 2. Members are prohibited from teasing or agitating the canine, whether he is in or out of the canine vehicle, except at the supervised training session and ONLY when directed by the canine handler.
 3. Members are prohibited from giving the canine any type of food or treat without the permission of the canine handler.
 4. When the canine is working, members shall maintain a safe distance between themselves and the working canine team to avoid being injured or interfering with them.
 5. Horseplay and joking around the canine handler or the canine shall not be tolerated. The canine shall not be approached, except as authorized by the canine handler.
 6. The canine is taught to alert and become aggressive when left alone inside the canine vehicle. Officers should avoid walking near the parked canine vehicle whenever possible.
 7. Only in special cases shall an officer, other than the canine handler, attempt to enter or remove anything from the canine vehicle.

VIII. Health Care, Sanitation and Injuries (CFA 14.11c)

- A. Police canines and their dog houses, kennels, runs and feeding equipment shall be kept clean at all times. The following items shall also be maintained daily:
 1. Canine waste and uneaten food shall be removed.
 2. Police canines shall have fresh water in a suitable container.
 3. Patrol vehicles used to transport the police canine shall be cleaned and water bowls freshened.

- B.** Canine handlers shall ensure: (CALEA 41.1.4c) (CFA 14.11c)
1. Each police canine shall be given an annual physical to include required immunizations and a heartworm check.
 2. All police canines shall be given heartworm preventive medication.
 3. Only pre-approved veterinary facilities shall be utilized.
 4. The canine handler is responsible for the canine receiving medical care when needed. The agency approved veterinarian shall dispense medication when appropriate.
 5. The canine handler shall also groom and bathe the canine when necessary, presenting a neat appearance at all times.
 6. Canines shall be boarded at kennels authorized by the Chief of Police, the Uniform Services Bureau Commander or designee.
 7. Showing off with the canine shall not be permitted at any time. Canine demonstrations shall be pre-approved by the Uniform Services Bureau Commander or designee.
 8. Canines are to be kept on a lead at all times on the street, except during pursuits and apprehensions or during designated searches.
 9. Punishing canines by striking or kicking is strictly prohibited.
 10. In the event that a canine escapes his kennel or the canine unit, the handler shall notify the on duty supervisor immediately. The on-duty supervisor shall respond to the scene and coordinate the search and recovery of the canine.
 11. While at the handler's residence, the Canine shall be kenneled when visitors are present.
- C.** If the canine handler or the canine becomes injured or incapacitated, the following procedures shall be followed:
1. Members are reminded that the canines are trained to protect their canine handler.
 2. Members should not attempt to approach the canine or render first aid to the canine handler unless it is believed that an injury may be life threatening.
 3. If the injury to the canine handler is life threatening and the canine cannot be controlled:
 - a. Attempt to get the injured canine handler to control the canine;
 - b. Contact another canine handler to attempt to control the canine; exhaust

all means to retrieve the handler without injuring the canine.

- D. Canine handlers shall maintain emergency veterinary phone numbers in a conspicuous place inside the canine vehicle.
- E. The Uniform Services Bureau Commander shall be notified of all police canine injuries.

IX. Vehicle Maintenance

- A. Canines shall not be transported in personally owned vehicles without prior approval of the Canine Unit Supervisor.
- B. The front gate of the canine container shall be secured at all times when the canine handler is out of the vehicle.
- C. Heat alarms shall be on at all times when the canine is in the vehicle. If the heat alarm is activated, the canine handler shall immediately check on the canine. If the heat alarm is not functioning properly, the canine handler shall immediately notify the Canine Unit Supervisor verbally and in writing and repairs shall be made as soon as practical.
- D. Only in special cases shall the canine be left in an unattended vehicle for more than 30 minutes without being checked visually.

X. Training and Performances Standards (CALEA 41.1.4b) (CFA 14.11e)

- A. The canine team must successfully complete a state mandated 400 hours of basic canine course from which the canine team will successfully display the ability to perform the following tasks:
 - 1. Obedience;
 - 2. Distance control;
 - 3. Three minute stays;
 - 4. Socialization;
 - 5. Building Searches; and
 - 6. Criminal apprehension.
- B. The handler shall reside in a home with ample space and yard to accommodate the canine and its kennel.
- C. The handlers must be willing to take their assigned canine into their home and maintain a suitable environment for the canine. They are also encouraged to interact daily with their canines.
- D. The canine team training shall be in conformance with the Florida Criminal Justice Standard and Training Commission guidelines. All efforts shall be made to adhere to national standards of a minimum sixteen hours of training monthly for canine teams. All training shall be documented by the handler and they shall maintain a hard copy for the service life of the canine. (CALEA 41.1.4b)(CFA 14.11e)
- E. Testing and certification of the canine and handler's ability shall be done in accordance with the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission guidelines. Additional certifications (patrol, narcotics, ect) given by another canine group (USPCA,

NAPWDA, etc.) may be obtained by the canine team, based on approval from the Chief of Police or their designee. (CFA 14.11d)

- F.** Re-certification of the canine team shall be conducted annually and shall be done in accordance with Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission Guidelines. Failure to recertify as a canine team based on the Florida Department of Law Enforcement requirements shall cause the canine to be removed from patrol service and the canine team shall attend remedial training until recertified. If, after remedial training is done and the canine team still fails to recertify, further action shall be determined by the canine supervisor and bureau commander.
- G.** Remedial training shall be conducted by a canine Instructor certified by the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission.
- H.** All training certificates and training sign in logs shall be maintained by the Department's Training Officer, as well as the canine unit supervisor. The canine supervisor shall be responsible for the maintenance of the canine team(s) training logs, deployment logs, and training and certification records. The canine supervisor shall build and maintain a file for each active canine within the department.
- I.** The canine unit supervisor shall be responsible for preparing and providing the required monthly and annual canine unit report(s) to the Uniform Services Bureau Commander.

XI. Drug Training Aids

A. Certified Training Drug Aids

- 1.** Training drug aids are acquired from the DEA with the approval of the Chief of Police.
- 2.** The training aids shall be assigned an individual case number that shall be permanently affixed to the training aid. The type of training aid and the gross weight of the drugs and the entire weight of the package shall be affixed to the outside of the training aid. (CFA 14.12a)
- 3.** Drugs are generally received in bulk from the DEA and shall be repackaged into training aids. Whenever drug packages are opened – for this or any other purpose – two members shall be present at all times to witness the handling; weighing; testing; and/or repackaging. One member shall be a canine officer. The other shall be a canine supervisor, or Property/Evidence manager. (CFA 14.12a)
- 4.** Each training aid shall be signed for by the canine handler, recording the gross weight of the drugs and the package weight of the training aid, with the original receipt forwarded to the Canine Supervisor. (CFA 14.12a)

B. Storage of Training Drugs (CFA 14.12b)

- 1.** The training aids shall be stored in the secured canine room within a secured safe at the Winter Haven Police Department, until signed for by handler. Only the canine Lieutenant and canine Sergeant shall have a key to access the safe. Each time training narcotic(s) are signed for, it shall be weighed by the Canine

Lieutenant or Canine Sergeant and verified by the handler. The training aid shall also be weighed and verified upon its return and storage.

2. Once the training narcotics have been inspected and issued, the handler shall keep them in their marked patrol unit. The training aids shall be stored in a secured box which shall also be secured to the vehicle. The interior trunk release shall be disabled and only functional with the ignition key in the "ACC" mode.
3. All training narcotics shall be inspected and accounted for during a mandatory quarterly vehicle inspection. An additional inspection form shall be completed for this and attached to the K-9 vehicle inspection sheet that is completed by the patrol shift supervisor(s).
4. The training aids shall not be left in the canine vehicle whenever the vehicle is left at the Police Department, City Garage, or other location, while the handler is on leave or otherwise away from work for more than five days. The training aids shall be stored in the safe, located in the secure canine room.

C. Use of Training Aids

1. The canine handler shall log all training aids taken out of the canine safe for use on their daily log. The log shall be kept inside the canine vehicle, and shall be copied monthly to the canine handler's supervisor.
2. Training aids shall only be used by the canine handler to which they are assigned.
3. Training aids shall only be used for training and demonstration purposes.

D. Return of Training Aids (CFA 14.12a)

1. Training aids no longer needed for training purposes shall be returned to the DEA, if required, or turned in for destruction as noted below.

E. Destruction of Training Aids

1. Training aids shall be turned over to the Property and Evidence section as recovered drugs, for proper disposal.

F. Damaged or Lost Training Aids

1. The canine handler shall immediately notify the canine Supervisor if a training aid is damaged or lost. If the K-9 Supervisor is not available, the canine handler shall notify the supervisor on duty. The training aid shall be reweighed for both the gross weight of the drugs, and the total weight of the package, before resealing the training aid if it is broken open. If broken open, a presumptive test on the contents shall be performed. Property/Evidence personnel shall be notified of the incident as soon as practical. (CFA 14.12a,d)
2. When a controlled substance is lost during training or other circumstances, the canine handler shall secure the scene and immediately initiate a search for the item.

3. A "Lost or Damage to City Property" form shall be completed for both damaged and lost training aids. The report shall document the weights of the training aid and its contents. A copy of this report shall be placed with the original check out documents.

G. Inventories

1. An unannounced annual inventory shall be conducted by the Uniform Services Commander or designee on all canine training aids, with a report forwarded to the Chief of Police. This inventory shall consist of weight and checking the packaging to ensure its integrity. If a seal, evidence tape, or bag is found to be damaged, a presumptive field test of the substance shall be conducted and the item repackaged and weighed. All findings shall be noted and a report shall be forwarded to the Uniform Services bureau Commander. (CFA 14.12c)

XII. Canine Equipment (CALEA 41.1.4d)

A. All canine vehicles shall have at a minimum the following equipment:

1. 6ft lead;
2. 15/30ft lead;
3. Tracking harness;
4. Muzzle;
5. Bite training sleeve;
6. IR strobe for canine/handler;
7. Canine emergency medical/overdose kit;
8. Heat alarm;
9. Kennel; and
10. Set pager/door opener for emergency heat alarm and door popper mounted in vehicle.

B. 10X10 chain link kennel.

XIII. Definitions

- A. *Police canine*** – Any dog that is recognized as a State Certified Police Officer by the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission.
- B. *Canine handler*** – A trained member of this department assigned the use of a canine for law enforcement purposes.
- C. *Area searches*** – Searches within a geographic location surrounded by natural or man-

made boundaries.

APPROVED 

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