5-09/265.10 - Special Enforcement Bureau Tactical Canine Deployment

The Special Enforcement Bureau's Canine Services Detail is responsible for maintaining police service canines specifically trained to aid in the location and apprehension of outstanding suspects wanted in connection with crimes meeting deployment criteria under this section.

The prompt and proper utilization of a trained tactical canine team has proven to be a valuable resource in law enforcement. When properly used, a tactical canine team greatly increases the degree of safety to all persons (including suspects) within a contained search area, enhances officer safety, significantly increases the likelihood of suspect apprehension, and dramatically reduces the amount of time necessary to conduct a search.

Tactical canine search teams can be requested through the Sheriff's Communications Center (SCC) or the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) Desk 24 hours a day. The opportunity for a safe and successful search operation will be enhanced with a timely request, response, and deployment of a canine team.

The following situations reflect suitable activities for tactical canine deployments:

- Commercial and residential structure searches where there is the possibility of suspects hidden inside and wanted in connection with activity listed below under authorized deployment;
- Area searches for criminal suspects who are wanted in connection with activity listed below under authorized deployment;
- Capture of suspects who are armed, or believed to be armed, when less lethal forms of apprehension are appropriate;
- Specialized security assignments;
- Specialized saturation patrol; and
- Unique tactical searches not previously described, with approval of the SEB unit commander or above.

Except in extreme emergencies, tactical canine teams are not to be utilized for crowd control situations.

Tactical canine deployments are authorized for and shall be limited to:

- Searches for armed suspects;
- Searches for suspects wanted for serious or violent felonies and/or where the circumstances of the situation would present a clear danger to the law enforcement personnel who would otherwise conduct a search without a canine;
    - Serious or violent felonies will include any offenses classified as Part I Crimes in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, except those categorized under larceny-theft;
- It is not uncommon for suspects driving stolen vehicles to be utilizing the vehicle to facilitate involvement in other serious or violent felonies. However, absent additional information at the time of deployment, searches for suspects wanted only for motor vehicle theft shall be limited to those who are reasonably believed to be adults, and are reasonably believed to be the driver of a confirmed stolen vehicle. Known passengers, absent extenuating circumstances, should not be searched for with the use of a police service canine;

- Searches for known juvenile offenders shall 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 other critical factors would reasonably justify the use of a tactical canine search team. In these situations, an SEB supervisor of the permanent rank of lieutenant or above must first authorize the use of a canine;
- Searches for articles, including weapons, narcotics or other property, recently discarded by suspects wanted in connection with deployable crimes which may have value as evidence in a criminal case; and
- Special Weapons Team activations and other activities as may be deemed appropriate by the SEB unit commander or his designee.

Station personnel requesting a tactical canine team are responsible for establishing an effective perimeter containment of the area to be searched. They are also responsible for ensuring the area is not contaminated by the scent from civilians or other law enforcement personnel. If a tactical canine team is requested, station personnel should generally refrain from searching prior to their arrival unless an exigency arises.

Most requests for a canine team will justify the use of a code 3 response. Canine personnel shall adhere to existing emergency driving policies when initiating a code 3 response.

In all instances, a supervisor from SEB, and/or a field supervisor from the concerned station, shall respond to the scene of the incident. In those instances where an SEB supervisor is not immediately present, field supervisors shall monitor the operation and ensure Department policy is adhered to. However, unless exigent circumstances requiring an immediate deployment exist, the decision to make a tactical canine deployment must first be approved by an SEB supervisor. Generally, once approved, the canine handler will then dictate the search tactics to be utilized and coordinate the deployment of assisting personnel.

Consideration shall also be given to requesting additional tactical personnel from SEB. These deputies have trained and worked closely with canine teams and are more familiar with the tactics and responsibilities involved. The decision to deploy SEB personnel rather than station personnel on a search shall be at the discretion of the SEB supervisor.

All canine handlers and deputy personnel assisting in canine searches shall abide by the Department's use of force policies at all times. Deputy personnel shall evaluate each situation requiring a force application in light of the seriousness of the facts and circumstances.

Prior to deploying tactical canine teams, announcements shall be made. These announcements are intended to notify persons within the containment area of the intent to utilize a canine, and to afford suspect(s) the opportunity to surrender to law enforcement personnel. The announcements shall be clear and audible to all personnel at the operation and made in both English and Spanish. Radio car and helicopter public address systems, if available and equipped, will increase the likelihood that the canine announcements are heard and shall be utilized. Prior to deployment, the canine handler or incident command post shall ascertain from units on containment positions if the announcements were clear and audible. Any exception to this policy must be fully justified by conditions and circumstances inherent in a specific incident which create officer or public safety concerns exceeding those that may typically be associated with tactical canine deployment operations. Absent exigent circumstances, the decision to forego canine deployment announcements must be approved by an SEB supervisor of the permanent rank of lieutenant or above. The justification and circumstances shall also be documented in all subsequent reports.

Safety is of paramount concern. Canines are trained to protect their handlers and may react to perceived

threats. Personnel should not enter or reach inside canine vehicles when the canine is inside, nor approach canine handlers abruptly. During search operations, personnel should follow the instructions of the canine handler and avoid any action which might jeopardize the safety of those involved in the operation. When a suspect is located, the handler will advise when it is safe to approach and take a suspect into custody.

In situations where a canine finds and bites a suspect, the concerned canine handler will as rapidly as possible determine if the suspect is armed or a continuing threat. Keep in mind that when the resistance has been overcome or the threat abated, the de-escalation of force is the appropriate response.

The handler will remove the canine at the first possible moment the canine can safely be released. When deciding to remove the canine, particular attention must be given to the perceived threat or actual resistance presented by the suspect. Handlers will continue to factor into their decision that the average person will struggle if being seized or confronted by a canine. This struggling, alone, will not be cause for not removing the canine. Without exception, a reference to the estimated duration of the canine's contact with a suspect shall be included in the handler's supplemental report.

In instances where a canine bite occurs, the facts shall be reported by the concerned canine handler and search team members to the SEB supervisor, and an immediate follow-up investigation shall be conducted. In most instances, canine bites will be investigated by the SEB supervisor, with notification to the Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) via memorandum. The highly specialized nature of tactical canine deployments, the expertise of the SEB supervisors, and the need for immediate and timely follow up will constitute compelling circumstances under the Department's force review procedures, which allow an SEB supervisor who may have been present and/or directed the deployment to conduct the investigation. However, in instances where canine bites result in hospitalization or any other mandatory notification circumstances occur in conjunction with the apprehension, the SEB supervisor will immediately consult with the on-call IAB lieutenant regarding the circumstances of the deployment and nature of the injuries. The IAB lieutenant will determine if an IAB Force/Shooting Response Team response is appropriate. If an IAB Force/Shooting Response Team responds to assume control of the investigation, the SEB supervisor shall remain and assist them, as needed.

Station personnel shall not describe canine bite incidents in their reports. However, they will make reference to the supplemental report(s) written by the canine handler in their reports. Photographs of any injuries which may have been inflicted by a Department canine shall be the responsibility of the SEB supervisor. Unless specifically directed by an SEB or IAB supervisor, station personnel shall not photograph or capture on video any part of the deployment, injuries, or follow-up investigation.

All canine bites will be reviewed by the Executive Force Review Committee. An additional level of oversight may be conducted by any entity designated with that responsibility by the Department.