



Garner Police Department Written Directive

Chapter: 800 - Operations

Directive: 820.07 - Canine Unit Administration and Operations

Authorized by: Chief Brandon Zuidema

Effective Date: December 1, 2016

CALEA Standards: 41.1.4

Last Revision: October 1, 2015

820.7.1 – Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish policies and procedures for the Garner Police Department's Canine Unit.

820.7.2 – Policy

It is the policy of the Garner Police Department to utilize canine teams to aid department personnel in the performance of their duties.

820.7.3 – Definitions

- A. Building/Area Search – The use of a canine team to search and locate persons inside buildings, wooded areas, or other locations where visibility is limited and hiding places are numerous.
- B. Canine Deployment – The removal of a police canine from a patrol vehicle for any legitimate law enforcement purpose. Merely breaking the dog, participating in training or using the dog in a demo is not considered a deployment since those activities are not “enforcement” related.
- C. Canine Handler – A Department police officer properly trained to work with a police canine.
- D. Canine Team – One (1) police canine and one (1) canine handler working in unison.
- E. Canine Unit – All canine teams utilized by the Department
- F. Canine Unit Supervisor – A sworn officer, selected and designated by the Chief of Police, who monitors and oversees canine operations and who is accountable for personnel and police canines assigned to the Canine Unit.
- G. Contact Bite – The police canine bite of a person.
- H. Evidence Search – The use of a canine team to locate hidden evidence. This includes, but is not limited to narcotics, weapons, clothing and/or items with a distinctive smell or recently touched by a human.
- I. Non-Contact Bite – A police canine bite that does not contact the body of the person (i.e. contact with clothing only).
- J. Police Canine – A properly trained, Department-owned canine used in accordance with this directive.
- K. Tracking – The use of a canine team to follow a scent, odor, or trail left by a person traveling on foot.

820.7.4 – Canine Handler Selection Criteria (41.1.4)

- A. Selection processes and other criteria for canine handlers are outlined in GPD Directive 310.05 – *Career Alternatives & Opportunities*.
- B. Additionally, candidates for the position of canine handler must:
 - 1. Live within a reasonable distance for call response time as determined by the Chief of Police;
 - 2. Possess a strong desire and ability to work as a team with a police canine;
 - 3. Possess the desire to participate and exhibit a commitment to Canine Unit program goals;
 - 4. Be willing to perform all job tasks and functions associated with the position for a minimum of three (3) years;
 - 5. Complete the POPAT course within the time of six minutes on Part One and three minutes on Part Two; and
 - 6. Commit to all training requirements listed herein and in GPD Directive 310.05.

820.7.5 – General Information

- A. Interaction with police canines:
 - 1. Department personnel will not pet, play with, or feed any police canine without the consent of the handler.
 - 2. Department personnel will not tease or attempt to intimidate any police canine at any time.
 - 3. Canine handlers will not demonstrate a police canine's capabilities except while performing official police duties, during community presentations, while training, or with specific permission by the Chief of Police.
- B. Administration and Assignments
 - 1. Police canine teams will be assigned to the Operations Bureau. Each canine handler will be supervised by a patrol supervisor and assigned a regular shift schedule. Police canines are assigned to supplement the police officer's ability to perform his/her duties more effectively.
 - 2. Canine teams shall not be assigned to a patrol district unless staffing requires it or a supervisor elects to do so based on unique circumstances involving on-duty personnel.
 - 3. Canine teams may respond to any call for service, but should respond when available to violent crimes in progress, vehicle and foot pursuits, burglaries/alarms, building searches, and other calls for assistance where the utilization of the police canine would be of use.
 - 4. Canine teams will not be required to transport any type of animal in their patrol vehicles.

820.7.6 – Canine Unit Supervision

- A. The Chief of Police will designate a sworn Department employee to serve as the Canine Unit Supervisor.
- B. The Canine Unit supervisor is responsible for overall canine team operations and coordinating training and general maintenance issues. The Canine Unit supervisor's responsibilities will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Conducting regular inspections of all canine team vehicles, police canines, and kennels and documenting all such inspections;
 2. Scheduling internal and external maintenance training;
 3. Maintaining an inventory of all issued canine equipment;
 4. Maintaining current rabies tags and Town of Garner dog tags for all police canines; and
 5. Reviewing all canine-related reports in OSSI.
- C. The Canine Unit supervisor will submit a monthly report to the Patrol Division Lieutenant that outlines the activities of each canine team and the Canine Unit as a whole.

820.7.7 – Canine Handler Responsibilities (41.1.4)

- A. Canine handlers are responsible for the safety, security, and wellbeing of their assigned police canine at all times. Each canine handler will:
1. House and maintain their assigned police canine at his/her residence. Equipment, food, kennel, and medical requirements will be the financial responsibility of the Department. The canine handler will adhere to Department and Town policies for obtaining these items and services.
 2. Feed, water, and keep their assigned police canine well groomed. This includes upkeep of the kennel area and the patrol vehicle where the canine is kept.
 3. Familiarize themselves with basic police canine health and care issues.
 4. Secure police canines inside their assigned vehicle when the canine team is on-duty and not being utilized. The police canine must have ample air flow to breathe while inside a vehicle, but must also be restricted from making physical contact with persons walking nearby the vehicle.
- B. Each canine handler will be compensated for the care and maintenance of his/her assigned police canine. The Chief of Police will determine the type and amount of compensation in accordance with FLSA guidelines.
- C. Canine handlers will assist with and coordinate scheduled activities through the Canine Unit Supervisor as described above.
- D. Canine handlers will record all police canine related incidents and training sessions in the OSSI software in a timely manner.
- E. Canine handlers will report to work even when the police canine cannot due to injury or illness.

820.7.8 – Canine Handler Absences / Incapacitation

- A. During canine handler absence or illness, another handler will care for the police canine.
1. If this is not possible, the police canine will be kenneled at an appropriate facility.
 2. If the handler wishes to kennel his/her dog for any reason, he/she will convey his/her request to the Canine Unit Supervisor.

- B. If a canine handler becomes incapacitated for any reason, another handler or the Canine Unit Supervisor will be contacted to assume control of any unattended police canine. Under exigent circumstances, other officers may take necessary action to restrain and secure the canine.

820.7.9 – Canine Equipment, Uniforms, and Vehicles (41.1.4)

- A. Canine teams will be issued specialized equipment and other items necessary for the efficient, effective operation of the team. Equipment items include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. 6 foot lead;
 - 2. 30 foot tracking lead;
 - 3. Tracking harness;
 - 4. Bite suit;
 - 5. Bite sleeve; and
 - 6. Kennel and related items necessary to maintain the canine (doghouse, food/water dishes, etc.).
- B. Canine handlers will be issued uniforms specific to their assignment as outlined in GPD Directive 410.01, *Uniform-Equipment for Officers*.
- C. Canine handlers will be provided a vehicle that is specially equipped for transporting the police canine and the necessary equipment for the canine team.

820.7.10– Veterinary Services

- A. All medical needs of the police canines will be handled by a local veterinarian of the department's choosing. The canine handlers may take a police canine to the nearest available veterinarian for emergency treatment only.
- B. If, in the opinion of the canine handler, a police canine requires veterinarian care, he/she will make an appointment as soon as possible. He/she will then notify the Canine Unit Supervisor of the illness or injury.
- C. A canine handler will immediately notify the Canine Unit Supervisor of any police canine death. The Canine Unit Supervisor will then contact a veterinarian to determine if an autopsy is necessary. If no autopsy is necessary, the Department will arrange for the canine's disposal.

820.7.11 – Training Guidelines and Requirements (41.1.4)

- A. Coordination of canine training is the responsibility of the Canine Unit Supervisor. However, completion of all necessary training is the responsibility of the canine handler.
- B. All canine teams must successfully complete a narcotics/patrol canine handler certification course prior to being utilized for any Department purpose.
- C. All canine teams must re-certify annually according to United States Police Canine Association (U.S.P.C.A.) and/or International Police Work Dog Association (I.P.W.D.A) standards for both narcotics detection and patrol work.
- D. Each canine handler shall conduct a minimum of thirteen (13) hours of in-service training with their patrol canine each month unless granted a waiver by the Canine Unit Supervisor due to extenuating circumstances.

1. A minimum of one (1) hour of training per day with the patrol canine is strongly recommended and will be permitted on-duty with the approval of the on-duty supervisor.
2. Based on a demonstrated need, canine teams may attend training at external facilities to increase the effectiveness and efficiency in meeting Department goals.

E. All training activities will be recorded in OSSI and reviewed by the Canine Unit Supervisor.

820.7.13 – Canine Team Utilization (41.1.4)

- A. The canine handler is the ultimate decision-maker regarding the deployment or other utilization of a police canine.
1. The decision to deploy a police canine to apprehend a suspect or to provide other law enforcement assistance is the sole responsibility of the canine handler. At no time will a Department supervisor order a canine handler to deploy a police canine.
 2. Canine handlers will evaluate any opportunity or request for canine utilization to determine if the request is within the police canine's abilities, is lawful under North Carolina General Statute, and is reasonable and in accordance with Department policy. Handlers may decline requests or terminate utilization at any time when in the best interest of the canine or the Department.
 3. Any decision by a canine handler to deploy a patrol canine shall be based on the reasonableness of the deployment given the totality of the circumstances as known by the handler at that time. The factors to be considered by the handler will include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. The severity of the crime that is alleged to have occurred and whether or not it involved violent actions by the suspect;
 - b. Whether the suspect poses an immediate threat of serious injury or death to officers, others present, or the surrounding community;
 - c. Whether the suspect is actively resisting arrest;
 - d. The criminal history and/or background of the suspect; and
 - e. Whether or not the suspect is likely to be apprehended without the deployment of the canine.

Note: Flight alone by a suspect is not justification to deploy a police canine for apprehension.

4. If feasible, the canine handler will give a verbal warning prior to deploying a patrol canine to apprehend a suspect by physical contact. The warning shall include the fact that a trained police canine will be released and that it may bite the suspect if the suspect does not surrender.
5. Canine handlers will maintain verbal and/or physical control of their police canines at all times, including when the police canines are off lead to apprehend, search, or track.
6. Police canines are trained to contact, seize, and hold an actively resisting suspect unless and until called off by the handler. A police canine released to seize a fleeing suspect shall be commanded by its handler to release and disengage once the suspect is under control.
7. Canine handlers will document any deployment of a police canine in the OSSI system. Canine handlers will also document any deployment where the police canine contacts a suspect as a use of force incident in accordance with GPD directive 710.01 – *Use of Force*.

B. Requests for police canine utilization:

1. On-duty canine handlers may be requested by other Department personnel to utilize their police canine to assist with apprehensions, searches, tracks, or other law enforcement activities. If the canine handler anticipates being tied up for a significant period of time, the handler is to notify the on-duty supervisor.

Note: Canine handlers are also expected to proactively respond to incidents where it is reasonable to anticipate the utilization of their police canine.

2. An on-duty canine handler may be requested by other law enforcement agencies to utilize his/her police canine to assist with apprehensions, searches, tracks, or other law enforcement activities. The on-duty supervisor (or a higher authority) must grant permission prior to the canine team leaving the Town unless exigent circumstances do not make it practical to do so; if exigent circumstances do exist, the canine team may respond immediately but shall confirm supervisory permission while en route.
3. Canine teams not on-duty may be called back to duty at the discretion of an on-duty supervisor who will evaluate the circumstances and determine if a canine team callback is warranted. The supervisor may call a canine handler to explain the circumstances and allow the handler to determine if a callback is appropriate.
 - a. At the time of the request, the requesting supervisor will advise the canine handler of the nature and location of the incident and the nature of the canine deployment being requested.
 - b. Upon arrival of the canine team, the canine handler will be provided with all current circumstances surrounding the incident and any dangerous conditions that exist.
 - c. The Canine Unit supervisor will be notified by the requesting supervisor via e-mail any time a canine team is called in when off-duty.

C. Detection of narcotics and illegal substances

1. If a request is made for the assistance of a canine team to search for illegal substances, the canine handler should be given as much advance notice as possible about the location of the search and the type of substance(s) which may be encountered.
2. Police canines will not be used to sniff suspects in an effort to search for controlled substances on the person of a suspect.
3. In cases involving the execution of a search warrant, officers will secure the scene and contain all persons present in one area. Once secured, a canine team will enter and begin searching. As the search progresses, persons present will be moved to an area already searched by the team.

D. Evidence recovery

1. Canine teams may be requested if there is reason to believe that a suspect has discarded evidence by dropping an item in flight or attempting to hide it in a field, wooded area, or other open area.
2. Evidence searches are generally conducted in a manner similar to tracking operations.

E. Search operations

1. Canine handlers will abide by Constitutional protections concerning search and seizure.

2. When circumstances indicate that an unauthorized person(s) may be hiding in a building or similar structure, an adequate perimeter shall be established around the building. The canine handler will determine whether the police canine will search on a lead or be released into a building.
3. If an on-lead search is conducted, the canine handler may request additional officers to accompany him/her into the building. If an off-lead search is conducted, additional officers will not be utilized unless they remain with the canine handler.
4. A police canine will not be released into a building without warning first being given to possible occupants by the canine handler.
 - a. The warning will identify the handler, instructions for surrender, and notification that a trained police canine will be released if the occupants fail to surrender according to the instructions given.
 - b. The warning will be given three times during a five (5) minute period prior to the release of the police canine. The first warning will be the initial warning. The second warning will be delivered two and one-half (2 ½) minutes later. The third and final warning will be given after five (5) minutes has expired and just prior to the police canine being released.
 - c. When feasible, the canine handler will deliver these warnings with a bullhorn.

F. Tracking operations

1. By eyewitness account or positive inference, canine handlers must be able to determine paths taken by suspects or persons to be tracked. This track path must be free and clear of contamination by other persons. On a criminal suspect track, the immediate establishment of a crime scene perimeter is essential. The officer in charge of the scene is responsible for establishing the perimeter.
2. When tracking a criminal suspect(s), a canine team will be accompanied by at least one additional officer who will keep other personnel informed of the direction traveled and progress made. Other personnel should remain out of the immediate area to avoid contamination of the scene and/or track.

G. Limitations on police canine utilization:

1. Canine teams will not be deployed at the scene of any non-violent demonstration, picketing, public gathering, or any other peaceful gathering.
2. Canine teams may be used for crowd control if criminal rioting is occurring or is imminent. Canine teams may be deployed as a back-up unit for public disturbance calls to protect officers whose safety is jeopardized. Police canines assigned to crowd control duties must be short-leashed at all times unless canine deployment is necessary to prevent an imminent threat of death or serious injury to the officer or a third person.

820.7.14 – Damage and/or Injuries Caused by Police Canines

- A. Property damage or injuries caused by a police canine will be immediately reported to an on-duty supervisor.
- B. The canine handler and supervisor are jointly responsible for:
 1. Securing prompt medical treatment for injured persons, including, where appropriate, transportation to a hospital emergency room;

2. Making certain photographs are taken of all damages and injuries;
3. Immediately notifying the Canine Unit supervisor;
4. Conducting or arranging for a full investigation of the circumstances, including interviewing all available witnesses and documenting the incident; and
5. Completing a Department Use of Force investigation when appropriate based on the circumstances.

820.7.15 – Public Demonstrations

Upon request and with the approval of the Canine Unit Supervisor, canine teams may perform canine demonstrations. The Canine Unit Supervisor will maintain all pertinent information regarding the request.

820.7.16 – Retirement of Police Canine

- A. When police canines can no longer be used because of age, health, injury, etc., the canine will be retired, relieving the Department of all financial obligations.
- B. The disposition of a retired police canine is at the discretion of the Chief of Police.
 1. A retired police canine will be offered to the current handler first.
 2. If the current handler is not interested or is unable to assume ownership, any prior handler(s) may express interest in the canine.
 3. If no previous handler is interested or there is no previous handler, other Department employees may express interest in the canine.
 4. If no Department employee is identified as suitable for assuming ownership of the canine, the Canine Unit Supervisor will make a recommendation to the Chief of Police for the disposition of the canine