



**BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE**  
**DD22 Canine Operations**  
**Effective: January 28, 2014**

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**POLICY:** The Burlington Police Department shall attempt to maintain two canine teams that will operate as a component of the Uniform Services Bureau.

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**I. QUALIFICATIONS OF CANINE AND HANDLER**

- A. The Burlington Police Department will utilize Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council (VCJTC) certified canines. Once the canine has been initially certified, it will be retrained as specified by VCJTC. Canine teams shall only perform duties for which they are certified. Attendance at training will be coordinated through the Department's office of Training and Recruitment or the Department's canine supervisor or instructor.
- B. The handler will also be certified through the VCJTC, and he/she will be required to maintain this certification through retraining as directed by VCJTC.
- C. Selection of canine handlers is subject to the collective bargaining process. A strong emphasis during the selection process will be placed on aptitude, skills, knowledge, and demonstrated work in the realm of drug interdiction.

**II. OWNERSHIP OF CANINE**

- A. It is understood that the animal is owned by the City of Burlington and shall remain the property of the City as long as the canine remains active with the Burlington Police Department. The City assumes all liability for the animal's training and behavior, both on and off duty. The City reserves the right to relieve the handler of his/her responsibilities, and reassign the animal to a new handler, for just cause.
  1. When the Department retires the Canine or the Canine is decertified by VCJTC, ownership of the animal reverts to the handler and the City is no longer responsible for the canine in any way.
  2. During the handler's tenure as such, he/she shall register the animal in the municipality in which it resides, listing the owner as the City of Burlington and the handler. The cost of registration shall be borne by the City.

- B. Terms and conditions for compensation of the handler and maintenance of the canine are subject to the collective bargaining process.

### **III. SUPERVISION**

For day to day operations, the Canine teams shall be under the direct supervision of the on duty shift commander. For all other issues related to the Canine teams, the handlers shall be accountable to the Deputy Chief of Operations.

### **IV. USE OF FORCE**

The Burlington Police Department recognizes that use of a specially trained canine constitutes a real or implied use of force. As such, officers may only use that degree of force that is reasonably necessary to achieve a lawful objective. All use of canines shall be consistent with Department Directive.

### **V. GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL INTERACTIONS WITH POLICE CANINES**

- A. The following guidelines are outlines to provide all personnel with information to enhance the safety and efficiency of all interactions with Canines.

1. If the canine handler is incapacitated, do not under any circumstances approach the canine or attempt to render first aid unless failure to do so is likely to result in a fatality. If necessary, control the canine by attempting to have the injured officer control his/her canine, or get a handler who has trained with the canine, or a family member to control the canine. Other alternatives for controlling the canine are the use of CapStun or mechanical devices such as a snare.
2. Never feed the canine without the express approval of the handler.
3. Do not touch or pet the canine in any way without permission from the handler.
4. Always remember that the canine is trained to protect the handler. Anyone making a threatening move or gesture toward the handler risks the possibility of injury. The canine will react without command in such situations as an aggressive pat on the back or a boisterous greeting. Do not approach the handler in an aggressive manner and do not walk up behind the canine and handler or otherwise startle them.
5. Do not under any circumstances agitate the canine. If the canine is alone or in a vehicle, it is normal for it to act in an aggressive manner when approached by a stranger. Police personnel are no exception.
6. If you see the canine acting in an unusual manner due to injury or illness, do not try to correct the problem. Locate the handler and advise him/her of your observations.

### **VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD OFFICERS WHEN WORKING WITH CANINE UNIT**

- A. When it is determined that a canine team is required, the following guidelines shall be observed by all officers on the scene:
  1. Secure the area until the canine team arrives.
  2. Prevent contamination of the area by physical or chemical agents.
    - a. This includes vehicle exhaust and cigarette smoke.

- b. Keep civilian personnel out of the area.
3. Assist the canine team only as requested by the canine officer. If requested, accompany the canine team during the search or tracking.
4. Keep away from windows and doors.
5. Keep loud noises to a minimum.
6. Avoid excessive talking while canine team is working.
7. Extinguish all unnecessary lights and lighting (flashlights, headlights, etc.).
8. In the event of a bite, immediately obtain medical attention for the victim.

## **VII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CANINE HANDLER**

A. Police Canine handlers, in addition to their regular patrol duties, shall be responsible for the following:

1. Routine field and building searches.
2. Assist outside law enforcement agencies when authorized by the Chief of Police or Shift Commander.
3. Determine the proper tactical deployment of the canine in situations where use of the canine is requested.
4. Determine proper use of uniformed officers at the scene as it pertains to the canine team objective.
5. Care for the animal and any equipment assigned to the animal or handler.
  - a. The canine vehicle may be driven to and from work, but shall remain parked at the handler's residence when off-duty.
6. Seek prior authorization for any veterinary services, supplies, or equipment.
7. Promptly report to the Canine Unit Trainer and the Shift Commander any sickness, injury or accident involving the canine.
8. Promptly report, in writing, all details concerning any bite inflicted by the canine.
9. Assure the canine is not left unattended while on duty, except in an emergency situation, or as otherwise authorized.
10. Handlers shall not permit anyone to pet or hug their canine without their immediate supervision.

## **VIII. PERSONNEL AUTHORIZED TO OPERATE CANINE VEHICLE**

When the canine is not in the vehicle, any department employee authorized to operate a fully marked police unit may operate the canine vehicle. If the canine is in the vehicle, only the handler, or another officer directed by the handler, may operate the canine vehicle.

## **IX. PERSONNEL AUTHORIZED TO CONTROL THE CANINE**

Under normal circumstances, the canine handler is the only person authorized to control the canine. In an emergency situation, another handler or officer who has trained with the canine, or a member of the handler's family, may control the canine.

## **X. AUTHORIZED USES OF THE CANINE**

- A. Canine teams will be deployed at the direction of the Shift Commander. The handler, however, has the ultimate responsibility to determine the appropriate use of the canine.
- B. Because canine teams are not trained for such incidents, they shall not be used for crowd control or during incidents of civil protests or riot, except in an emergency, and then only with the approval of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- C. Public relations demonstrations within the City may be approved by the Shift Commander. Requests for demonstrations outside the City shall be approved by the Operations Deputy Chief.

## **XI. INJURY TO THE CANINE**

In any instance where the canine sustains an injury or becomes ill as a result of line of duty work, the handler shall determine the ability of the animal to continue with the mission. The handler shall be responsible for the health, security, and safety of the animal at all times.

## **XII. CANINE BITES**

- A. When a canine bites any person, other than in training exercises, the incident shall be immediately reported to the Shift Commander. A law incident shall be initiated.
- B. When a canine bite occurs, whether or not in the line of duty:
  - 1. Medical attention shall be provided to the victim. Medical personnel should inspect the affected area irrespective of the perceived seriousness of the bite or injury.
  - 2. Photographs of the bite shall be taken, preferably before and after medical treatment.
  - 3. The handler shall forward a detailed copy of the incident to the Operations Deputy Chief *and to the VCJTC Canine Committee which reviews all canine bites in the State of Vermont.*
- C. If the bite occurred on duty, the Shift Commander shall assign another officer to investigate the bite. A copy of this report shall also be forwarded to the Operations Deputy Chief.

## **XIII. APPAREL TO BE WORN**

- A. In order to accommodate the physical demands of the Canine team, the handler shall wear as his/her everyday uniform the following:
  - 1. Fatigue style uniform pants and shirts.
  - 2. Cloth badges.
  - 3. Baseball style uniform hat.
  - 4. White or black t-shirt.
  - 5. The handler shall not be required to wear a necktie and may blouse their uniform pants in their boots if they wish.
- B. Canine handlers shall at all times maintain at least one class-A uniform and 8-point hat suitable for special occasion attire (court, funerals, etc.).

## **XIV. EQUIPMENT TO BE MAINTAINED IN CANINE UNITS**

In addition to all the equipment normally maintained in fully marked police vehicles, the following items shall be kept in canine vehicle at all times:

- a. tracking lead
- b. tracking harness
- c. patrol leash
- d. muzzle

## **XV. MAINTENANCE OF TRAINING/USE RECORDS**

- A. The canine handler shall be responsible for maintaining records for the canine, which shall include the following sections:
  1. Copies of all medical documents.
  2. Copies of all certifications/training documents.
  3. Special events lists.
  4. Copies of all incident reports.
  5. All practice training records.
- B. Originals of all of the above shall be forwarded to the Office of Training and Recruitment on a monthly basis. The handler shall maintain his/her own records with copies of the originals.
- C. The records shall be reviewed monthly by the most senior Canine handler to ensure proper care and documentation.
- D. Each time the canine is used the handler shall complete the required state forms which are maintained in a Burlington Police Department database. At least once a month the handler shall provide a summary of all canine uses to his/her canine supervisor *or instructor*.
- E. A Training Summary Report shall be completed at the conclusion of each training session. A copy of this report shall be forwarded to the Office of Training and Recruitment.

## **XVI. USE OF NARCOTICS FOR TRAINING PURPOSES**

- A. The use of controlled drugs and other contraband may be authorized to assist in the drug detection training of canines.

All requests for controlled drugs and/or contraband shall be made through the Operations Deputy Chief.
- B. All drugs shall be weighed upon sign out to the handler. No more than two ounces of each type of narcotic may be signed out to a handler at once. All narcotics shall be dispensed in a sealed container, and shall be returned with the seal intact.
  1. If the seal is broken, the handler and any other witness to the incident must write a supplement explaining the circumstances. A copy of this report shall be forwarded to the Operations Deputy Chief.
- C. All controlled drugs and other contraband utilized for training shall be stored in a secure location, and it shall be the responsibility of the handler to properly care for the contraband.
  1. Drugs and contraband shall be returned as soon as training is complete. Training drugs shall be stored in a secure lock box in the temporary evidence room. Only K-9 handlers, *the K-9 instructor*, and the ID technicians shall have access to the lock box.
  2. Drugs and contraband shall not be used or transported outside the City of Burlington

without permission from the Operations Deputy Chief.

Reviewed & approved by the Burlington Police Commission on April 26, 2011. Reformatted 11-26-2012.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael E. Schirling", with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

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Michael E. Schirling, Chief of Police

28 January 2014  
Effective Date