

FUNCTIONS OF THE ACCELERANT DETECTION CANINE PROGRAM **9446**
(February 2002)

CONTROL OF CANINES **9446.1**
(February 2002)

The officer assigned as the detection canine handler is primarily responsible for the care, handling, and actions of the detection canine. The following are minimum guidelines for the handler to follow in order to maintain control of the detection canine:

Handlers shall take every precaution to see that canines are not provoked, teased, or otherwise abused.

Handlers shall not permit canines to run at large. When it is necessary to relieve the canines, handlers will take the canine to a proper area and maintain control.

Handlers shall not leave canines unattended in offices or chained in any manner that would allow injury to the canine or any passerby.

Once the canine is returned to the kennel or another specifically designated secure place, the handler is no longer required to exercise immediate control over the canine's actions.

STAFF (NONHANDLER) TRAINING **9446.2**
(February 2002)

The detection canines have been selected and trained by experts. They are, under most circumstances, stable and predictable, fitting nicely into the Department setting. As a canine team, both the handler and the canine will become a common sight throughout their areas.

To familiarize other staff with canine operations, the Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement should distribute various informational memos regarding the program and also provide an opportunity for a detection canine demonstration and discussion.

The following information should be provided to staff as a guideline for behavior when near the canine and when observing the activities of the canine team:

- Do not approach a canine that is tied up;
- Do not run towards or away from the canine or handler;
- Do not attempt to feed or pet the canine;
- Do not open a vehicle door if the canine is inside;
- Do not give the canine commands;
- Do not crowd, bend over, tease or try to confine (hug) the canine;

In summary, it should be reiterated that these detection canines are part of a highly trained team and, as such, are responsive to their handlers. At any time the canine may take aggressive action to defend the handler if it senses a real or implied threat towards the handler. Staff personnel are encouraged to ask questions of the handler regarding canine behavior and accelerant search procedures.

USE OF CANINES AT FIRE SCENES

9446.3

(February 2002)

Generally, there are four types of circumstances where an accelerant detection canine would be used to conduct a search. In all cases, the handler will determine when, and if, the conditions at the scene warrant the use of the canine.

BUILDING SEARCHES

9446.3.1

(February 2002)

Prior to conducting any building search using the detection canine, the handler is responsible for verifying that scene conditions are such that there is minimal risk of injury to the canine. The handler will take control of the scene, if necessary, with the assistance of the fire department or other designated peace officers. The handler will determine the number of persons who will enter the building with her/him during the time the canine is searching the scene.

When conducting building searches, the handler may release the canine off leash, depending on the conditions, and conduct a controlled search. The handler will maintain visual contact with the canine as much as physical conditions allow. Any positive alerts indicated by the canine during the building search will be marked at the direction of the handler.

OPEN AREA SEARCHES

9446.3.2

(February 2002)

The handler will determine, according to the circumstances, when an open area search is to be used. The handler may release the canine off leash, depending on the conditions, and conduct a controlled search. The handler will maintain visual contact with the canine and the canine will remain under the control of the handler at all times. Any positive alerts indicated by the canine during the open area search will be marked at the direction of the handler.

VEHICLE SEARCHES (February 2002)

9446.3.3

Prior to conducting any vehicle search using the detection canine, the handler is responsible for verifying that scene conditions are such that there is minimal risk of injury to the canine. The handler will take control of the scene, if necessary, with the assistance of fire department personnel or other designated peace officers. The handler will determine the manner in which the search will be conducted. Any positive alerts indicated by the canine will be marked at the direction of the handler.

PERSON/GROUP/CROWD SEARCHES (February 2002)

9446.3.4

Under some circumstances, a canine team may be effective in searching persons, small groups, or crowds. In these situations, respect for public sensitivity (and sometimes outright fear) of a canine team requires that unnecessary exposure and confrontation with citizens be avoided. It is the handler's responsibility to assess the situation and authorize the search. The handler's sound judgment, common sense, and Departmental policy should be the determining factors. In making such determinations, the following guidelines should be considered:

- Is there adequate fire or other designated peace officer personnel available to assist in effectively controlling the crowd?
- Is the area such that the handler has adequate working space to properly control the canine during the search?
- Is there an immediate threat to life or property that would be mitigated by use of the canine?

During small group and crowd searches, the canine will be on a short (6 foot) leash and under the handler's control at all times. If, at any time during canine searches involving persons, the canine demonstrates any hostile reaction to any individual or group of individuals, the handler shall immediately terminate the search and remove the canine from the area. The handler will identify any positive alerts indicated by the canine.

CANINE TEAM SUPERVISION (February 2002)

9446.4

The accelerant detection team consists of a handler and canine. The Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement will designate the area(s) where canine teams are assigned. The accelerant detection team's supervisor shall become familiar with policies and requirements for detection teams assigned in their areas. The accelerant detection team supervisor's responsibilities are as follows:

- Schedule and deploy the canine detection team as necessary.
- Ensure that training needs and requirements are met and that all records and reports are current and properly completed.
- Conduct regular inspections of the kennel, equipment, and vehicle of the canine team to ensure that they are properly maintained.
- Ensure that a good working relationship is maintained between the canine team and other Departmental staff.

OTHER AGENCY ASSISTS

9446.5

(February 2002)

The Department's accelerant detection canines are available to any fire department or law enforcement agency requesting assistance. It is the responsibility of the canine handler to inform agencies within his/her jurisdiction of the availability of the detection canine.

The handler may use the canine on any scene in his/her response area during normal business hours without prior approval of a supervisor. The supervisor or the Regional Law Enforcement Coordinator must authorize any response outside the handler's geographic area. Any after hours use of the canine shall conform to the Department's overtime policy. The call out procedure for a detection canine team is the same as for any other local request for assistance from the Department.

The handler will document each use of an accelerant detection canine. Reports shall be completed in accordance with Departmental policy and shall include the following information:

- Date and time of fire;
- Date and time detection team arrived on scene;
- Name of agency having jurisdiction and the incident number (if available);
- Synopsis of the canine's search of the scene and a description of any alerts indicated by the canine;
- Disposition of any evidence collected as the result of canine alerts.

FORMAL CANINE DEMONSTRATIONS

9446.6

(February 2002)

The canine team may, upon request, demonstrate its skills for school groups, service clubs, government agencies, and other groups. Requests for formal demonstrations shall be documented and sent to the handler's supervisor for approval.

In all cases, requests by local agencies for use of detection canines to assist on fire scenes shall take precedence over requests for demonstrations. Canines will not be taken from a fire scene to perform demonstrations.

Canine handler demonstrations are designed to exhibit the best aspects of the canine detection team. The following are guidelines in preparing for canine demonstrations:

- The handler shall be dressed in his/her field uniform and present a professional appearance.
- The canine shall be transported to the location where the demonstration will be held in a canine equipped vehicle.
- The canine shall be leashed at all times, except when the demonstration exercise calls for the canine to be off-leash.

As part of the demonstration, the canine may be walked through the group on-leash. If the handler deems the situation appropriate, she/he may allow individuals to pet the canine. In such cases, the handler will give simple instructions to the group on where and how to pet the canine.

Exhibits can include such items as leashes, collars, medical supplies, training tools, food etc.

Searching exercises should be on-leash and short in duration. Searches should be demonstrated only when the conditions promote a successful exercise free of any conditions that would be harmful to the canine. Off-leash exercises are optional.

The canine handler must strictly limit public participation in any demonstration.

COMPETITIONS

9446.7

(February 2002)

The Department does not sanction canine handler competitions other than those it sponsors. Certain selected events, however, may be determined appropriate. Such events will be reviewed by the Region Law Enforcement Coordinator to determine the relevance to the program, safety of the canine, and to insure that appropriate training occurs. Any requests for canine competitions shall be submitted by the handler in writing to his/her supervisor for approval prior to participation in the event.

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[\(see Forms or Forms Samples\)](#)