



Las Cruces Police Department
GENERAL ORDERS
FIELD OPERATIONS VOLUME 2
GO-226 K-9 UNIT (LESS CRITICAL)
Revised 6/4/2012

226 K-9 UNIT

PURPOSE

This General Order establishes procedures and regulations for the training, use, and administration of K-9 teams employed by the Las Cruces Police Department.

POLICY

The Las Cruces Police Department (LCPD) shall use police K-9s as a cost effective and reliable asset to law enforcement operations.

APPLICABILITY

This General Order applies to all commissioned personnel. This General Order supersedes all previous versions.

REFERENCES

- CALEA 41.1.4
- NMML OPR.01.08
- General Order 255 Use of Force
- Current contractual agreement between the LCPD and Las Cruces Police Officers' Association (LCPOA)

DEFINITIONS

Deployment – any operational use of a K-9

K-9 Team – the partnership of a dog handler and a K-9

226.01 DEPLOYMENT OF K-9 TEAMS

- A. The use of force continuum lists the police K-9 as both a tool and a weapon. Officers shall bear in mind that the use of a K-9 constitutes a use of force and/or the implied threat of the use of force and shall abide by General Order 255 Use of Force. In all but the most extreme cases, the K-9 handler has final authority regarding whether or not the K-9 is deployed.



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B. K-9 teams can be used to search areas and buildings for hidden suspects that might be detected by scent, sound, or sight. K-9 can also be utilized to search open areas for suspects or evidence / articles that a suspect may have discarded. K-9 teams may be deployed to assist in:

1. Apprehending a violent or potentially violent felony and/or misdemeanor offender
2. Article/evidence recovery
3. Building/area searches
4. Crowd control and disbursement
5. Explosive detection
6. Narcotic detection
7. Officer back-up
8. Protection of law enforcement personnel
9. Tactical/SWAT deployment
10. Tracking/trailing of criminal suspects and missing persons
11. Vehicle pursuit termination and foot pursuits
12. Any other situation in which a K-9 may be of use

C. Officers supporting a K-9 team shall provide security for the handler and take custody of any suspect located.

226.02 CALL-OUT PROCEDURES

When a K-9 team is not on-duty, an officer may call for a K-9 team with the authorization of the on-duty supervisor. The K-9 Unit supervisor shall be called to see which team is on-call, and to see if the team who is on-call meets the needs of the request.



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226.03 K-9 WARNING

- A. Verbal warnings and commands shall be given prior to searching any building or area, if practical and safe to do so. A suggested warning is as follows:

“This is the Las Cruces Police Department K-9 Unit. If there anyone inside the building, announce yourself now and surrender or a police dog will be used to find you. The dog will bite you when he finds you. ANNOUNCE YOURSELF NOW!”

This warning may be modified to suit the situation by the handler and only serves as a sample of an appropriate warning. The handler may choose to have this, or other warnings issued via public address system, or by other officers as necessary or practical. MVRDA shall be advised to log the time that the warning was given.

- B. The K-9 team may conduct the search after a reasonable amount of time to allow a person to surrender to police. The handler may choose to conduct the search on-lead or off, as appropriate to the situation.

226.04 DEPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

- A. When a suspect has fled or is fleeing the scene of a crime and a K-9 team is responding, officers should not pursue on foot unless a reasonable chance of apprehension exists.
- B. When an officer is pursuing on foot and loses sight of the offender, the foot pursuit should be immediately terminated, a perimeter secured and held for the K-9 team’s arrival. Officers involved in the initial foot pursuit should note the last direction of travel, obstacles, hiding places, and other potential hazards to brief the K-9 team upon arrival.
- C. Tracking / trailing of criminal suspects and lost persons - Ground scent tracking and wind scent trailing can be useful for following fleeing suspects or lost individuals when the presence of other persons, vehicles or extreme weather conditions do not impair the scent. Officers requesting the assistance of a K-9 team to assist in this type of search should secure an appropriate perimeter to avoid contamination of the scent trail.
- D. Crowd control and Civil Disturbances - In the case of civil disturbances, or other types of crowd control, the K-9 team may be deployed at the discretion of the handler. In the event the K-9 team is to be deployed in crowd control situations, the K-9 shall be



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deployed on lead (6' or shorter). It will be to the discretion of the handler if the K-9 is to be deployed in an agitation muzzle or if the K-9 will be out of muzzle.

- E. Pursuits and apprehension - Use of the K-9 team during pursuits and apprehensions shall be conducted at the handler's discretion. Assisting officers shall allow the K-9 team primary access to the area or path of flight, before conducting any search if practical.
- F. Tactical / SWAT deployments:
 - 1. The K-9 team and the K-9 Unit supervisor shall be consulted prior to deployment as to the appropriateness of using the K-9 and the best method of using the K-9 team(s).
 - 2. Assisting another agency's tactical operations must be approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee in consultation with the K-9 Unit supervisor, prior to deploying a K-9 team(s).

226.05 NARCOTICS DETECTION

- A. A K-9 team certified in narcotics detection may assist in the detection of controlled substances.
- B. Controlled substances used as training aids may be issued to handlers with a K-9 certified in narcotics detection. Controlled substances used for training shall be issued by the Metro Narcotics Agency. These substances shall be kept in a secure area and accounted for at all times. Individual handlers shall be responsible for the training aids issued to them. These aids shall be inspected regularly by the K-9 Unit supervisor for accountability.

226.06 EXPLOSIVES DETECTION

- A. A K-9 team certified in explosives detection may be used for building, vehicle, aircraft and security sweeps. The K-9 Unit supervisor shall be notified prior to deployment or calling out the explosives detection K-9 team.
- B. Scene management:
 - 1. All information obtained shall be made available to the K-9 handler.
 - 2. The K-9 handler shall determine if the K-9 will be deployed.



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3. The search area shall be evacuated, and if possible all fans, blowers, air/heating units will be turned off before the starting the K-9 search.
 4. No one will accompany the K-9 team unless requested by the handler.
 5. The K-9 team shall not enter the search area sixty (60) minutes before, or sixty (60) minutes after a threatened detonation time.
- C. The K-9 team shall be used to search only. The K-9 shall not be used to check a suspicious package for an explosive device.

226.07 GENERAL OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

- A. On-duty K-9 teams shall respond to crimes in progress within the city limits without specific dispatch and shall assist officers in any potentially violent situation where the use of a K-9 may be appropriate. K-9 teams shall advise MVRDA when they are in service and when responding to calls without being dispatched.
- B. K-9 teams shall not transport prisoners.
- C. K-9 teams may assist any law enforcement agency operating within the confines of the city limits.
- D. K-9 teams may assist surrounding agencies upon that agency's request and with the approval of the on-duty supervisor.
- E. K-9 teams shall assist with calls for service and back up other officers as needed.

226.08 K-9 BITE PROCEDURES

- A. In the event a K-9 bites someone the following procedure shall be followed:
1. The injured person shall be afforded medical care as soon as possible.
 2. The K-9 Unit supervisor and Special Services lieutenant shall be notified and a bite investigation shall be conducted by the K-9 Unit supervisor and/or a K-9 certified instructor assigned by the K-9 Unit supervisor. If the K-9 Unit supervisor's K-9 is involved in an engagement, the Special Services lieutenant shall be notified and a bite investigation shall be conducted by a K-9 certified instructor appointed by the Special Services lieutenant. After the investigation, a use of force report and a



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supplement report shall be submitted. All reports shall be forwarded to the Special Services lieutenant for review and approval.

3. Animal Control (ACO) shall be notified on all bite incidents and will conduct a bite report per ACO policies and procedures.
4. Photographs shall be taken by a department photographer. Photographs should include a picture of a cleaned wound area so that photographs accurately reflect the extent of injury in a non-prejudicial manner. All photographs shall be updated to the bite report file.
5. A K-9 involved in a bite incident that is placed on working quarantine, may be allowed to perform regular duties as per the ACO policy.

226.09 TRAINING AND MONTHLY REPORTS

A. K-9 handlers shall:

1. Attend and successfully complete a basic K-9 handler training program, consisting of at least 240 hours of documented training, prior to being placed in service as a K-9 handler.
2. Attend weekly maintenance training with their assigned K-9. Handlers on leave or special assignment shall be allowed to make up training. This training shall be conducted as a unit activity and on a scheduled workday.
3. Maintain current certifications as a K-9 team per department certifications for their assigned duties (i.e., patrol, narcotics etc.). These certifications will be renewed on an annual basis. K-9 teams shall undergo a forty-hour refresher course and re-certify annually. K-9 teams shall undergo a bi-annual evaluation by a K-9 instructor.
4. An evaluation may be requested when a K-9 instructor observes a problem or potential problem with a K-9 team.
5. Certification of the K-9 team may be revoked upon an unsuccessful evaluation. Remedial training shall be administered prior to allowing the K-9 team to attempt re-certification.
6. The K-9 team may be placed back in service after successfully completing remedial training and re-certification.



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- B. A deployment log shall be filled out every time the K-9 is deployed in an official capacity.
- C. A training log shall be filled out every time any training is conducted with the K-9.
- D. Monthly activity reports shall be submitted to the K-9 Unit supervisor for review.
- E. K-9 Unit training reports, field deployment and narcotics reports are maintained by the K-Unit supervisor and shall not be removed from the files without the specific permission of the K-9 Unit supervisor. These records are the property of the department and not the individual officer.

226.10 K-9 CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- A. Handlers assigned to the K-9 Unit shall perform routine care and maintenance of the K-9. Handlers are allotted one-half hour per duty day to complete these tasks and shall receive compensation as outlined in the current labor contract.
- B. Handlers are responsible for maintaining the K-9 in a healthy environment. This includes proper feeding, cleaning, and routine physical inspections. The K-9 handler is responsible for keeping his/her assigned K-9 secured at all times. Handlers shall be provided with a kennel. Kennels shall be secured with a lock or other device to ensure the hasp cannot be opened by the K-9. When the K-9 is left unattended, the K-9 shall be secured to prevent escape.
- C. Handlers are responsible for routine inspection and maintenance of the kennel ensuring no security breaches. Handlers shall immediately notify the K-9 Unit supervisor of any deficiencies with the kennel.
- D. When K-9s are occupying a vehicle, the handler shall ensure that the car is locked and that the K-9 is secure. Handlers shall ensure that the temperature of the vehicle is kept at a safe level. Handlers shall periodically check the welfare of the K-9 housed in a police vehicle when the vehicle is left unattended.
- E. Handlers are responsible for ensuring that the K-9 receives prompt medical care from the contracted veterinarian. The handler is responsible for filing all medical records and receipts in their K-9's medical records file. When a K-9 becomes ill or injured, the handler shall do the following:
 - 1. Stabilize the K-9 and evaluate the illness or injury.



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2. Transport the K-9 to the on-call veterinarian.
 3. Notify the K-9 Unit supervisor.
- F. Handlers shall not permit teasing or harassment of their K-9 or other department K-9s.
- G. Unauthorized exhibitions of a K-9 apprehension and engagement abilities are forbidden.
- H. Handlers shall ensure that employees working in the immediate proximity of the K-9 obey all directions given by the handler and that their actions do not compromise the safety of the handler, the K-9, or the deployment mission. The handler may refuse to deploy if he/she feels that the use of the K-9 is not justifiable, tactically feasible, or is a violation of the K-9 Unit SOP.
- I. K-9s shall not be allowed to breed, as they are the property of the City of Las Cruces.

226.11 INJURED K-9 HANDLER

- A. If a K-9 handler is injured or killed, there is a high probability the K-9 will stand guard over the handler. In that situation the following procedures should be followed:
1. Do not rush toward the handler or the K-9.
 2. Call out to the handler to see if they can control the K-9.
 3. Call for another K-9 handler to assist.
 4. The handler's police vehicle has a bite sleeve in the trunk that can be used to lure the K-9 away from the injured handler.
 5. Request ACO to assist with restraining the K-9.
 6. An electronic control device (ECD) may be used to control the K-9.
 7. As a last resort, the K-9 may be euthanized.

226.12 K-9 UNIT SUPERVISOR

- A. The K-9 Unit supervisor's duties include, but are not limited to:



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1. Reviewing and maintaining K-9 Unit training reports, field deployment and narcotics reports
2. Evaluating K-9 training and K-9 team performance
3. Coordinating all community relations and demonstrations
4. Coordinating with other agencies
5. Keeping the chain of command informed on the K-9 Unit operations
6. Doing a quarterly inventory and weigh-in of narcotic and explosive training aids.
7. Replacing narcotic and explosive training aids to maintain integrity of training and diminish contamination of training aids.

226.13 UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

- A. K-9 handlers shall only wear department approved uniforms.
- B. K-9 handlers shall be issued the following equipment and shall be responsible for the proper care and maintenance of this equipment.
 1. Nylon duty gear. Handlers may be issued tactical holsters and lighting systems for their duty weapon. Handlers shall not wear nylon gear with the Class A uniform.
 2. Care, maintenance, and deployment equipment:
 - a. Traffic lead
 - b. Patrol lead
 - c. Tracking lead
 - d. Agitation muzzle, leather German basket style
 - e. Stainless steel prong collar
 - f. Fursaver collar
 - g. Electric collar (with K-9 Unit supervisor approval)



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- h. Feed pan
- i. Water pan
- j. Dog brush
- k. Fur rake
- l. Kennel

C. Handlers shall notify the K-9 Unit supervisor if equipment becomes unserviceable and needs to be replaced. All K-9 Unit equipment shall be returned when the handler leaves the service of the K-9 Unit.

226.14 K-9 RETIREMENT

When a K-9 is no longer able to perform its duties, due to age or health it shall be retired. The current handler, and subsequently its former handler, will be given the option to adopt the K-9 free of charge at the discretion of the Chief of Police. If no handler wants the retired K-9, then other options may be explored for the K-9 to be adopted with the approval of the Chief. The City of Las Cruces shall be free of any future liability, costs, or claims of ownership involved with the retiring K-9 as a condition of adoption. Release of liability shall be coordinated with the City Attorney's office.