DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Policy Number:	**301.120**
Title:	**Canine Units**
Effective Date:	**12/15/20**

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for implementing and managing canine units assigned to and operating within adult facilities in accordance to incident command system (ICS) procedures.

Mission: to enhance facility security by conducting searches and providing an additional response element for ICS situations.

Goal: to assist in maintaining facility security and safety through detection of contraband and assisting with ICS situation resolution.

Objective: to accomplish its goal while minimizing likelihood of injury to staff, visitors, and offenders.

APPLICABILITY: All adult correctional facilities

DEFINITIONS:

E-Collar – a collar used as a training device that sends an electric stimulation or warning sound to the dog when the trainer uses an electronic signal.

Incident command system (ICS) – the standard operating procedure for staff response during situations of a non-routine nature.

Law enforcement technology group (LETG) canine tracker – software used by canine teams to track canine training and certifications.

Narcotics – controlled substances, including such examples as marijuana, opium derivatives (cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamines), and synthetic drugs.

National Police Canine Association (NPCA) – a national professional canine handling association, which offers training and canine information.

Police dog title – a rating that identifies the level of training that a dog has received in tracking, obedience, handler protection, criminal apprehension, article search, and agility.

Single-purpose dog – a dog used strictly for location with no apprehension functions, which is normally used just for tracking and for the detection of contraband.

United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) – a national professional canine handling association, which offers training, legal assistance, and canine information.

PROCEDURES:

A. Administration

1. Trained canine units must be established in adult facilities, as authorized by the deputy commissioner of facility services, and made available to other facilities as needed.

2. The wardens of adult facilities, in coordination with the deputy commissioner of facility services, have the authority to establish and deploy canine units.

3. All requests for canine unit assistance outside of the assigned facility must be approved in advance by the warden or designee.

4. All joint powers agreements pursuant to Minn. Stat. §241.01, subd. 7 and Minn. Stat. §471.59, subd. 1, must be reviewed by the central office policy/legal services unit for consistency and for the appropriate format compliance.

5. A canine unit is composed of, at a minimum, one canine handler and one dog with multiple abilities (such as obedience, agility, suspect search, article search, building search, area search, apprehension, handler protection, and narcotics detection), certified by the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA).

6. Corrections captains have the management responsibility for canine units. Actual program coordination must not be delegated to those below the level of corrections lieutenant.

7. All canine units with police dog titles must be designated as incident command system (ICS) responders by the appropriate supervisory staff, and are deployed as necessary.

8. In order to meet certification standards for narcotics detection as defined by the USPCA, facility canine units must maintain a supply of controlled substance narcotics as canine training aids.

B. Canine selection

1. As a general rule, the Belgian Malinois mix and the German Shepherd are the authorized breeds for police dogs. Single-purpose dogs may be multi-breed dogs.

2. Female canines must be spayed prior to purchase. Canines must not be used for breeding purposes.

3. The selected police dog or single-purpose dog canine must be 12 to 36 months old.
   a) A USPCA certified trainer/handler must be involved in the selection process.

   b) The hips, teeth, back, and shoulders must be documented as being sound prior to purchase.

4. The warden, at the warden's discretion, may replace canines that have been taken out of service.

C. Handler selection

1. The warden of each facility with authorized canine units must select one handler for each dog, in accordance with existing bargaining unit and labor agreements.

2. The handler, in normal circumstances, must only work with the currently assigned dogs. The canine team must not be assigned collateral duties except for situations specifically outlined by the warden.

3. The handler must be able to care for the canine, control it, and get the utmost productivity from the dog.

4. The handler must be provided canine equipment, leashes and muzzles as necessary to train and deploy the canine.

5. The warden may reassign a specific dog to another handler, who has received or is receiving basic patrol dog training, at the warden's discretion.

6. Physical fitness requirements - refer to Policy 103.016 "Pre-Placement Physical Exam Screening and Drug Testing."

7. Handlers who elect to leave the canine position must serve a probationary period in the classification to which they transfer, if they have not served a probationary period in that classification previously.

D. Training of canines and handlers

1. Each canine handler must be matched and trained with the selected canine in order to ensure their utmost performance. The entire initial training process must be accomplished at a USPCA/NPCA training site.

2. Entry level training for the police dog canine and handler must be certified at basic police dog standards and the curriculum must cover:
   a) Legal issues;
   b) Escape prevention;
   c) Contraband detection, including narcotics;
   d) Building searches;
   e) Control and obedience exercises; and
   f) Apprehension and handler protection.

3. Entry level training for a single-purpose dog and handler, must cover:
   a) Legal issues;
   b) Contraband detection, including narcotics; and
   c) Control and obedience exercises.

4. The initial handler development certificate or yearly USPCA/NPCA re-certification is mandatory. The facility must make available any refresher training deemed necessary for the canine and handler.

5. In the event a canine unit does not attain re-certification (one each calendar year), the canine must be immediately removed from service. The warden determines the time for additional training and/or preparation for re-certification.

6. All training and retraining must be appropriately documented by the handler and maintained on the law enforcement technology group (LETG) canine tracker. Documentation must be available to the captain and the employee development office.

7. Canine decoys/agitators must work with the canine handlers for training purposes.
   a) These staff must be selected by the supervising captain or lieutenant.

b) All staff acting as canine decoys/agitators must be members of the USPCA or NPCA.

8. Handlers must be trained on proper humane use of E-Collars. The use must be recommended by a non-DOC, certified USPCA/NPCA trainer prior to any use on the police dog canine.

E. Handler responsibilities

1. Each handler is responsible for the canine's care. The handler must properly perform routine duties ensuring adequate care and maintaining the integrity of the canine program.

2. A handler must not leave a canine unattended in a vehicle for an extended period of time.

a) Handlers must leave vehicle windows slightly open for ventilation and the circulation fan turned on when leaving a canine in the vehicle.

b) Prolonged isolation on a hot day, even with ventilation, may cause the canine discomfort, injury, and/or death.

c) A vehicle equipped with a secure partition and air circulation fan is available to handlers when needed.

3. Handlers must maintain a daily record of canine grooming using the LETG canine tracker, training and tactical operations, and medical check-ups for submission to the captain or assigned canine unit supervisor. All confiscated contraband or material must be handled in accordance with Policies 301.030, "Contraband," and 302.250, "Offender Property."

4. Handlers are required to give clear commands to the canine in the language in which the canine was trained.

F. Canine deployment guidelines

1. Prior to deployment, any canine must possess, at a minimum, one of the following:

a) A USPCA police dog I (PD1) title, or

b) A class certificate from a USPCA-certified school, which remains valid until regional certification trials the following calendar year.

c) A class certificate from an NPCA-certified school, valid until a USPCA certificate can be obtained; the USPCA certificate must be obtained as soon as a class is scheduled and, at the latest, within one year.

2. A handler is responsible for the canine's actions and tactical use. A handler must ensure that a request for canine tactical use does not violate department policy.

3. Under routine circumstances, police dog canines must never be allowed to freely roam inside a facility, on facility property, or be trained to respond to any command not learned in a training school.

4. Only appropriately trained staff and USPCA/NPCA-certified canine units must be used to detect and deter illegal drug use, and search for persons as directed by the canine unit supervisory staff.

5. During the search of an occupied area or housing unit, the canine must remain on a leash until offenders are secure or clear of the area.

6. Police dog canines may be used to search offenders, using the facility barrier sniff training method.

7. A single-purpose canines may be used to search offenders, visitors, and staff if the canine is trained to passively indicate the presence of narcotics.

8. Canine units must not routinely tour food and health services areas, but may enter these areas with probable cause or during an emergency response.

9. Handlers are responsible to ensure that the police dog canine is wearing a functional e-collar during all working and training deployments.

10. Canines may be used to search for escaped offenders or to secure an area. Handlers must issue clear directions or warnings prior to releasing a canine from a leash.

11. Police dog canine units must respond to ICS situations, as directed by the supervising staff.
    a) During ICS situations, whenever a canine becomes involved in a use of force situation, proper notification must be made and documented in accordance with Policy 301.081, "Use of Force and Restraints."

    b) The Pinion Restraint, Canine Bite, and Chemical Irritant Review form (attached) must be completed.

12. A canine must not normally be taken into a public place unless it is an act of official duty. Canines on unofficial duty status in public places must be leashed. If the handler deems it necessary, the canine may be muzzled.

13. If, while in the line of duty, a public safety dog is harmed or killed, DOC staff must follow Minn. Stat. 609.596 regarding additional charges.

14. Each facility with a single-purpose dog must develop an operating guideline including procedures for staff searches, visiting room searches, and offender searches.
    a) The presence of the single-purpose canine is used to psychologically deter and physically detect narcotics.

    b) The single-purpose canine must not be used in any show of force or use of force situation.

    c) Before responding to an ICS, the handler of a single-purpose canine must secure the canine, either in the K9 vehicle away from offender traffic, or in a K9 holding pen.

G. Guidelines for non-handler staff
1. Staff not assigned to the canine unit must not enter buildings or areas being searched by the canine unit without the approval of the supervising lieutenant/watch commander and canine handler.

2. Staff must not run in front of a canine unless responding to an emergency situation.

3. Staff must never make an aggressive gesture toward the dog or handler. At no time may an employee other than the handler attempt to give commands to the canine.

4. Staff must never attempt to touch, handle, or feed a canine without the handler's approval.

5. No one other than the handler may attempt to enter or retrieve anything from a canine unit vehicle or kennel if the canine is present.

H. Health, care, and feeding of canines

1. Exercise and feeding

a) The handler must exercise the canine daily.

b) A small obstacle course with at least four obstacles should be constructed so that the canine may maintain a high level of fitness.

c) The handler must provide the canine with the proper amount of daily food consumption that ensures proper nutrition so that the canine stays fit, agile, muscular, and in excellent health.

2. Medical care

Each canine must receive regular medical care to maintain its peak condition. This includes such examples as the following:

a) Each canine must semi-annually receive (or when unusual behavior is apparent as a result of illness or injury) a medical examination by a licensed veterinarian. The handler must maintain yearly health and immunization records logged in the LETG canine tracker for rabies, distemper, and parvo.

b) Each canine must receive a maintained, veterinarian-approved diet and a required medication schedule (e.g., heartworm pills, vitamins, and any other medication as prescribed).

c) In the event of a serious injury or illness, when it is not feasible to care for the canine at a veterinarian clinic, the warden may, with the recommendation from the licensed veterinarian, authorize duty time for the handler to care for the canine at the handler's residence.

d) Under normal circumstances, the working life of a canine must be eight to ten years.

(1) After that time, the usefulness of the animal must be determined.

(2) If a licensed veterinarian determines the canine to be medically unfit or unhealthy, the dog may be euthanized or retired (see Policy 104.350, “Fixed Asset Management”).

e)

(1) Handlers who wish to keep the canine after it has been retired may submit a request to the warden.

(2) A retired canine may be donated to a certified law enforcement canine rehabilitation organization such as the Warrior Dog Foundation.

(3) In all cases, the warden must handle the disposition of the canine in accordance with the Minnesota statute governing the handling of state property.

(a) A property disposition request must be completed.

(b) A canine waiver and release of liability must be completed (see Policy 104.350, "Fixed Asset/Property Management," Form G, "Canine Waiver and Release of Liability" (also linked below).

(c) If DOC is transporting the canine, any necessary authorization for travel must be completed.

3. Kennels

a) In normal circumstances, each canine must be housed in a kennel at the handler's residence; exceptions may be authorized by the warden or designee.

(1) Kennels must be constructed with a chain link fence enclosing the perimeter and must be mounted on a six by twelve foot concrete floor.

(2) The canine housing area must be constructed of wood or plastic and be insulated so that it maintains a comfortable temperature for the canine. The kennel must not be elaborate or allow the canine to become acclimated to the kennel climate rather than the outside atmosphere.

(3) If more than one canine is housed in the kennel, a partition must be installed between each stall to prevent the canines from agitating each other.

(4) At no time must more than two canines be housed in a kennel.

b) The kennel area must be cleaned daily and individual stalls must be cleaned and sanitized with a suitable disinfectant and water solution.

(1) Canine handlers are responsible for cleaning the kennel.

(2) Canine supervisors must annually inspect kennels and document the inspection as part of the handler's annual performance review.

c) Kennels constructed prior to this policy are authorized and need not be changed unless authorized by the warden or designee.

4. Offenders must never be allowed access to the canine or associated canine unit items, such as kennel, food, or bedding.

I. Narcotics Handling

1. The canine unit supervisor must ensure that each handler is registered with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to procure narcotics/controlled substances for training purposes.

2. When narcotics/controlled substances have been received at the facility from the DEA, the handler, the canine unit supervisor and a facility office of special investigations (OSI) staff must begin the inventory documentation of the narcotics by logging and weighing all the substances that have been received for training purposes. The Controlled Substance Register (attached) must be used.

3. Storage

Narcotics and other controlled substances must be stored in the armory in a combination locked and secured safe only accessible to the handler and key officers. Within the safe, the narcotics/controlled substances must be stored in an air-tight container that minimizes cross contamination of substances and maximizes the shelf life of the narcotic.

4. Accountability

The handler and the key officer are the only staff allowed to access the K-9 controlled substance training aids stored in the armory.

a) Access to the armory is granted per Division Directive 301.045 "Perimeter Management."

b) When a handler wishes to draw controlled substance from the storage for training purposes, the handler must:

(1) Inform the watch commander that training is to be conducted and the specific location of the training;

(2) Fill out all information on the Controlled Substance Register kept in the controlled substance safe in the armory;

(3) Obtain a second signature as witness for the controlled Substance Register from a lieutenant or higher ranked officer;

(4) Weigh each controlled substance separately at the time the narcotic is removed and again when it is returned. (Due to humidity and training factors, weights may differ slightly. If there is more than a 0.10 gram change for all non-leafy substances or a 0.25 gram change for all leafy substances, a confidential incident report must be written by the handler); and

(5) Note the time of return and weight on the Controlled Substance Register. The handler must obtain a second signature from a lieutenant or higher ranked officer

5. Quarterly weights

All canine narcotics/controlled substance training aids must be weighted and inventoried quarterly by the handler, canine supervisor and the facility OSI investigator. This inventory must be recorded on the controlled Substance Register. Due to humidity and training factors, weights may differ slightly. If there is more than a 0.10 gram change for all non-leafy substances or 0.25 gram change for all leafy substances, a confidential incident report must be written.

6. Use in training

The handler who checks out a controlled substance for training purposes is responsible for the security of the article at all times.

a) The handler may train within or outside the secure perimeter after notifying the watch commander; and

b) If training occurs within an offender living area or an area occupied by offenders, the controlled substance must be behind a locked door in an area cleared of offenders, and the locked door must be continuously visually maintained by security staff until entry by the canine team.

7. Disposal

Controlled substances used for K-9 narcotics training must be occasionally replaced due to chemical degradation of the substance.

a) When narcotics are determined by the handler to no longer be useable, they must be removed from the safe by the canine supervisor, weighed, logged, and witnessed; then given to the facility OSI investigator for appropriate disposal as determined by the OSI director/designee.

b) The OSI investigator must log the narcotics per Policy 301.035, "Evidence Management."

c) New narcotics cannot be procured from DEA without proof that the initial narcotics were destroyed. Destruction must be done by a MNDOC sworn law enforcement officer within OSI at a state licensed incinerator.

J. Corrections Decoy Hiring Process

1. The facility captain must e-mail all facilities asking for qualified applicants to submit their resumes if they are interested in being a decoy for the canine program.

2. Minimum requirements for decoys

a) Physical fitness
A physical fitness test must be administered on the day of tryouts, and must include a one-mile run, one minute of at least 50 pushups, and one minute of at least 25 situps.

b) Applicants must have a minimum of two years of work experience as a corrections officer 2 with MNDOC.

c) The applicant's current performance review and performance reviews during the last two complete fiscal years must reflect an overall satisfactory rating or higher.

d) The applicant must have 18 months of work experience within the last 24 months performing correctional officer work with the MNDOC. (NOTE: This may include a work-out-of-class (WOOC) assignment or temporary unclassified appointment to another DOC position if a principal responsibility is monitoring/supervising offenders/residents.

e) Applicants may not have any written reprimands within the last 12 months and must have no suspensions or greater discipline within the last 36 months.

f) Applicants must be able to follow directions, and must be able to read dogs' behavior during stressful situations (for example, be able to read dogs' body language while being bitten).

3. Preferred qualifications for decoys
The following qualification are strongly desired of applicants seeking considerations for a decoy position:

a) Experience or training in showing, raising, or breeding dogs;

b) Special operations response team (SORT) or A-Team/security squad experience; or

c) Completion of mandatory and additional job-related training.

4. From the applicant pool, the top seven are picked to attend a day with the K9 teams and tested on their abilities to perform decoy duties. Current MNDOC K9 handlers and their partners must run the applicants through a variety of tests and then the handlers provide a written summary of the day for each applicant and rank them in order of the most qualified. The handlers must forward those reports to the captain, who meets with the K9 handlers of the facility to finalize their picks for decoy.

K. All cost connected with the canine units is funded by the respective facility unless otherwise authorized by the assistant commissioner of facility services.

INTERNAL CONTROLS:

A. Training, certification, veterinary care, and grooming records are retained in the LETG canine tracking software.

B. Narcotics for canine training are inventoried and tracked on the Controlled Substance Register, which is retained in the controlled substance safe in the armory.

ACA STANDARDS: 4-4192, 4-4208, 4-4209, 4-4210, 2-C0-3A-01, 1-ABC-3A-17

REFERENCES: Minn. Stat. §§ 471.59, subd. 1; 241.01, subd. 7; and 609.596
Policy 301.030, "Contraband"
Policy 301.081, "Use of Force and Restraints – Adult"
Policy 301.140, "Incident Command System"
Policy 302.250, "Offender Property"
Policy 103.016, "Pre-Placement Medical Exam and Evaluation"
Policy 104.4615, "Use of State Vehicles"
Policy 104.350, "Fixed Asset/Property Management"

REPLACES: Policy 301.120, "Canine Units," 9/3/19.
All facility policies, memos, or other communications whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic.

ATTACHMENTS: K-9 Unit Daily Log (301.120A)
K-9 Law Enforcement Assistance Log (301.120C)
Controlled Substance Register (301.120F)
Pinion Restraint, Canine Bite and Chemical Irritant Review form (301.081B)
Canine Waiver and Release of Liability form (104.350G, on DOC Budget iShare site)

APPROVED BY:
Deputy Commissioner, Reintegration and Restorative Services
Deputy Commissioner, Facility Safety and Security
Assistant Commissioner, Organizational and Regulatory Services
Assistant Commissioner, Research, Policy, and Organizational Performance
Assistant Commissioner, Health, Recovery, and Programming
Assistant Commissioner, Orientation, Assessment, and Program Planning