2022

MODEL CANINE POLICY

**Revised:** December 18, 2022

**Note:** Any agency adopting this policy in part or on the whole must thoroughly review this policy to ensure consistency with current state/local law, agency ‘use of force’ and other existing policies, training requirements, and agency expectations and should revise as necessary to ensure compliance with such standards.

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**This policy is a best practices model for agencies in the process of reform or endeavoring to modify and revise policies to remain consistent with law and contemporary national best practices.**

**Note**: The River City Police Department is a fictional model agency

**RIVER CITY POLICE CANINE POLICY**

**Effective date:**

# POLICE CANINES

* 1. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The River City Police Canine Program was established to supplement police services to the community. Police canines have proven to be an invaluable resource for effective police operations in the City of River City. This policy governs the operation of the River City Police Canine Unit and the deployment and use of police canines.

# POLICY

It is the policy of the River City Police Department (department) that police canines may be used as a search tool to track and or locate contraband, missing persons, or items of evidence; and may be deployed to track, locate, and apprehend individuals suspected of committing a serious crime.

# DEFINITIONS

**Accidental canine bite**. Any bite to any person that is an intended consequence of the deployment (contact or directed bite).

**Body Worn Camera (BWC).** The approved video recording system worn by officers.

**Canine (Administrative) Manual**. The department manual governs the general, non-operational guidelines and administrative procedures related to the Canine Unit, including reporting, administrative records, training, and canine care and maintenance.

**Note**: In the event of any conflict, this policy takes precedence in all areas of police canine operations.

**Canine Supervisor**. The department supervisor assigned to oversee the Canine Unit responsible for operational leadership and administrative oversight, including review of all canine activities and reports and all training-related matters.

**Canine team.** A certified department canine and an assigned handler (Certified Canine Team).

**Contact bite**. A canine bite that occurs subsequent to a search and finds of a suspect who is in an accessible area; a contact bite is considered a use of force (UOF) and will be documented according to this policy.

**Canine Deployment Report (CDR).** The administrative, internal report designed for the department's assessment of the canine deployment is intended to identify training needs and collects data; the CDR is not part of the crime report. The CDR may be part of an approved online tracking system.

**Canine Training Record (CTR).** The file required for all canines/teams which are comprised of records related to formal and informal training, certification(s), and other data as required by the department.

**Conventional police tactics.** Use of non-specialized police tactics and training, including the use of non-lethal and less-lethal (less than lethal) force options or devices.

**Directed bite**. Direct deployment (bite) of a police canine as a force option to control and or apprehend a suspect.

**Exceptional circumstances**. Clearly articulable facts and circumstances which objectively support a deviation from established standards and this policy.

**Exigent circumstances**. Conditions requiring immediate police action where the delay could cause death or serious injury to officers or a member of the public.

**Hard out (Tactical out**). The act of physically removing the PSD from an active bite versus verbal call-off (recall).

**Incident Commander (IC).** Individual with general authority and responsibility over an operational incident (i.e., responsible on-scene supervisor, senior or handling/primary officer).

**Incident Command Post (ICP).** The identified centralized location where all planning occurs, often at the point where search activities are coordinated (i.e., pursuit termination point).

**Pain compliance**. Any technique that produces pain stimulation intended to stop the actions of the suspect and cause them to comply with the officer's direction.

**Police Service Dog (PSD).** Reference to an individual police canine; interchangeable with the formal term and title of police 'canine' (or ‘K9’) within various department policies, documents, and guidelines.

**Post Bite Assessment (PBA).** The canine supervisor's formal (internal) assessment of the deployment and use of the canine in each incident to identify training issues or lessons learned for the handler, the Unit, or the department.

**Less-lethal (less-than-lethal) control devices.** Impact weapons (i.e., bean bag shotgun), electronic control weapons (ECW), or other devices, as defined by the department UOF related policies.

**Serious crime**. Any violent felony crime (i.e., ADW, Robbery, etc.); or crime where the suspect is believed to be armed with a firearm based on the facts known to the officer(s) at the time.1

**Significant area of deficiency**. A noted deficiency in performance due to magnitude (impact) or frequency (chronic in nature) which creates a reasonable concern for the safety of officers and or the community. Examples include repeated chronic failures to call off or out from a bite, a pattern of accidental bites (poor targeting), refusing to bite when directed, or consistent or repeated inability to locate suspects.

**Supplemental Crime Report (SCR).** Report completed by the handler which is part of the crime report.

# GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF CANINES – SEARCH FOR CRIMINAL SUSPECT

A canine may be deployed if there is probable cause that the suspect has committed a serious crime and is actively hiding or fleeing from police, and the use of a canine would be an effective tactical resource. Because the canine handler's decision to deploy his/her (their) PSD may result in a contact bite, the deployment must meet specified criteria.

## Deployment – Activation of Body Worn Cameras

Consistent with agency policy and absent exigent or exceptional circumstances, handers shall activate their assigned BWC upon arrival at the incident, prior to canine deployment. Such activation should capture initial briefing information and all announcements and warnings and continue in *active* mode through the operational use of the canine as consistent with the department's BWC policy.

Before the initiation of any search or arrest (tactical) plan, all participating search or arrest team members shall activate their BWCs. All cameras shall remain in active mode until deactivation is approved by the IC or on-scene supervisor.

## Deployment – Criteria

Upon arriving at the scene, the responding canine handler shall meet with the IC or primary officer, obtain a full briefing, and make an assessment to include the following considerations:

* The nature and severity of the involved crime(s)
* Whether the suspect is attempting to escape or evade arrest
* The threat posed to the community and or officers by the outstanding suspect

1 Policies should designate specific felony crimes.

Additionally, when feasible, the handler should take into consideration the following factors based on information known at the time of deployment:

* Approximate age of the suspect
* Any known mental illness
* Any known developmental disability (i.e., autism spectrum disorder)
* Degree of intoxication if known
* Any other material considerations or factors

Upon assessing the facts and circumstances, the handler may decide to deploy their canine when a search without a canine would present a danger to police personnel.

## Deployment – Supervisory concurrence

Upon determining that the deployment criteria have been met, the canine handler shall contact and brief an on-scene supervisor and obtain approval for the deployment. When no supervisor is on the scene, the canine handler shall obtain approval from any field supervisor, or when no field supervisor is available, from the watch commander. The approving supervisor should respond to the scene when possible and should ensure that they are fully briefed before approving the deployment. The approving supervisor is accountable for ensuring that the criteria for deployment are met.

**Note:** In exigent circumstances, the canine handler may make the decision to deploy their canine absent supervisory approval. The canine handler is accountable for the decision based on clear, articulable exigent circumstances and shall only do so when deployment meets the established criteria and they have considered all risks to officers and the community.

## Deployment – Tactical control

Upon obtaining supervisory approval, the canine handler should coordinate control of the tactical environment to ensure that effective containment is in place and that any necessary resources, such as less-lethal devices or other force options, are present. The role of IC should be assumed by someone other than the canine handler so the handler can focus on their responsibilities.

**Note:** When the deployment is part of a coordinated tactical plan such as a SWAT-controlled operation or search warrant execution, the canine handler shall coordinate their responsibilities with the involved IC (i.e., SWAT commander), who shall retain overall operational control of the incident.

The canine handler shall ensure that they have an effective and properly equipped search team prior to deployment; and shall fully brief the search team at the ICP or search initiation point prior to the search. Each search team shall be equipped with at least one less-lethal force option, such as a TASER, Beanbag Shotgun, or 40mm Launcher, as consistent with department policy and the operational plan.

Additionally, the handler is responsible for ensuring additional logistical resources are requested and utilized as needed, such as canine tactical body armor, ballistic shields, or video equipment.

Upon conclusion of the deployment and when operationally feasible (i.e., pending crime scene processing, recovery of evidence, etc.), the handler shall notify the IC or on-scene supervisor to ensure that the operational area can be returned to normal as soon as possible.

## Deployment - Suspect contact

Although the PSD may bite a suspect who is accessible (i.e., hiding in an open or wooded area, under a vehicle, etc.); absent exceptional circumstances, when a PSD successfully locates a suspect that is secreted, concealed, or otherwise not accessible (i.e., room, shed, elevated position, closed garage, etc.), the canine handler should contain the location and maintain control of the PSD. A tactical arrest plan should then be developed to take the suspect into custody as safely as possible using conventional police tactics. The tactical plan should include de-escalation efforts (i.e., verbalization and warnings) to gain the suspect's compliance.

Consistent with the department's UOF Policy, the tactical arrest plan may include the use of reasonable force options to take the suspect into custody. Such a plan may include a directed bite when other options have been exhausted or would be impractical. (see Directed bite).

**Note:** If the IC or on-scene supervisor designates the incident as a *barricaded suspect* event, related department protocols shall be followed.

# CANINE SEARCH ANNOUNCEMENT AND WARNING

It is the department's objective to ensure that suspects are given sufficient opportunity to surrender and avoid injury whenever possible. Absent exceptional or exigent circumstances, canine handlers shall ensure that the designated general search announcement and warning are given no less than two (2) times before releasing their PSD. The search announcement and warning should be;

* + - made in whatever manner ensures that it is clearly audible throughout the search area (i.e., by PA system, Long Range Acoustic Device, helicopter, etc.);
    - repeated at various levels/floors or areas of a building as appropriate and;
    - recorded by the most appropriate method.

**Note**: Such recordation should be formally facilitated at the ICP or by the IC (or search team), so the canine handler can focus on the search operation. Efforts should be made (and documented) to confirm that the announcement is audible

throughout the search area (i.e., heard by all perimeter officers, etc.), and such confirmation should be documented in related reports.

General search announcement and warning (example):

*"To the person or persons hiding from the police, make your location known to us immediately, put down all weapons, come out with your hands raised and follow directions. If you do not, a police dog will be used to find you. If the dog finds you, you may be bitten; you have [one minute2] to surrender."*

The suspect may be immobile or unable to exit and might respond and surrender verbally. The handler shall ensure that on-scene personnel (i.e., all perimeter and containment personnel) are vigilant for any attempts by the suspect to surrender (i.e., shouts of surrender, etc.), in which case appropriate conventional police tactics should be used to control and secure the suspect.

**Note:** This announcement may be modified based on the facts known (i.e., use of suspect's name, etc.) or the tactical or environmental conditions.

The canine handler shall wait a reasonable amount of time to allow the suspect to respond, no less than [one (1) minute], and then the announcement and warning shall be repeated, adding:

… *"this is your final warning."*

When one (1) minute has elapsed after the second announcement and warning, the canine may be deployed.

**Note**: The time(s) provided may be modified as reasonable based on the tactical and environmental conditions or existing exceptional circumstances.

## Community announcement and warning

When feasible, in addition to the general search announcement and warning, prior to the deployment of the canine in any active residential or business area (i.e., neighborhood, apartment project, business park, etc.), the handler should ensure an attempt is made to warn the community via the most appropriate means, that a police canine will be deployed. Below is an example of such a warning combined with a general warning and announcement:

*"This is the River City Police Department. We are searching for a criminal* (and or *armed*) *suspect and preparing to use a police dog. For your safety, please go inside your home or business and stay inside and secure all pets until we have completed our search.*

2 Determined time period

*"To the person or persons hiding from the police, make your location known to us immediately, put down all weapons, come out with your hands raised and follow directions. If you do not, a police dog will be used to find you. If the dog finds you, you may be bitten; you have one minute to surrender."*

## Announcement and warning - Other languages

In all incidents where a general or community search announcement and warning are given, the handler should do their best to determine whether a language other than English would be appropriate (i.e., known Spanish-speaking suspect or community), then make all efforts (in coordination with the IC) to obtain a person fluent in that language who can give an additional search announcement and warning in the appropriate language - or use a standardized or recorded announcement as appropriate.

For example:

Spanish standardized general announcement and warning:

*“A la persona o personas que se esconden de la policía, háganos saber su ubicación de inmediato, suelte todas las armas, levante las manos y siga las instrucciones. Si no lo haces, un perro policía será utilizado para encontrarte. Si el perro te encuentra, puedes ser mordido. Tienes un minuto para rendirte.* "

This is your final warning:

"*Esta es tu advertencia final*".

Spanish combined - community announcement and warning:

*“Este es el Departamento de Policía de River City, estamos buscando a un sospechoso y preparándonos para usar un perro policía. Para su seguridad, entre en su casa o negocio y permanezca adentro y asegure a todas las mascotas hasta que hayamos completado nuestra búsqueda.”*

*“A la persona o personas que se esconden de la policía, háganos saber su ubicación de inmediato, suelte todas las armas, levante las manos y siga las instrucciones. Si no lo haces, un perro policía será utilizado para encontrarte. Si el perro te encuentra, puedes ser mordido. Tienes un minuto para rendirte."*

## Exigent circumstances – No warning

In exceptional circumstances, the handler may request authorization from an on-scene supervisor (or when there is no supervisor on scene, from the on-duty watch commander) to refrain from giving a search announcement and warning - but should only do so upon careful consideration of the tactical consequences and the risks posed to officers, the community, and the suspect. The supervisor shall be accountable for any such waiver.

# DIRECTED CANINE BITE

There are circumstances when a canine handler may direct their PSD to bite a suspect who has committed a serious crime when such deployment is objectively reasonable, and consistent with the department’s use of force policy. 3

A canine handler's decision to direct a bite must be based on the facts known to the canine handler at the time the bite is directed; and will be assessed using the standard of objective reasonableness consistent with the department's UOF Policy, including all considerations of proportionality and de-escalation.

## Directed bite - Criteria

The canine handler shall consider the following factors (known at the time):

* + - The severity of the involved crime(s) (including new or additional information)
    - The degree to which the suspect poses a threat to the safety of officers or others
    - Whether the suspect is actively attempting to evade arrest or attempting to escape

**Note:** The fact that the suspect attempted to escape or was combative previously does not constitute *actively attempting to evade arrest or attempting to escape.*

When tactically feasible, the handler should consider the following factors when known prior to a directed bite:

* + - * Other available force options and their effectiveness
      * Approximate apparent age of the suspect
      * Degree of any apparent intoxication
      * Degree of any apparent mental illness or impairment
      * Degree of any apparent disability or visible injury
      * Known (articulable) proximity of weapons or dangerous improvised devices
      * Potential for injury to officers, suspects, or others
      * Any other exceptional circumstances

When there is a supervisor on scene, they are responsible for providing oversight of the UOF whenever feasible, consistent with the department UOF policies.

**Note:** Absent exceptional circumstances (and to avoid injury or impairment to officers and the PSD), efforts should be made to avoid the use of less-lethal projectile weapons, OC spray, or Taser devices on the suspect during an active bite and while officers are physically engaged with the suspect.

3 It is strongly recommended that a canine bite be considered an intermediate level of force (i.e., Level 2) due to the possibility of injury

## Directed bite – Warning

Absent exceptional or exigent circumstances, the canine handler shall verbally warn the suspect that a dog will be released and will bite - and allow time for the suspect to comply before deployment.

# CANINE BITE – SUSPECT CONTROL

## Call off and arrest

Whenever a contact or directed canine bite occurs, the handler should call their PSD off or remove the canine from the bite as soon as is possible based on the tactical situation.

Consistent with this policy and principles of UOF proportionality, when the suspect submits to arrest and becomes compliant (i.e., the suspect objectively submits to custody), the PSD should be called off (removed) and the suspect timely secured using conventional tactics.

**Note**: Any subsequently directed bite shall be considered a separate UOF and assessed as such consistent with this policy.

Under the direction and tactical control of the canine handler or appropriate on-scene personnel (i.e., supervisor), an identified contact/arrest team should take the suspect into custody as safely as possible with the objective of avoiding further injury to the officers, the community, or the suspect.

**Note**: Absent exceptional circumstances (i.e., a suspect who is known to be armed and who presents an objectively deadly threat, etc.), officers should not order the suspect to walk or crawl to the officers during an active bite ("bring/drag the dog to me" command).

## Additional force options at the time of a canine bite

Any additional or subsequent uses of force, including less-lethal control devices used at the time of the canine bite, will be assessed according to department UOF policies; each officer using force must independently and clearly, articulate their rationale for the use of force at the time the force was employed.4

**Note:** Absent exceptional circumstances, handlers should avoid the use of additional force or tactics while actively handling their canine (i.e., handcuffing, strikes, use of Taser, etc.) and should focus on control of their PSD.

4Each officers use of force should be assessed individually based on the totality of circumstances, which include the reasonableness of the particular force during an active canine bite.

## Contact with suspects who are known to be armed with a firearm

When a PSD locates a suspect who is reasonably believed to be armed with a firearm based on articulable facts known to the handler at the time (i.e., exchange of gunfire or observed with a gun), and the suspect fails to surrender or remains secreted after clear directions are given, the incident should be considered a barricaded suspect. Appropriate tactics should be employed to take the suspect into custody, consistent with related department policy and training.

## Use of canines for pain compliance

Absent exceptional circumstances, canine handlers should avoid deploying their PSD on a directed bite for purposes of *pain compliance* or *distraction*, as an active canine bite is likely to increase the suspect's resistance against handcuffing and may result in greater injury to officers and the suspect (any exceptional circumstances for such deployment must be well articulated).

# CRIMINAL SUSPECT - TRACKING

There may be circumstances where a canine can be useful to track a criminal suspect on lead/leash rather than conducting a containment search (i.e., significant time delay, limited resources, or large affected area). Prior to initiating such a tracking operation, the canine handler shall notify and obtain approval from the watch commander, coordinate a properly equipped search team, and obtain any other necessary resources. Thereafter, the canine hander may initiate tracking based on a designated plan which must include announcements and or warnings as needed. Should a suspect's general location be identified/narrowed to a containable area (yard/building etc.), the canine handler should develop a tactical plan, establish a containment, and conduct a search consistent with this policy. An ICP should be established at the appropriate location (or police facility) where the search operation can be monitored.

# NON-CRIMINAL CANINE DEPLOYMENT

Canines are an effective resource because of their superior senses, and they may often be effectively used to track or search for non-criminal subjects (i.e., lost children. Individuals who may be disoriented or in need of medical attention). In such circumstances, it will be necessary for the handler to evaluate the conditions and ability of their PSD to determine the feasibility of such an application; additionally:

* + - An ICP should be established, and an IC identified to oversee the search operation;
    - The handler should provide an appropriate (modified) announcement to the subject and warning to the community before deploying the PSD and do so throughout the search as is reasonable;
    - Such deployment should be conducted on leash/lead or under such conditions that will minimize the likelihood that the PSD will bite or otherwise injure the subject or any other person;

**Note:** The handler should assess whether or not their PSD should remain muzzled during such a search based on the need for the safety of the community and the subject

* + - Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, assisting personnel should take direction from the handler in order to minimize interference with the canine;
    - Once the subject has been located, the canine should be secured as soon as it is reasonable.

# USE OF NARCOTIC-DETECTION CANINES

A narcotic-detection-trained canine may be used in accordance with department policy under the following circumstances:

* To assist in the search for narcotics during a search warrant service
* To obtain a search warrant by using the detection canine in support of probable cause
* To search vehicles, buildings, bags, and any other articles when such use is reasonable, including based on reasonable suspicion, as an investigative tool to develop probable cause

During an actual canine narcotics search, the handler shall maintain direct control over the area and/or articles to be searched. Officers are instructed not to search the area prior to the canine search. Request for a canine narcotics search out of the city is subject to the canine call-out policy and subject to watch commander approval.

A narcotic-detection canine shall not be used to search a person (individuals) for narcotics.

# EVIDENCE OR ARTICLE SEARCHES

Police canines are trained to search for and locate evidence of a crime and articles related to police investigations. When department personnel believes there is evidence or articles hidden, they should request the response for a canine team. Thereafter, they should endeavor to protect the area from all pedestrians and vehicular traffic and should make no attempt to search the area prior to the arrival of the canine team. Upon their arrival, the canine handler should assume control of the area and conduct a coordinated search as appropriate

**Note**: While the canine handler will make every effort to protect objects of evidentiary value so fingerprints or markings are not disturbed, requesting

personnel should realize that a police canine may physically touch or retrieve that item, which may impact the evidentiary value.

# INJURY – NOTIFICATIONS

When a bite or any other injury occurs to any person as a result of a canine deployment, the handler shall ensure that timely notification is made to an on-scene supervisor (as soon as is tactically feasible). The on-scene supervisor shall make the chain of command notifications as required by department policy, including to the . Additionally, the canine handler shall ensure that the canine supervisor is notified and fully briefed in a timely manner. The canine supervisor or their designee should respond to any incident where an injury was directly caused by a police canine and initiate an investigation of the incident.

# CONTROL OF CANINE

Canine handlers are responsible for maintaining control over their PSD at all times. While not searching or otherwise deployed during a police operation or training, canines should be secured in a canine handler's assigned police vehicle or another appropriate place.

Canine handlers shall avoid leaving their PSD in an unsecured (off lead) down-stay during any tactical operation, search, suspect/subject contact (i.e., pedestrian contact), or during an arrest; and shall ensure the canine is secured as appropriate during training activities (i.e., between exercises).

**Note**: Because the canine handler has specific responsibilities during a canine operation, absent exceptional circumstances, the canine handler should not become physically involved in any suspect contact or arrest while maintaining control of his/ her canine (i.e., using additional force, searching, or handcuffing a suspect).

# REPORTING - CANINE BITE (NON-ACCIDENTAL) 5

**CANINE HANDLER**

Any canine deployment that results in a contact bite or directed bite has specific use-of-force reporting requirements as follows.

## Canine Contact Bite

The canine handler shall complete a detailed original or supplemental crime report to include:

* + - Background of call or operation, or details of observations

5 Each agency has specific UOF Policy reporting protocol/formats. This canine bite reporting process should be integrated into that process but should not duplicate it.

* + - Initial (pre-deployment) actions taken (i.e., briefing, containment, resources, etc.)
    - Information and facts provided by witnesses and or officers on the scene
    - Assessment of :
      * The nature and severity of the involved crime(s)
      * Whether the suspect is attempting to escape or evade arrest
      * The threat posed to the community and or officers by the outstanding suspect
    - Supervisor providing approval for deployment
    - Location of the ICP and identity of the designated IC
    - Search initiation point and search area description
    - Names of search team officers
    - Details of the search announcement(s) or warnings, including time(s) given, language, repetitions, and including a determination that the announcement was audible throughout the search area and how that determination was made (i.e., officers at all sides of containment confirmed that it was audible prior to the search)
    - Time delay after each announcement and before beginning the search (i.e., time given to surrender)
    - Details of contact including:
      * Description of contact bite(s), whether observed, heard, or reported
      * Reason a canine contact bite occurred (i.e., suspect hiding in the open, easily accessible, etc.)
      * Suspect's actions or statements when bitten or to arresting officers
      * Location (bodily) and assessment of the severity of the bite
      * Tactics used to take the suspect into custody
      * Commands given and suspect's reaction(s)
      * Duration of bite (i.e., assessed using BWC or other recordings)
      * Injuries and treatment (at scene, jail, or hospitalization)
      * Method of call-off (i.e., canine recalled off the bite/or canine physically removed)

## Canine Directed Bite

When a directed bite occurs, consistent with the directed bite policy above, the following UOF factors shall be articulated independently in the crime report under the header *Directed Bite*:

The canine handler's rationale for directing a bite includes the following factors:

* + - The severity of the involved crime(s) (including new or additional crimes)
    - Degree to which the suspect posed a threat to the safety of officers or others at the time of the force
    - Whether the suspect was actively resisting arrest, attempting to evade arrest, or attempting to escape at the time of the directed bite

Consistent with this policy and the department's UOF Policy, the handler should articulate any additional relevant factors assessed or considered at the time of the directed bite, which may include:

* Other available force options and their effectiveness
* Approximate apparent age of the suspect
* Degree of any apparent intoxication
* Degree of any apparent mental illness or impairment
* Degree of any apparent disability or visible injury
* Known (articulable) proximity of weapons or dangerous improvised devices
* Potential for injury to officers, suspects, or others
* Any other exceptional circumstances

The canine handler shall articulate any attempts at de-escalation (i.e., verbalization and warnings); and other force used or the effectiveness of other force options (i.e., suspects position and the confined space would make other force options ineffective or unsafe).

**Note**: Any additional force used by the canine handler, such as the use of a Taser, strikes, or physical force, must be included in the canine handler's SCR consistent with the UOF Policy and listed separately under the header *Additional Use of Force.*

**CANINE SUPERVISOR**

## Use of Force Investigation – Post Bite Assessment

When any non-accidental canine bite occurs - as a primary duty, the canine supervisor shall respond to the incident and conduct a comprehensive UOF investigation (consistent with the UOF policy), which includes a PBA. If the canine supervisor is unavailable, his designee may respond to conduct the initial assessment. However, the canine supervisor is responsible for the internal review and formal assessment of the incident.

The UOF investigation should include the following:

* Conducting a canvas for witnesses and recorded statements per the UOF policy

**Note:** The supervisor should obtain the statements of individuals who were percipient witnesses, regardless of whether they observed the bite, heard the incident, or may have other material information.

* Conduct a canvass for recordings, including any and all body or dashboard camera recordings from any agency, CCTV, or other private videos (including video taken/provided by witnesses)

**Note:** The canine supervisor shall watch all relevant videos (portions) and review all other evidence as part of their review of the incident.

* Ensuring that appropriate chain of command notifications are/were made in a timely manner and the watch commander is kept apprised of the investigation
* Ensuring that a series of clear photographs are taken to include the following:
  + The area (yard, residence, alley, etc.)
  + Specific place/scene of arrest (i.e., room, shed, etc.)
  + Suspect full body and facial close up
  + Any injuries, whether existing or resulting from the incident
  + Other parts of the body showing no visible (i.e., 'complained of') injuries

**Note:** An attempt should be made to take photographs of the bite injuries after they have been cleaned versus on-scene or pre-cleaned photographs because such photographs more accurately depict actual injuries.

* Obtain a statement from the suspect, consistent with current UOF policy and Miranda guidelines, to include whether they heard any announcements, commands, or warnings

The UOF - PBA report should include the following:

## Pre-deployment incident summary

Provide a summary of the incident, the scene, and the crimes known and related to the canine handler

## Assessment of the canine deployment

Discussion of whether the criteria were met and what factors were present and considered by the canine handler

## Assessment of any (non-directed) contact bite

The circumstances that resulted in a bite occurring, such as the location or accessibility of the suspect

## Assessment of any directed bite

A detailed UOF assessment of the canine handler's decision to direct a bite consistent with this policy, including what factors were present and were considered, include any de-escalation efforts, and what alternatives were unreasonable or not feasible (likely to be ineffective)

## Final recommendations

At the conclusion of their investigation (including viewing available video and photographs), the canine supervisor shall provide a formal recommendation on whether the canine deployment criteria were met (deployment was within policy); and if any subsequently directed bite was within the policy as a separate UOF. If either the deployment or the subsequently directed bite was not within policy, the canine supervisor shall provide a clear rationale for that determination and provide recommendations for actions to be taken consistent with current department policy (i.e., remedial training or counseling, etc.)

## Additional information

Any material information regarding the incident should be documented, including any training issues for the department or for the canine Unit.

**Note:** The canine supervisor may reference and rely on the canine handler's SCR to assess the incident (to avoid repeating facts), however, they must do an independent objective assessment of the canine deployment, any bite, and all related force used by the canine handler

**Note**: In order to maintain consistency of oversight and at the discretion of the watch commander, the canine supervisor may assume responsibility for conducting the UOF investigation(s) relative to all uses of force by other involved officers when they are directly related to the incident. However, the related PBA (canine team-related activity) shall be a separate document for administrative and internal review purposes.

**CANINE COMMANDER**

Consistent with the department's UOF chain of command reporting and review requirements, the canine supervisor shall forward the completed non-accidental canine bite UOF-PAB report(s) and the related CDR to the canine commander within three (3) calendar days of the incident.

The canine commander shall review all documents related to any non-accidental canine bite, including the UOF-PBA report, CDR, and any other related reports. The canine commander may discuss the incident with the canine supervisor (and other department staff) and may take any actions deemed necessary, such as requiring additional investigation, directing that a unit debriefing occur, or mandate update or remedial training to the involved canine team or the Unit. The canine commander shall indicate on the related CDR that they have reviewed the incident (i.e., initials or signature) and may include any insight deemed necessary.

The final UOF-PAB report shall be processed and filled consistent with the department's UOF reporting and records retention policies. The CDR shall be retained within the department's Canine Training Record files consistent with this policy.

# ACCIDENTAL BITE AND NON-BITE-RELATED INJURY

Accidental canine bites and injuries that occur during the canine deployment (directly related to deployment) shall be investigated as an Injury to a Person and documented on a department Injury Report. (an example of a *related* injury may include a suspect suffering an injury while fleeing during a canine search).

**CANINE HANDLER**

When such an injury occurs, the canine handler shall:

* + - Secure their PSD
    - Ensure that the River City Fire Department (paramedic) is summoned and that timely first aid is rendered as appropriate
    - Notify the on-scene supervisor (and the canine supervisor)
    - Assist the investigating supervisor and the officer tasked with completing the Injury Report.

**Note:** Absent exceptional circumstances, an officer other than the canine handler involved should complete the Injury Report

* + - Ensure that the incident and any training needs are documented on the CDR and as appropriate within the Canine Training Record
    - When the investigating supervisor is not the canine supervisor, the canine handler shall meet the canine supervisor to discuss the incident and review the related reports at the canine supervisor's discretion

**CANINE SUPERVISOR**

Consistent with his duties, the canine supervisor shall respond to any accidental bite or canine-related (non-bite) injury. However, when they are not available, with the approval and concurrence of the canine commander, the canine supervisor may delegate a supervisor (not materially involved in the incident) to respond to conduct the investigation and complete the related Supervisor's Activity Report (SAR).6 However, the canine supervisor shall be accountable for the final investigation and any related recommendations.

The investigating supervisor's duties include the following:

* + - Canvas for any and all witnesses and conducting interviews

**Note:** The supervisor should obtain the statements of individuals who were percipient witnesses, regardless of whether they observed the bite, heard the incident, or may have other material information

* + - Canvass for any recordings of the incident (i.e., CCTV footage)
    - Ensure that appropriate chain of command notifications are made in a timely manner and that the watch commander is kept apprised of the investigation
    - Ensure that a series of clear photographs are taken of any the affected body part, as well as any injuries (including post cleaning when possible), and of other parts of the body showing areas of *complained of* injuries
    - Ensure that an Injury Report is completed by a designated officer documenting the incident in accordance with department policy

6 Adopting agency should ensure appropriate report titles are inserted within this policy (i.e., sergeant’s log etc.) as

needed.

* + - Complete a detailed SAR, including an incident assessment and any policy-related findings or recommendations consistent with department policy.
    - When the investigating supervisor is not the canine supervisor, they shall discuss the incident with the canine supervisor and incorporate any insight provided by the canine supervisor into the final SAR (i.e., "*discussed the incident with sergeant Smith who will conduct a debrief with the canine unit and chief trainer"*)
    - Attach a copy of the completed Injury Report and any other (non-confidential) related documents to the SAR
    - Ensure that the involved canine handler completes the CDR and forwards it to the canine supervisor
    - After reviewing all related reports, the canine supervisor shall complete the insight portion of the CDR and include any training needs and or recommendations

**Note:** Timely to the incident, the canine supervisor shall discuss the incident with the canine commander including any resulting training needs or recommendations.

**CANINE COMMANDER**

Responsibilities of the canine commander include:

* + - Designate an acting canine supervisor to respond to the incident to conduct the administrative investigation when the canine supervisor is unavailable or unable to respond
    - Timely to the incident, notify the chief of police and any other relevant personnel that an accidental bite or canine-related injury has occurred and provide the appropriate briefing (i.e., high profile incident etc.)
    - Discuss the incident with the canine supervisor, including any training needs or recommendations
    - Review all reports, photographs, and or video (relevant portions) related to the accidental bite or canine-related injury, including the Injury Report, crime or supplemental reports, and the CDR
    - Conduct a follow-up to ensure any recommendations (i.e., debriefing, training etc.) were completed

# SIGNIFICANT AREAS OF DEFICIENCY

When significant areas of deficiency are noted by the canine supervisor (or are otherwise reported to the department), the canine supervisor shall fully brief the canine commander, who shall brief and discuss the matter with the chief of police.

The canine commander shall:

* + - Ensure all reports (UOF-PBA, Injury Report, CDR, SAR, etc.) are completed within 24 hours of any related incident (upon becoming aware).
    - Initiate a formal internal review of the incident consistent with department policy
    - Facilitate corrective or remedial actions as soon as feasible
    - Remove the canine team (handler and or PSD at the discretion of the chief of police) from service until the matter has been reviewed and adjudicated

**Note:** At the discretion of the chief of police, the canine handler may be assigned to administrative duties or otherwise reassigned until the matter has been investigated; the involved PSD should not be returned to field duties until the completion of any necessary remedial training and full recertification (consistent with department guidelines for canine certification), and upon the approval of the chief of police. The incident and all actions taken shall be timely documented in the CTR.

# PROHIBITIONS ON THE USE OF A CANINE

Absent exigent circumstances, canines shall not be used for the following:

* + - To threaten or intimidate any group or person, including a suspect

**Note:** Consistent with de-escalation principles, a canine handler may present their canine as a show of force and warning that the canine may be deployed when such actions are likely to be effective in gaining the suspect's compliance and a serious crime is involved. Examples include a canine barking at a perimeter before search deployment or at a suspect of a serious crime who is actively resisting capture or arrest (i.e., high-risk stop or barricade incident).

* + - Directed bite of a suspect for minor (non-serious) crimes, including misdemeanor resisting arrest and or any infraction
    - Directed bite of a suspect who is passively resisting (i.e., hands up, failing to respond to commands only)
    - To apprehend suspects who are known (or objectively appear) to be elderly
    - To apprehend any suspect who is known (or objectively appears) to be a minor child
    - To apprehend female suspects who are known (or objectively appear) to be pregnant
    - Conducting a narcotic search of a person or group
    - Any crowd management/control purpose

# INJURIES TO POLICE CANINE

In the event that a PSD is injured, the handler shall report the incident to an on-scene supervisor immediately and to the canine supervisor in a timely manner. The injury shall be documented on the CDR as well as all related crime reports. Depending on the severity of the injury, the PSD shall either be treated by a designated veterinarian or transported to a designated emergency medical facility for treatment. If the handler and dog are out of the area, the handler may use the nearest available veterinarian. If the injuries are serious and require medical treatment or hospitalization (removing the PSD from service

for any period of time), the canine supervisor (or, if unavailable, their designee) shall respond to the incident and make timely chain of command notifications as necessary.

**Note:** The on-duty watch commander shall be responsible for approving any additional related criminal booking charges (i.e., 600 PC)7

# REQUEST FOR USE OF CANINE TEAMS

Police canines are a valuable department asset, and officers are encouraged to make use of this resource. Requests for the use of a department canine team from outside entities are subject to review and approval of the on-duty watch commander. The watch commander shall ensure that any approval to deploy a department canine team is carefully considered and is consistent with the mission of the River City Police Department, related policies, and any existing Mutual Aid Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding. The watch commander should consider the nature of the request, the seriousness of the crime, the availability of the outside agency's canine teams, and the potential liability to the City of River City. The watch commander may solicit the advice of the canine supervisor but is responsible for the deployment decision and shall document the request and rationale for their decision regarding deployment.

When a canine team is deployed to any other jurisdiction, their operational use shall be governed by policies, training, and operational guidelines of the River City Police Department. Whenever a conflict occurs, the canine handler has the discretion not to deploy their PSD or not to do so until such conflicts are resolved. If appropriate, the watch commander may designate a department supervisor (preferably the canine supervisor) to respond to the scene to advise on deployment and assist in resolving any such conflict(s).

Prior to deploying their PSD, the responding canine handler shall ensure that sufficient personnel and resources are present (i.e., perimeter personnel, less-than-lethal devices, etc.).

**Note**: The canine handler may elect to use River City Police Department officers in their search and arrest team when resources allow.

Generally (absent exceptional circumstances), a canine team shall not be called out while off duty for use by an outside agency.

**Note**: Exceptional circumstances may include – a serious crime is involved, the use of a canine would clearly mitigate the risk of injury to the community or officers, and no other canine personnel from the requesting agency are readily available.

7 Injury to a police dog-related charges

# REQUEST FOR PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS

All requests for a canine demonstration shall be submitted in writing on a River City Police Department, Request for Canine Demonstration Form8no less than 30 days prior to the event and must be approved by the canine supervisor and the canine commander.

The canine supervisor is responsible for reviewing the conditions and environment of the demonstration and coordinate with the involved canine team(s) to take appropriate action to mitigate any risks to persons or property. Such actions may include:

* + - Ensuring a sufficient boundary/room for spectators is in place
    - Proper equipment is used
    - Only trained department agitators are involved
    - Proper warnings are given to the public, including specific instructions regarding approaching a PSD

Canine handlers shall not demonstrate any apprehension work unless authorized to do so by the Chief of Police.

# INJURED CANINE HANDLER

## Procedure

All department personnel should be aware of how to address a circumstance where a canine handler becomes injured. When a canine handler is *down*, his PSD may stand guard and prevent anyone from approaching the hander. Assisting officers should use caution when developing a strategy to render aid to the handler to, include consideration of the following:

* + - Responding personnel should endeavor to assess the degree of the handler's injury or impairment and ensure EMS is standing by
    - Request the assistance and response of another canine handler and ensure the canine supervisor is notified
    - The canine vehicle contains protective sleeves and additional leashes, and other equipment in the trunk or interior of the vehicle, which can be used, preferably by trained personnel9
    - If immediate access to the handler is required and the dog cannot be called away, consider agitating the PSD to secure his bite on the training sleeve. An experienced agitator should perform this task if available (not in uniform). The handler can be secured while the PSD is distracted

8 Form recommended

9 Each handler and canine supervisors’ vehicle should be so equipped.

* + - When another canine handler arrives, they should assume control of the canine. Upon arrival, the canine supervisor should contact the department's chief trainer, who can respond and take possession of the PSD after it is secured
    - In the event the PSD is also injured, alert dispatch to call the department's veterinarian and ensure timely transportation to the appropriate facility (all current contact information should be maintained in the Canine Manual)
    - If all other means fail and the handler's life is in danger, the dog may be destroyed as a last resort in order to allow emergency medical treatment for the handler

# AVAILABILITY

Department Canine Teams shall be available for call-out under conditions specified by the Canine Manual and consistent with any existing labor agreement or Memorandum of Understanding.

**Note:** It is recommended that a department administrative Canine Manual be developed separately from the operational policy.

End document



[WWW.USPCAK9.COM](https://d.docs.live.net/f46843e2c3aebbc7/Pictures/Documents/WWW.USPCAK9.COM)