2-23 USE OF CANINE (K-9) UNIT

Related SOP’s:

1-64 K-9 Unit

2-23-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is for department personnel to utilize the K-9 Unit to search buildings for intruders and/or track wanted subjects. It provides guidelines for Department personnel when requesting the use of a Canine (K-9) Unit to ensure safety for officers and citizens.

2-23-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Albuquerque Police Department (department) to provide rules for department personnel when requesting the use of a Canine (K-9) Unit to ensure safety for officers and citizens.

2-23-3 Definitions

A. Apprehension

For the purposes of this policy, any occasion when a PSD is deployed and plays a clear and well-documented role in apprehending a suspect or individual. In order to play a clear and documented role, a handler must articulate the PSD role, such as being the subject of warnings, following bark commands, performing a search, or the suspect stating that the PSD influenced their decision to submit to arrest.

B. Deployment

Any situation, except an on-leash article search, where a PSD is brought to the scene and is used in an attempt to locate or apprehend a suspect, whether or not a suspect is located or apprehended.

C. Handler

An officer who is certified in the use of a PSD who is assigned to a particular PSD who deploys with that PSD and is responsible for the PSD’s 24-7 care.

D. Police Service Dogs (PSD)

A dog assigned to the K-9 Unit after meeting the selection standards and certification requirements as established by the Department’s Tactical Section – K-9 Unit.
E. Search

When a PSD is deployed into a search area or structure, commercial or residential, to look for and find a specific suspect of a specific crime, or is utilized to ensure that the area/structure is clear of any criminal suspect who may be hiding from law enforcement or evading capture.

2-23-2 2-23-4 Rules

A. On-Call Status

K-9 Units are on call 24 hours per day via Communications. If no K-9 Unit is on duty, an on-duty area supervisor must give approval before calling out the K-9 Unit.

B. Operational Control / Conflict of Orders

1. The K-9 Unit Sergeant will assume operational control of any situation requiring the deployment of the Police Service Dogs (PSD). In the absence of the K-9 Sergeant a Tactical Section Supervisor will be contacted.

2. If the K-9 Unit Sergeant is not present and a Handler is requested by another supervisor to deploy their PSD in a manner that the Handler feels is inappropriate, the Handler will inform the supervisor of this and state the reasons for their concern and contact a Tactical Section Supervisor. Ultimate authority to deploy a Police Service Dog shall be at the discretion of the individual K-9 Handler.

3. Under no circumstance will a Handler comply with an order that he/she knows to be illegal or violates the civil rights of any individual, or is in violation of the Use of Force Policy.

4. If the Handler is participating in a full tactical activation the authority to deploy the Police Service Dog resides with the Tactical Commander or his/her designee.

   a. When the Tactical Section is activated for first amendment assemblies for demonstrations, incidents or events, crowd control situations, civil disturbances, and/or riots, K-9 Handlers will not deploy with their police service dogs as a force option. However, this does not preclude K-9 Handlers from being utilized for other tasks at the discretion of the Tactical Commander.

C. K-9 Unit Searches

1. Building Searches

   a. The primary duty of the K-9 Unit is to search buildings for intruders.
b. During the K-9 Unit's normal working hours, a K-9 Unit will be dispatched to all commercial and school silent alarms.

c. A K-9 officer and PSD Unit will be utilized to search all commercial buildings and schools where a point of entry is found or the suspect is believed to be in the building.

d. As soon as a point of entry is found, the building will be secured and no one will be allowed to enter the building until the K-9 officer and PSD has arrived.

e. In the event a commercial business appears secure, the business will be searched by PSDK9s only after:
   i. It is determined that there is a strong possibility that the alarm is valid.
   ii. It would be impractical to conduct a search by officers due to building design.
   iii. The owner/manager arrives and requests the search, in concurrence with the officer at the scene.
   iv. Approval has been granted by an on-duty area supervisor.

2. Tracking/Area Searches

a. K-9 Units can be utilized to track a subject and search for articles associated with the subject in an area.

b. Officers should remain out of the area to prevent contamination if a K-9 Unit is to be utilized.

c. The K-9 Unit should be called to the scene as quickly as possible while the subject's scent is still fresh.

3. Apprehension of Fleeing or Resisting Subjects

a. K-9 Units can be used to apprehend persons fleeing or resisting arrest, when there is reason to believe that the subject(s) has committed a felony.

b. The decision to utilize the PSDK9 for apprehension will be based on the threat posed by the subject. The age of the subject (i.e. juvenile) will not preclude the use of the PSDK9, but should be considered in evaluating the threat the subject poses.