

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

Albuquerque Police Department



Gorden E. Eden, Jr., Chief of Police

October 12, 2016

Northwest Community Policing Council

Re: Ear Protection for Police Service Animals

Dear Northwest Community Policing Council:

Thank you for your recommendation regarding ear protection for our Mounted Horse and K-9 Units.

In regard to our Mounted Horse Unit, the Albuquerque Police Department does take precautions to limit the police service animal's exposure to loud noise. If we are conducting training scenarios in which the horses will be exposed to loud noise for an extended period of time we will do our best to limit their exposure. We do this by placing a plug in their ears, or by providing distance between the animal and the origin of the noise. At APD we try to balance the need for training with the health and well being of our service animals.

In regard to our K-9 Unit, these dogs are amazing creatures. There are recorded incidents in which police service dogs are responsible for saving the lives of police officers and citizens. The handlers have strong bonds with their dogs. They often spend more time with them than their own families. The Albuquerque Police Department does not expose our service dogs to any environment or situation that they would not have a potential to encounter in the field. In regard to gunfire, we use preventative measures to attempt to negate the effects of gunfire on the service dogs. This being said, we are currently in the process of researching products that can provide more protection for our service dogs.

We are very fortunate to have the Mounted Horse Unit and the K-9 Unit. These units serve the community with distinction. Thank you for concern and support of these units. Your recommendations are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gorden E. Eden, Jr.".

GORDEN E. EDEN, JR.
Chief of Police

GEE: sw

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Albuquerque

New Mexico 87102

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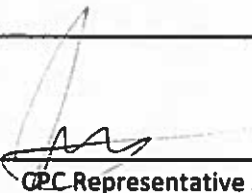
Rationale

Training around firearms is essential for officers but also police service animals – dogs and horses. The potential for hearing damage in humans exposed to loud noises is widely accepted. To avoid damage, hearing protection is always worn during firearms training. There is scientific evidence that animals may also suffer hearing loss from acoustic shock, such as the sound of firearms. Police service animals represent a significant investment of time, money, and effort. It is prudent that such animals be afforded protection against injury whenever possible.

Recommendation

Police horses and K9 dogs should be equipped with hearing protection during training and whenever practical in situations where acoustic shock is likely. There are specific hearing protection devices made for these animals. Officers handling such animals should be trained in the proper use of hearing protection for their animal partners.

Respectfully Submitted By:



OPC Representative Signature