



GREENVILLE COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GO -211

## GENERAL ORDERS

## K-9 Services

### PURPOSE:

This policy provides guidance to the application of trained dogs for the Greenville County Sheriff's Office. These dogs may be used for but not limited to: criminal apprehension, building searches, area searches, the detection of evidence, illegal drugs, explosives, accelerants, and solid state drives (TPPO), searching for missing or fleeing persons, and crowd control.

### TYPES OF DOGS IN USE:

**Patrol Dog:** A dog trained, certified, and validated through the SCCJA in criminal apprehension and aggression control. These dogs have also been trained and nationally certified to detect the odor of illegal drugs (cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine).

**Man-Trailing Dog:** A dog trained and nationally certified in scent discriminate trailing. These dogs may be used to locate both missing persons and criminal suspects.

**Explosive Detection Dog (EDD):** A dog trained and nationally certified to detect explosive odors.

**Drug Detection Dog:** A dog trained and nationally certified to detect illegal drug odors.

**Accelerant Detection Dog:** A dog trained and nationally certified to detect the odor of accelerants.

**Triphenylphosphine Oxide (TPPO) Detection Dog:** A dog trained and demonstrated proficient in the detection of hard/solid state drives.

**Therapy Dog:** A dog trained to provide affection and comfort to unfamiliar people by allowing them to make physical contact with it in a variety of different settings.

### DOG HANDLING METHODOLOGY:

The Sheriff's Office utilizes a handler control policy. Through the training of both handlers and dogs, the handler maintains control of the dog through the use of verbal, hand, and leash commands.

**PATROL DOG:**

Police service dogs are authorized for use:

- Searching buildings or areas believed clear of innocent persons for hidden criminal suspects.
- Tracking suspects
- Searching for illegal drugs in vehicles, buildings, parcels, or other legally accessible locations.
- Crowd control.
- Participating in community education demonstrations.

Patrol K-9s are dogs that are authorized to apprehend, prevent the escape of, or to seize a person who the dog handler has reasonable grounds to believe has committed or is about to commit a serious offense, and one or more of the following exist:

1. Reasonable belief that the person poses an immediate threat of violence or serious harm to the public, any officer, or him/herself.
2. The individual is resisting arrest by means of force or attempting to evade arrest by flight and use of a dog appears necessary to prevent injury to the arresting officer(s).
3. The individual is believed to be concealed in an area where entry by anyone other than a dog would pose a significant threat to the officer.
4. In situations where conditions or variables not specifically identified in this policy exist, it is the responsibility of the handler to ensure that the circumstances support a reasonable decision to use a dog.

The use or attempted use of a Patrol K-9 to apprehend an individual is considered a Response to Aggression (RTA) and classified as a Less Lethal force response.

**On-duty police service dog teams** will respond to crimes in progress without specific dispatch to assist patrol units in potentially violent situations. As a general rule, police service dog teams should not be assigned as a primary unit to “report type” calls of non-emergency nature unless so authorized by a Watch Commander, or a K-9 Unit supervisor during unusual complaint periods.

Prior to the use of a dog to search for or apprehend any individual, the handler on scene is to carefully consider all pertinent information reasonably available at the time. The information is to include, but is not limited to the following:

- Individual’s exact or approximate age.

- Nature of the offense.
- Potential danger to deputies attempting to intervene or assist with apprehension.
- Potential danger to the public resulting from the release of a dog.
- Degree of resistance the subject has shown.
- The potential for escape or flight if the dog is not utilized.
- The potential for injury to deputies or the public caused by the suspect if the dog is not utilized.

A K-9 handler and/or the K-9 supervisor will have the ultimate authority not to deploy the dog. Once the police service dog team is deployed, tactical use and application of the dog will be at the discretion of the individual handler who will rely on his/her judgment, training, experience and current policy. The handler will evaluate each situation and determine if the use of a dog is technically feasible. Under no circumstance shall a supervisor order a handler to deploy a K-9 for an apprehension, this decision resides solely with the handler.

**A VERBAL WARNING** – Except where it would otherwise increase the risk escape or the risk of injury to the handler, other personnel, or the general public prior to any area or building search where a suspect may be located, there will be a verbal dog announcement made. The announcement will consist of:

1. Verbal identification as a deputy sheriff.
2. The presence and imminent release of a police service dog.
3. A demand for surrender
4. Warning that the dog will bite.

A sufficient interval between warnings will be given to allow for a peaceful surrender. Additional warnings should be given throughout building searches, area searches and/or tracking/trailing deployment to insure the warning could be heard. The warning should be given in the language of the community, or if it is known to deputies that the subject speaks another language a reasonable attempt to communicate in that language should be made.

**PROHIBITED  
DOG****USAGES:**

The following are situations where the usage of a dog is not justified:

1. To affect the arrest of an obviously highly intoxicated or feeble person who cannot escape or resist deputies and who poses no immediate danger to deputies or the public.
2. To intimidate or frighten a suspect.
3. To search for known juvenile offenders unless there is probable cause to arrest the juvenile for a violent crime under the SC Code of Laws (16-1-60) or the juvenile poses an immediate threat to death or serious bodily harm to deputies and/or the public Sniffing of people for the odor of illegal drugs.

**DOG INFLICTED  
INJURIES:**

The following applies to incidents involving a law enforcement patrol dog biting or otherwise inflicting injury on anyone:

1. Obtain medical attention for the injured person.  
Note: All injuries sustained by any persons which result in laceration, avulsion, or hemorrhage, will be examined and attended by a physician at a medical facility.
2. Photographs will be taken of the injuries/bites on the subject ensuring a full-body and face photo, which also shows the wounds.
3. Any injuries to the suspect which occur as a result of an intentional deployment of the Patrol K-9 require a Response to Aggression (RTA) report. An unintentional bite or injury must be documented in an incident report but will not be classified as an RTA. A K-9 Unit Supervisor must review the RTA analysis for any physical apprehensions by a police service dog.
4. Notify a K-9 Supervisor and on-duty Watch
  - Commander. The K-9 Sergeant will notify the K-9 Services Unit Commander whenever a serious dog related incident occurs.

**NON PATROL DOGS:**

The use and deployment of non-patrol dogs will be outlined in the K-9 Services Manual. Although not specifically trained in apprehension, it is recognized that these are animals with the potential for accidental injury. In the event that an accidental injury results from the deployment of a non-patrol dog, the same procedures will be followed as if the accidental injury was the result of a patrol dog

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deployment. National certification is mandatory for all non-patrol dogs with the exception of Therapy Dogs.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF  
DOG HANDLER:**

The dog handler is responsible for:

- Devoting the necessary time needed to care for, feed, and maintain their Sheriff's Office dog and equipment.
- Keeping the assigned dog in good physical health with regular veterinarian visits, exercise, and grooming to include up-to-date annual vaccinations and heartworm preventative.
- The dog handler understands that they will be compensated for the devoted to the care, feeding and maintenance of his/her assigned dog at his/her hourly wage rate.
- The dog handler understands and agrees that fourteen hours of overtime are spent each work period in the care, feeding and maintenance of his/her assigned Sheriff's dog. "Work period" is defined as a fourteen (14) consecutive day period consisting of eighty hours.
- Obtaining specialized training in dog operations through the Greenville County Sheriff's Office: (1) 200 hour course for Single Purpose Dogs and (2) 600 hour course for Patrol K-9's. A handler transition course for a previously trained dog will consist of 200 hours when partnered with an experienced handler. A trained K-9 partnered with an inexperienced handler will complete a 400 hour course.
- Participating in weekly maintenance training of the dog.
- Completing detailed training records on approved forms.
- Obtaining national certifications (NAPWDA, NNDDA, NPCA, SCPK9A, NPBA) with the dog annually.
- Maintaining certification through SCCJA.
- Being available for call-outs as needed.
- Kenneling the dog in accordance with the directives prescribed in the K-9 Services manual.
- A Sheriff's Office dog will not be used for breeding without approval from the Sheriff.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF  
GCSO:**

GCSO is responsible for providing:

1. The dog and all necessary equipment.
2. Dog food and necessary supplies.
3. Payment of all approved veterinary bills and associated dog medicines.
4. On a case-by-case basis, flea and other pest extermination for the interior of the handler's home.

5. Provide time to train on a weekly basis and to attend schools for certifications.

**SELECTION OF  
DOG HANDLER:**

Qualifications for dog handler:

1. Three years experience in law enforcement.
2. Good physical condition.
3. Strong verbal and written communication skills.
4. Must live on property suitable for placement of a dog.
5. Above average annual performance evaluations.

Selection process for dog handler:

1. Participation in an oral interview board seated by members of the K-9 Services Unit.
2. Physical ability assessment.
3. Firearms proficiency.
4. Selection will be made by the affected Division Commander and the Sheriff.

**DUTY STATUSES OF  
GCSO DOGS:**

**Active Status:** A dog that is currently in-service with the agency and who is trained, in training, or awaiting to be trained. While dogs in an active status are typically paired with an assigned handler, it is possible for a dog to be in an active status and awaiting a handler to be paired. Handlers caring for a dog in an active status are to be compensated for the care and maintenance of the dog for one-hour per day ("Garcia Pay"). All expenses related to a dog in this status are the responsibility of GCSO.

**Inactive Status:** A dog that has served the agency, is no longer in-service, and who meets one or more of the following criteria is eligible for consideration of an inactive status classification:

1. Handler is severely injured or perishes in the line of duty.
2. Dog has served a minimum of six years in an active status.
3. Dog is deemed medically unfit for duty by the K-9 Services Veterinarian.

Any dog meeting the above criteria may be considered to be placed into an inactive status, with a handler in good standing, by the Selective Enforcement Division Commander. Dogs in this status will be provided with food, an annual medical examination, and annual flea/tick medications as well as heartworm preventative at the expense of GCSO. Additional medical expenses will be considered for coverage by GCSO after a consultation with the Team Veterinarian, Unit Leadership, and the Division Commander,

the approving authority. "Garcia pay" is not authorized in this duty status.

As with any policy the Sheriff has the ultimate authority in modifying these guidelines and can designate the duty status of a dog at his discretion.

**Retired:** A dog that has served the agency, is no longer in-service, and has been signed over to a qualified individual in good standing with the agency. All care and associated expenses will be covered by that individual. "Garcia pay" is not authorized in this status.

The K-9 Services Lieutenant is responsible for maintaining a listing of the dogs in each duty status.

**SECURITY AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY OF  
CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES  
AND EXPLOSIVES USED  
FOR DOG TRAINING:**

Controlled substances and explosives used for dog training are to be stored in locked safes at a secure Sheriff's Office facility or secured in a locked and approved storage container locked in a Sheriff's Office vehicle. Access to the locked safes shall be restricted to K-9 Services personnel.

Controlled substances and explosives used for dog training purposes are inventoried monthly. Documented inventory results shall be maintained by the Supervisors of K-9 Services.

  
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Hobart Lewis, Sheriff