



TRANSIT POLICE

POLICE DOGS

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POLICY

Definitions

BCPPS – British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards, as amended from time to time.

Bite – A police dog's use of mouth and teeth to grab or hold a person's body or clothes.

Chief Officer – The Transit Police Chief Officer or delegate.

Criminal Code – *Criminal Code of Canada* [RSC 1985, c. C-46], as amended from time to time.

Deployment – A police dog performing an operational task.

Designated Constables – The Transit Police police officers appointed by the Police Board.

Dog Team – A Member who is a trained Handler and their assigned Police Service Dog which is trained and certified specific to explosive odour detection.

Handler – A Member who is trained to handle police dogs.

JPD – Jurisdictional Police Department.

Member – Designated Constable (all ranks), Deputy Chief Officer and Chief Officer of the Transit Police.

Metro Vancouver Transit Police ("Transit Police") – The operating name of the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Police Service.

PDS – Police Dog Service of the Transit Police.

PDS Lead – Member assigned responsibility for the supervision and co-ordination of all activities relating to the PDS, including call load management, major incident supervision, deployment, coaching, evaluation, administration, and planning.

Police Dog Equipment – Includes, but is not limited to collars, leashes, crates and harnesses.

Police Service Dog (“PSD”) – A dog acquired by the Transit Police for use in the Transit Police Explosive Detection Dog Service.

Vapor Scent (“VS”) – Explosives and explosive materials produce odours, which are invisible vapours. Through the sense of smell (olfaction), dogs can be trained to learn to detect an explosive odour and continue to locate the odour to its source, even while moving (i.e., suspect is walking through a transit station). The source could be inside a suitcase, backpack, vehicle, or on a person etc.

VS Detection Police Service Dog (“VS-PSD”) – A PSD trained to recognize defined explosive material vapours and indicates to the Handler with a designated signal/behavioral change.

VS Detection Police Service Dog Unit (“VS-PSD Unit”) – A VS-PSD and their Handler; trained and certified specific to VS detection.

Authority

1. Transit Police Dog Teams must be trained and validated annually to BC Police Provincial Standards (“BCPPS”), where applicable, in order to be utilized in explosive detection/searches. Where no BCPPS exist, Dog Teams/VS-PSD Units will be trained to the standards as determined by the Chief Officer.
2. The Handler will deploy their assigned Police Service Dog pursuant to their lawful authority as a Police Officer, and in compliance with the *Criminal Code*, federal statutes, provincial legislation and policing standards, Transit Police policy and applicable case law.

[See also: Policy Chapters [OD120 - Search](#) and [OD130 - Seizure](#)]

General

3. The Transit Police will not maintain general or specialized Police Service Dogs, with the exception of a Police Service Dog explosive odour detection function.
4. Explosive detection Dog Teams will be established and designated as the Transit Police PDS. The number of Dog Teams established and maintained within the PDS will be as authorized by the Chief Officer. The Police Board will be consulted in any increase to authorized strength for the PDS.
5. The Handler will be responsible and accountable for deploying their assigned Police Service Dog in a manner which facilitates effective execution of police duties while reasonably safe guarding the public and police officers.
6. Supervisory and Command personnel will recognize the Handler as the resource on the appropriate utilization of the Police Service Dog. Police officer safety and Police Service Dog safety will be paramount when determining utilization of the Dog Team.

7. Handlers will ensure that when the Police Service Dogs are utilized, that there is accurate and complete documentation for legal, administration and evaluation purposes.
8. Police Service Dogs at the Transit Police are for explosive odour detection purpose, not operational deployment for criminal apprehension; however, in the event of an accidental bite or injury to a person, the BCPPS section 1.4 and procedures within this policy chapter will be followed by Members.

Vapour Scint ("VS") Detection Capacity

9. The Transit Police may train its PSDs in VS detection as a specialized function, for deployment in support of detecting criminal activity and protecting transit passengers and infrastructure. The Transit Police will train and maintain VS Detection Teams to support the deployment of VS-PSD Units. Members will refer to Transit Police SOP75 – Vapour Scint Detection and Operational Response for operational protocol and certification standards.

Relationship with Jurisdictional Police

9. The Transit Police will contact the JPD to request assistance when police dog services are required for narcotics detection, apprehension of suspects, or tracking. Such requests will be made in accordance with any protocols established.
10. The Transit Police may request the assistance of a JPD explosive detection dog team when the PDS is unavailable.
11. The Transit Police Dog Teams and VS-PSD Units will be made available to assist law enforcement agencies.

Evaluation

12. Transit Police will perform an evaluation of its the PDS at least every three years, or more frequently as required by the Chief Officer or as otherwise required by the Director of Police Services, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

PROCEDURES

Deployment and Duty Procedures

13. The primary function of a Handler will be that of a patrol Member with the supplementary duty of being a Police Service Dog Handler. When on duty, the Handler will monitor and attend calls where the deployment of an explosive detection dog can be utilized, and provide a visible presence on the transit system through foot patrol and preventative searches.
14. Unless otherwise so determined by the Chief Officer, PDS Members will report to the Inspector Operations and the PDS Lead, where designated. The Inspector

Operations will be responsible for the management of the PDS, including determining operational deployment models for use of the Dog Teams.

15. Unless assigned a specific duty, PDS Members will support other patrol units, assist with crime prevention and community relations initiatives, and attend calls where there is a request for their services (searching for explosives or explosive devices) or where it is apparent their services may be of assistance (e.g., clearing unattended packages).
16. Upon reporting to duty, the Handler will liaise with the Watch Commander for operational planning purposes and the Daily Duty Report is to be completed, as required.
17. Upon reporting to duty, the Handler will directly notify the Operations Communications Center ("OCC") of the Dog Team being available and their specific shift times.
18. Regarding a call for service related to an unattended package or possible explosive threat, the PDS resource will be considered.

[Refer also to Transit Police policies: OA070 – Bombs/Explosives, SOP10 – Explosive Threats, and SOP35 – Unidentified Packages]

19. When a Member requires the attendance of the Dog Team, the Member will make the request through the OCC and, in the course of deployment the OCC will notify the Supervisor that the Dog Team is being dispatched.
20. In any situation, the Member in charge of an operation/incident must rely on the discretion of the Handler as to how, when and where a dog will be deployed or withdrawn.
21. When a Dog Team is not on shift and is required for operational purposes, the Watch Commander or Patrol Supervisor may authorize a call out for an off-duty Dog Team.
22. In determining whether to authorize a Dog Team call out, the Watch Commander or Patrol Supervisor will take into account the seriousness of the incident, location of incident and desired timeline for operational response, and the impact on transit system resiliency.
23. In the event that a Dog Team is not available, or it is deemed not practicable to proceed with a call out given all considerations, a JPD dog unit will be requested to assist, in accordance with existing protocols.

Handler Responsibility and Conduct

24. Police Service Dogs are considered a valuable tool issued by the Transit Police and the Handler will be responsible for the proper care and maintenance of their assigned Police Service Dog. This responsibility will be assumed by the Member when they are assigned to the PDS.

25. Handlers must inspect all police dog equipment on a weekly basis to ensure that it is in good working order (per BCPPS requirement). Handlers must promptly replace faulty equipment.
26. While on duty, the Police Service Dog will be under the control of its Handler in areas where the public has access. Direct control includes verbal control or physical control (confined, on harness, or on a lead).
27. While on duty, the Police Service Dog will only be released from physical control by the Handler where it is necessary for the effective execution of police duties and where, under the circumstances, the safety of the public and police officers is reasonably assured.
28. When a Dog Team is present for or involved in the arrest of a suspect, the Handler will remove the Police Service Dog from the scene as soon as is practicable (per BCPPS requirement).
29. The Police Service Dog will not be left in the police vehicle in a manner in which they may have contact with the public. When not under the control of the Handler, the Police Service Dog's head cannot extend through any open window.
30. When securing a Police Service Dog outside of the police vehicle, the Handler will take steps to ensure that the Police Service Dog cannot injure itself or others.
 - (1) The Handler will ensure that the Police Service Dog has sufficient shade during warm weather and an adequate supply of water.
31. When left unattended, it is essential that the Police Service Dog be checked periodically to ensure that it is not in distress.
32. The Police Service Dog will not normally be handled or given commands by anyone other than the assigned Handler. Only under emergency conditions will another Handler command the Police Service Dog.
33. The Police Service Dog will not be exercised by being allowed to run beside vehicles or bicycles, or in any area which presents danger to the dog or the public.
34. Other than routine care and exercise, the Handler will not involve themselves in outside activities with their Police Service Dog unless previously authorized by the Inspector Operations.
35. When a Dog Team is approached to give a demonstration, the Handler will be required to obtain approval from the Inspector Operations (or designate).
36. Each Handler will be responsible for recording the daily activities of the Dog Team on the Daily Duty Report, including any statistical information required by the Inspector Operations.

- 37. The Handler will submit an incident report on PRIME when attending calls for service (including when a call for the Dog Team is cancelled).

Care of the Police Service Dog

- 38. All dogs acquired for the PDS are the sole property of the Transit Police.
- 39. The Transit Police will be responsible for covering all authorized expenses related to the operation of the PDS (e.g. veterinary bills, kennels, kennel fees, dog food, dog incidentals/equipment, training, vehicle safety and security/pet barriers, and explosive odour kits and explosive magazines).
- 40. The Transit Police will be responsible for providing PDS Members with the necessary Handler kit and clothing items, and designated police vehicles that are properly equipped for dog transport.

41. [REDACTED]

- 42. Police Service Dog kennels may be subject to inspection by the Inspector Operations or their designate to ensure that the housing is properly constructed and maintained.

- 43. Police Service Dogs will be housed in a Transit Police approved secure kennel when off duty or on leave.

(1) [REDACTED]

- 44. If the Police Service Dog is injured or sick, the Handler will immediately notify the Inspector Operations. Unless otherwise directed, the Handler will report to work as usual.
- 45. In the event that the Police Service Dog becomes sick or injured to the extent that professional medical attention is required, it will be the responsibility of the Handler to transport the Police Service Dog to the veterinarian.
- 46. The Handler will retain a copy of all veterinary examination reports in PDS records and forward a copy to the Inspector Operations upon request.
- 47. The disposition or transfer of a Police Service Dog will be at the sole discretion of the Chief Officer (including upon retirement or reassignment of a Handler).

48. Upon retirement, a Police Service Dog may be placed with an external party and a waiver of liability and financial responsibility will be completed and maintained by the Transit Police.

Injuries

[Refer also to BCPPS section 1.4 and Transit Police policies: Chapter OH070 – Independent Investigation Office and SOP55 – Notification of Sensitive Issues]

49. In all instances, including training, when a Police Service Dog injures anyone, action must be taken, medical aid provided, and the injury and action taken documented in the Member's notebook and on PRIME.

NOTE: Transit Police and the Handler may be civilly liable for damages caused by the dog where the Handler improperly handled the dog, failed to assist when required or was negligent in providing assistance.

50. When a Police Service Dog injures anyone, the Handler will:
- (1) Administer first aid to the injured person (or request another Member on scene to administer first aid) and call for Emergency Health Services to attend (and transport to hospital if required), as is appropriate to the circumstances;
 - a. Obtain the consent of the injured person if they are conscious, or if unconscious, the Handler will document the non-consent; and
 - b. If the person injured is under 18 years of age, that the parent or guardian is notified;
 - (2) Request a Supervisor to attend to the scene as soon as possible;
 - (3) Document the incident in the Handler's notebook;
 - (4) Document all other possible sources of injury to the person (e.g., collision, fences, brambles);
 - (5) If possible, ensure that the injuries sustained by the person are photographed (including after medical treatment), and if the person refuses to have the injuries photographed, then document the refusal;
 - (6) Ensure that all witnesses are identified and interviewed;
 - (7) Open a PRIME General Occurrence File and complete an incident report and comply with reporting requirements of BCPPS section 1.4.3 if a dog bite occurred (and enter any photographs into exhibits); and
 - (8) Complete a SBORR (Subject Behaviour Officer Response Report), as applicable, pursuant to Transit Police policy **OH020 – Use of Force**.

51. The Handler will be responsible for promptly notifying the Inspector Operations of all instances where a Police Service Dog causes an injury to a person.
 - (1) If the injury falls within the parameters of s. 89 reportable injury to the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner or a critical incident for the Independent Investigations Office, the Inspector Operations will ensure that the required notifications are made.

Police Dog Vehicle

52. When on duty, Police Service Dogs will be usually transported in a designated Police Service Dog police vehicle that is equipped with appropriate dog safety features, including thermostat/alarm system and barrier from the driver and passenger areas. In circumstances where the Handler is required to transport the Police Service Dog in a non-designated Police Service Dog police vehicle, the Handler will advise the PDS Lead (or Watch Commander if the PDS Lead is not on duty) and crate the Police Service Dog to ensure safe transport and prevent vehicle damage by the Police Service Dog. Appropriate safety measures to be taken by the Handler.
53. Prior to police vehicle use, the Handler will be responsible for ensuring that the installed dog safety systems are in working condition and for informing the Watch Commander and Fleet Coordinator of any maintenance or operating concerns.
54. The Handler will be authorized to use their personal vehicle to transport the Police Service Dog while off duty, for example:
 - (1) To and from the police facility;
 - (2) Assigned training sessions involving use of the Police Service Dog;
 - (3) To and from veterinary care facilities;
 - (4) Travel related to the PDS operations, call-outs and dog care matters; and
 - (5) Travel related to special assignments with supervisory approval.
55. When the Handler is transporting the Police Service Dog in a non-designated Police Service Dog police vehicle, the Handler is required to crate the Police Service Dog and take other safety measure as instructed by the PDS Lead or by policy.

[See also Transit Police policies: AG090 - Police Vehicles and AG010 – Property Management]

56. While transporting an authorized passenger in a PDS vehicle, the Handler will instruct the passenger on how to conduct themselves while in the vehicle.

Validation and Training

57. Police Service Dogs will be validated annually by properly accredited police personnel (RCMP or municipal police agency) to the provincial standard required by Police Services Division.
58. The Dog Teams will engage in training on an ongoing basis in order to maintain the level of the provincial standard and any additional specialized capacity in explosive odour detection.
59. In coordination with the PDS, the Transit Police Training Section will be responsible for the design and delivery of training to Members and VS Detection Teams in support of the VS detection function of the Transit Police.
60. The Dog Team may not be deployed if not validated in accordance with this policy.
61. Each Handler will maintain a detailed log of the Dog Team's training sessions. Each recorded session will explain location of training, which explosive sample(s) were used and a synopsis of the result.
62. The Handler will store the training log in a secure location and make it available for review upon request of the Inspector Operations and as is required for validation, authorized evaluation purposes, or Court.
63. When training in a public venue, the Handler will not disclose sensitive information or intricate details of training techniques.
64. Handlers will maintain their explosive training kits in accordance with the direction of the Explosives Regulatory Division of Natural Resources Canada.
65. The PDS will establish operating protocols regarding the handling, securing and replacement of explosive training kits (including location of "hides" when training in the field) and maintenance of associated records. Handlers will be required to comply with issued operating protocols.

Reporting

66. The Transit Police will submit PDS related reports to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General ("Ministry") as required by BCPPS or as otherwise requested by the Ministry.

Key References:

BC Police Act [RSBC 1996] c.367

BC Provincial Policing Standards 1.4 – Police Service Dogs Principles

BC Provincial Policing Standards Section 1 Use of Force/Sub-Section 1.4 – Police Service Dog [Effective September 1, 2015]

Criminal Code of Canada [RSC 1985, c. C-46]