

Rockville City Police Department

GENERAL ORDER



Subject CANINE TEAM		Procedure G.O. # 4 - 41
Authorizing Signature 	Effective 02-26-2010 Revised 02-23-2021 Revised 05-20-2025 Revised 06-24-2025 Revised 10-13-2025 Revised 08-03-2026 Revised 10-07-2026	Total Pages 22

I. POLICY

The mission of the Rockville City Police Department (RCPD) Canine Unit is to provide support to department personnel by providing highly mobile, specially trained, police service dogs. The police service dog when appropriate may be used as a use of force but is primarily utilized as a locating tool, capable of searching for items or people and apprehending criminal suspects while providing additional safety for police officers and the public.

In situations where law enforcement officers are justified in using the police service dog as force, the utmost restraint should be exercised. Use of force should never be considered routine. In exercising this authority, a canine officer should do everything possible to avoid unnecessary uses of force, and minimize the force that is used, while still protecting themselves and the public.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order (G.O.) is to provide guidance on the use and appropriate deployment of the department's canine teams. Officers should be familiar with canine functions so they are able to make informed decisions as to when a canine is appropriate, can be useful and if one should be summoned.

III. DEFINITIONS

Canine teams offer a wide range of capabilities; usually trained in multiple disciplines; also known as police service dogs (e.g. Patrol/Drug Dog, Patrol/Explosive Dog, etc.).

- A. **Aggressive Canine Contact** – An offensive or defensive action taken by the canine towards an individual, domestic animal, or livestock (including, but not limited to biting, scratching, or jumping up on a person or animal).
- B. **Canine Contact** – The physical touching by a canine, of any part of a person or an object in their possession which is being worn or carried by them or is an extension of the person. (e.g. backpack, hat, baseball bat, purse...).
- C. **Canine Handler/Officer** – sworn police officer, that has met certification standards, assigned to a police canine.

- D. **Canine/Police Service Dog** – A dog that is specifically trained and certified to assist with police duties.
- E. **Canine Team** - Canine handler assigned to a single - or dual-purpose canine.
- F. **Dog Bite** – Is the gripping of a person's body, article of clothing, or item being worn or carried upon their person, by the canine's mouth regardless if the person or animal is injured.
- G. **Drug Detection Canine** - A canine that is trained to detect the presence of controlled dangerous substances (CDS).
- H. **Dual Purpose Canine** - A canine that is trained in patrol and or CDS/Explosive detection.
- I. **Explosive Detection Canine** - A canine that is trained to detect the presence of explosive materials and compounds.
- J. **Bloodhound** - A canine breed specialized in human scent trailing, used exclusively for non-confrontational tracking.
- K. **Scent Article** - An item carrying human scent, such as clothing, bedding, or personal effects.
- L. **Endangered Person** - An individual at imminent risk due to age, mental health, medical condition, or environmental factors (e.g., missing children, elderly with dementia, suicidal subjects).
- M. **Last Known Point**- A definable location for an outstanding subject corroborated by evidence or information.
- N. **Last Point Seen**- A definable location for an outstanding subject was last observed by an officer, witness or victim.
- O. **Usage Report** – A report located in the K9 Track reporting system that is generated every time a canine is deployed for an official law enforcement purpose.
- P. **Active Resistance** – Any action or evasive movements a subject takes to avoid or physically counteract an officer's attempts to detain or place them in custody and/or take control. Active resistance may include, but is not limited to pushing away, tensing arm muscles to avoid handcuffing, pulling away from an officer who is using force in response to resistance in the lawful performance of their duties, or purposely hiding themselves with the intent to avoid detection or arrest despite being offered the reasonable opportunity to surrender.

- Q. **Passive Resistance** – A refusal by a known, unarmed person to comply with an officer’s verbal command or physical control techniques by non-active means. Examples include, but are not limited to, linking arms, going limp, or ignoring verbal instructions by failing to respond or move when an officer can clearly see a suspect is not attempting to avoid detection and/or arm themselves. An individual who is attempting to further avoid detection by not moving or making furtive movements which create substantial concern to the officer that he/she may be attempting to arm themselves should not be considered “passive” under this definition.

IV. PATROL CANINE DEPLOYMENT

- A. The primary function of a properly trained canine team is to provide law enforcement with an enhanced ability to locate people, contraband, and evidence. In determining whether to deploy a canine, the handler must have information relevant to the facts and circumstances of the incident which lead the handler to believe, as a reasonable and prudent police officer that the suspect(s) have committed a crime. The decision to use a police service dog shall be in accordance with this and all departmental policies. The decision and manner to deploy a canine shall be reviewed considering information reasonably available to the officer at the time the decision is made. Police incidents are dynamic situations that can be rapidly evolving. Police canine handlers must evaluate information as it changes, which could dictate the deployment of, or removing the use of a canine. Each K9 deployment used for law enforcement purposes will be documented in a K9 report. Reports are completed through Dog Team Pro.

The bloodhound is the primary resource for missing children, elderly individuals, and suicidal or endangered persons. Endangered persons include those at risk due to age, mental health, or environmental factors. Deployment should occur at the earliest opportunity to preserve trail viability. Life safety in the subject is the highest priority. First responding officers are responsible for securing scent articles until the handler arrives. Scent articles should be collected using sterile gloves and stored in a clean, sealed container to prevent contamination. Preferred articles include clothing worn by the subject. Command staff will expedite mutual aid requests if additional resources are needed. Handlers will coordinate with search-and-rescue teams, aerial support, or community alerts (e.g., AMBER Alerts) as needed.

Bloodhounds are tracking dogs, not apprehension dogs. A bloodhound deployment is classified as a search or investigative function, not a use of force. When a bloodhound locates a person, patrol officers are responsible for making contact and managing the encounter, not the handler or the dog.

The bloodhound may be deployed in low-risk incidents when circumstances suggest a misdemeanor crime has occurred. For minor cases, bloodhounds may be deployed only with a confirmed **SCENT ARTICLE** and a valid reason, such as tracking a fleeing suspect

or linking someone to a scene. This preserves the dog's readiness for critical incidents like missing persons or violent crimes.

Before deployment, the handler will evaluate whether the trail is fresh enough to make the search effective and whether the circumstances justify the use of the dog.

Trails under 4 hours are strongest; 4 - 8 hours may still work, and beyond 24 hours are usually weak. Cool, damp weather and natural surfaces preserve scent, while heat, wind, and pavement reduce it. Handlers should assess conditions to determine if a trail is fresh, fair, or weak.

The bloodhound may be deployed in high-risk incidents when circumstances suggest a violent felony occurred.

When pursuing a suspected armed person, additional manpower should be deployed to secure a perimeter. Bloodhound teams will be assigned a patrol K-9 team which will follow behind the bloodhound. Additional officers assisting in the search may have to go on the track to help ensure the safety of both teams.

Searches for known juvenile offenders shall be limited to situations where the crime's severity, the subject's age, potential for violence, or other critical factors justify deployment. When tracking juveniles or persons in crisis in public areas, handlers must ensure there is a clear legal or safety reason (welfare check, missing person, mental health-related emergency) for the deployment, obtain supervisory approval when feasible.

B. Canine deployments will be utilized for, but are not limited to the following, when probable cause or exigent circumstances exist:

1. Tracking / locating suspects.
2. Tracking and locating lost or missing persons.
3. Searching building, fields, and wooded areas for suspects.
4. Searching crime scenes for evidence.
5. Apprehending fleeing suspects
6. Searching for hidden narcotics, explosives and firearms.
7. Perimeter and operational support for investigations, tactical and surveillance units.
8. High-risk arrest situations.

C. K9 Deployment Notifications:

1. For on-duty deployments, the Sergeant or OIC on scene will be notified. If an engagement or surrender occurs, the chain of command will be notified per current practice. For deployments outside regular hours (call outs), the handler will notify the Special Operations Division Commander directly.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. When required, canine handlers will issue a verbal warning in a loud, clear voice, which will include the following:
 1. Identify themselves as a police officer.
 2. State exactly what actions the suspect(s) should take immediately.
 3. Identify the consequences if they do not comply.
 4. An acceptable form of the canine warning would be: "Police canine, speak to me now or I will release my dog. He/she will bite you when he/she finds you".
- B. Canine handlers will wait a reasonable amount of time after the warning, to allow a suspect an opportunity to peacefully surrender. The time is dictated by the search area and the probability that the intended recipients of the message heard the announcement. Canine handlers should consider issuing announcements from other points of access to minimize the threat of ambush.
- C. Canine handlers will give additional warnings as needed in larger search areas.

VI. CANINE AS A LOCATING TOOL

- A. Police dogs are highly trained and equipped with a keen sense of smell, making them an invaluable asset in locating missing individuals in difficult and dangerous situations. Canine teams may be utilized to search for individuals as a locating tool in circumstances where it would not be permissible to utilize them as force option. A police dog can be utilized as a resource in searching for missing people when all other available options have been exhausted, including requesting a bloodhound from surrounding agencies and there is a potential danger to the missing person's life due to weather conditions or a relevant medical condition. The use of a police dog must be approved by both the canine handler and the Watch Commander to ensure the safety of both the dog and the missing person. Canine officers will issue a canine announcement prior to the start of all searches and tracks.
- B. Canine announcement will be repeated as the deployment progresses beyond reasonable earshot distance of the original announcement.

- C. Canine officers will maintain their canine on lead and adjust the length of lead to reduce the likelihood of accidental or unintended contact as conditions dictate.
- D. The canine will not be released to apprehend a fleeing subject when the canine is being used solely as a locating tool.
- E. The canine officer will take at least one back-up officer on all deployments involving person searches unless there exists an exigent reason to search alone.
- F. When the subject is located, the canine officer will take immediate positive physical control of their canine and maintain a safe distance to avoid accidental contact with the subject.
- G. The canine handler or backup officer will verbally warn the subject and afford them a reasonable opportunity to surrender peacefully. If the suspect does not surrender, the backup officer will operate under the department's use of force policy (Response to Resistance and Aggression G.O. 4-1) to effectively take the suspect into custody using the least amount of force necessary.

VII. CANINE AS A LESS-LETHAL FORCE OPTION

- A. When a canine handler is preparing to deploy their canine for the purpose of apprehension, they must comply with the department's use of force policy (Response to Resistance and Aggression G.O. 4-1). A trained police canine is viewed as a protective instrument, thus considered a less-lethal force option. Force situations are dynamic and require an officer to continually assess the subject's actions to ensure an objectively reasonable response. Officers may initiate and transition to levels or types of force, including attempts to de-escalate, in relation to the amount of resistance offered by the subject. In addition to being a less-lethal force option, a canine can also be utilized for purposes of de-escalation. Circumstances that influence the level of force used by the officer include but are not limited to the following:
 - 1. The severity of the crime at issue
 - 2. Whether the suspect(s) pose an immediate threat to the safety of officers or others, and whether the suspect is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight.
 - 3. Suspects who purposely hide to avoid detection or arrest, despite being offered reasonable opportunities to surrender, are considered to be engaging in active resistance, for the purposes of force relating to the police canine.
- B. In addition to A. 1 - 3, canine officers will also take into consideration the age of the suspect.
- C. Canine officers will issue a canine announcement unless there are articulable, exceptional circumstances that would suggest it would expose the canine officer, other officer or bystander

to a substantial risk of serious injury or death.

- D. The canine officer will maintain their canine on lead until the decision is made to release the canine to apprehend a suspect (s).
- E. When the suspect is located, the canine officer will afford the suspect(s) a reasonable opportunity to surrender if it is possible to do so without creating unnecessary risk to themselves or others.
- F. De-escalation may include the mere presence of the canine, or issuance of a canine announcement as defined by this policy, recognizing that the trained police canine is a resource that is intended to reduce the immediacy of the threat by preventing an individual from escaping, gaining the tactical advantage and/or arming themselves. A canine announcement as defined by this policy shall not be considered a threat of force and shall be considered a de-escalation technique which gives an individual the opportunity to surrender peacefully.
- G. This policy recognizes that a search or apprehension conducted by a trained police canine could be considered reasonable under the totality of the circumstances if an officer feels the speed, efficiency, and/or accuracy of a trained police canine reduces the risk posed to officers attempting to search or apprehend a fleeing suspect without a canine.
- H. When the suspect is located, and the suspect is compliant, the backup officer will take the subject into custody.
- I. In situations where the canine officer is searching a confined space (e.g. buildings or fenced in areas) for a suspect, the search may be conducted off lead. When conducting the search off lead the canine officer will:
 - 1. Issue a canine announcement prior to releasing the canine off lead.
 - 2. Make reasonable efforts to ensure the safety of bystanders.
 - 3. The canine officer should maintain visual contact with the canine.
 - 4. Some conditions may dictate minimal use of illumination. In these instances, handlers should attempt to obtain thermal and/or night vision capabilities prior to deploying for the search.
 - 5. The canine handler will ensure the canine is wearing an electronic remote collar and that the collar is in working order while operating off lead.
 - 6. It is the canine handler's responsibility to control their canine (the canine is a tool/protective instrument/less-lethal use of force). The handler is responsible for determining the appropriate use and level of force to be used.
 - 7. Once a canine is released or commanded to apprehend a suspect by biting and

holding the suspect, it is the duty of the canine handler to terminate canine force through the use of verbal commands or if necessary to physically remove the canine as soon as compliance is gained, and it is safe to do so.

VIII. APPREHENSIONS

- A. The canine officer will turn all apprehended suspects over to patrol or investigative units for processing and filing of criminal charges.
- B. Canine officers will provide written statements to processing officers, detailing the circumstances of the arrest and actions taken by the canine team to affect the apprehension. Canine officers will be afforded an opportunity to review Body Worn Camera (BWC) footage before providing any written statements per BWCS policy. Canine handlers will provide an approved Usage Report to the investigating officer.
- C. Canine officers may use the canine to protect themselves or others from what they reasonably believe is an imminent threat of death or serious physical injury. The use of a canine is considered a less-lethal use of force.

IX. BITE/INJURIES PROCEDURES

- A. If a bite, injury and/or claim of injury results from the use or deployment of the police canine the following procedures shall be followed:
 - 1. The injured person shall be provided with medical care as soon as practical.
 - 2. The canine handler will make immediate notification to the shift supervisor.
- B. The shift supervisor will notify the on-duty or on-call watch commander. The shift supervisor, or designee if unavailable, shall respond and personally view the injury, ensure that the area of the bite, injury or claimed injury is photographed and document their observations.
- C. Additionally, the following shall be performed:
 - 1. The canine handler shall submit to the shift supervisor the police report or supplement detailing the facts regarding the bite or injury and Response to Resistance and Aggression Report in accordance to General Order # 4-1 (Response to Resistance and Aggression) by the end of the tour of duty.
 - 2. The shift supervisor shall ensure that a copy of all forms and reports with supervisory endorsements are forwarded via the chain of command by the end of the tour of duty, if an extension is required the Bureau Commander will be notified of the delay and reason for delay.

3. The Bureau Commander shall ensure that a copy of all forms and reports are sent to Risk Management within 24-hours.

X. DETECTOR K9 DEPLOYMENT: GENERAL

Deployment of a detection canine will be conducted safely, without undue risk to the canine, the canine handler, other officers, or the public in general. The decision to deploy a canine under these circumstances will be the sole responsibility of the canine handler, after thorough consideration of all factors. Canines being utilized for detection will generally be on lead, however circumstances and conditions may require the canine to be off lead. The canine handler will ensure the canine remains in their direct control and line-of sight. Whenever possible, canine handlers will maintain the chain of custody of located evidence, standing by the item until a patrol officer can take custody of it.

A. Explosives Detection

1. Bomb Threats

- a. Explosive device threats will be mitigated in coordination with Montgomery County Fire Rescue (MCFRS) Fire Marshal's Office.
- b. When assigned an explosive detection or bomb threat search the canine officer must view all threats as serious and potentially dangerous to both property and persons.
- c. Upon arrival the canine officer will contact the supervisor in charge and obtain all information involving the suspected explosive device or bomb threat, to include general location, area to be searched, and detonation time if known.
- d. The canine officer will request the supervisor to establish a communications liaison between the search area and the Emergency Communications Center and if possible secure the area.
- e. The communications liaison will advise ECC when the search is going to commence and instruct them not to communicate with the canine team on the radio. The canine officer will monitor the radio but cannot transmit.
- f. If the total area cannot be searched before the detonation time, the supervisor will be advised and request ECC to assign additional Canine Explosive Detection Teams.
- g. If no other teams are available, the canine officer will search as much of the area as possible, leaving enough time to evacuate no less than thirty (30) minutes before detonation time.

- h. When a search cannot be started or completed thirty (30) minutes before detonation time, the canine team should wait thirty (30) minutes after the intended detonation time before conducting the search.
- i. When no detonation time is given, the canine handler should take the necessary time to prepare the canine and commence the search.
- j. If the threat is related to a vehicle, only the exterior may be searched. Canine teams will not enter the interior or cab portion of any vehicle unless coordinated and cleared by the Montgomery County Fire Marshall's Office.
- k. If the canine indicates an alert to an explosive odor at any point during the search, the canine handler must leave the immediate area and confer with MCFRS.
- l. The handler must advise the Bomb Technician of the description and location of the area in which the canine indicated.
- m. After the Bomb Technician renders the indicated area safe, the canine team must continue the search using the same procedure for any additional positive indications.
- n. When the search has been completed or suspended, the handler will notify the on-scene supervisor and provide them with the search results.

2. **Protective Sweeps**

- a. The canine team will conduct protective sweeps on request. The size of the search area will determine how many canines will be needed for the detail.
- b. If a canine alerts to the odor of an explosive during a protective sweep, the canine handler must leave the immediate area and confer with MCFRS.

3. **Suspicious Packages**

- a. Any object that has been deemed suspicious by the canine handler or a MCFRS, will be treated as a live explosive. Canine handlers will not approach or deploy their canine to sniff in the immediate area of the object.
- b. Canine handlers will remain on scene to assist with secondary device scans but will defer to MCFRS before engaging in any additional search activity.

B. Narcotics Detection

1. **Vehicle Scans**

- a. Narcotic detector teams will respond to requests for vehicle scans in a timely fashion.
- b. Canine handlers will contact the requesting officer and ensure that the vehicle is unoccupied, engine is turned off and the doors and windows closed. Vehicle occupants will be staged at least one full car length away from the suspect vehicle.

- c. Canine handlers will request that the immediate adjacent travel lane be blocked to provide a margin of safety to the team as they search.
- d. Once the exterior of the vehicle is searched the canine will be secured regardless of the outcome.
- e. The canine handler will communicate the results of the search to the requesting officer. If the search resulted in a positive indication, the vehicle will be searched by on-scene patrol officers.
- f. Only once the search of the interior of the vehicles by on scene officers is completed may the handler deploy the canine to search the interior if deemed appropriate.

2. **Other**

- a. Narcotics detector teams may be called to search structures, parcels, and open areas.
- b. Consideration will be given to the likelihood of direct access to narcotics in these searches. The handler will scan interior areas visually and conduct a walk through before the canine is deployed to search.

C. Article Detection

- 1. When the potential need for an article detection dog arises during an incident, a request for the canine team should be made as soon as practical.
- 2. The requesting officer or on scene supervisor should attempt to ascertain if any hazards (environmental, biological, structural, etc.) are present in the area where the canine team is to search and advise the canine handler prior to deployment.
- 3. If an officer(s) accompanies the canine team during the search, the officer(s) will follow all directions given by the canine handler relating to the search.
- 4. When a canine team has been requested or is responding to an incident, it is the responsibility of the officer, or a supervisor, handling the incident to cancel the responding canine team(s) if they are no longer needed.

D. Deployment Documentation

- 1. A canine usage report will be generated every time a canine is deployed for an activity. Usage reports will be completed no later than the start of the canine officer's next tour of duty. If an extension is needed the canine handler must seek supervisor approval.

XI. PATROL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Officers will follow the below guidelines to assist the responding canine team with conducting an effective deployment:

1. Gather as much pertinent information as possible prior to the canine team's arrival, making sure to disseminate it as appropriate to other involved units.
2. Supervisors, or an officer on scene if a supervisor is unavailable, shall set up a perimeter and avoid contaminating the search area.
3. If the event to which canine is requested involves a fleeing suspect and the pursuing officer loses sight of the subject, the pursuit should be terminated, a perimeter established, and canine handler notified of the last known point of the subject.
4. Officers on scene shall refrain from entering the search area unless requested to do so by the canine handler or an on-scene supervisor. Any entrance into the search area will be communicated to the canine handler due to contamination and safety concerns.
5. The requesting officer or on scene supervisor shall ascertain if any environmental, biological, structural, pets, etc. are present in the area where the canine team is to search and advise the canine handler prior to deployment.
6. Upon arrival of the canine team, the canine handler may assign an officer(s) to assist the canine team during search procedures. Officers utilized in this capacity will adhere to the instructions given by the canine handler.
7. Officers shall maintain an awareness of the canine team's location, understanding that interference with the canine team's activities may result in personal injury to the officer or others.
8. Cancel the canine team if it is determined they are no longer needed.

XII. CANINE TEAM RESTRICTIONS

- A. Due to the unique role of the police canine team, the canine handler will work a schedule independent from the patrol teams, except in extraordinary circumstances and at the direction of the K9 Unit Commander. To ensure availability, canine teams shall not be routinely assigned to calls for service as a primary unit, unless directed by a supervisor due to staffing and/or call volume issues but shall assist officers with in-progress calls and as a backup officer when appropriate.
- B. Canine handlers will not transport prisoners when the police service dog is kenneled in the vehicle.
- C. Crowd Control
 1. Canine teams shall not be used for crowd control at peaceful demonstrations.
 2. Canine teams may be used for crowd control with approval of a command official in extreme circumstances such as to protect property or persons during a riot or other large-scale disturbance that cannot be controlled by other means. In these situations, canines shall:

- a. Be short leashed unless no other means are available to protect an individual from serious injury.
- b. The canine handler will not initiate any protective action, unless to guard against imminent death or serious bodily injury.

D. Canine teams will not be deployed to search for other animals.

E. Allied law enforcement agencies operating in Montgomery County but outside the City of Rockville limits may request the assistance of the RCPD canine team. The request must be approved by an on-duty RCPD supervisor. The handler is responsible for adherence to RCPD policy and reporting requirements.

XIII. CANINE HANDLER QUALIFICATIONS/SELECTION

A. Minimum Qualification

1. Applicant must be a Police Officer II or higher and in good standing.
2. Own or rent a home capable of accommodating a 6' x 12' kennel, and
3. Demonstrate the ability to provide for 24/7 care and maintenance of a RCPD canine as needed and as delineated in the general order.

B. Selection Process for Canine Handler Position Vacancy

1. Memo of Interest from qualified employees,
2. Supervisor endorsement,
3. Physical Fitness Test
 - a. 40 Push-ups
 - b. 40 Sit-ups
 - c. 3 Pull-ups or 15 second dead hang
 - d. 60 lb weighted carry
 - e. 1.5 mile run in 14 minutes
 - f. Panel interview to include at least one subject matter expert, and a memorandum of recommendation completed by the panel and forwarded to the Chief of Police.
4. The Chief of Police, or his designee, will make the final selection.

XIV. CANINE SELECTION/TRAINING/ CERTIFICATION/CARE

A. Selection of a New Canine

1. The newly selected canine handler or existing handler, if it is a replacement dog, will work with the K9 Unit Commander to select a new dog.
2. Once a dog is identified as appropriate for procurement by the RCPD a memorandum will be forwarded to the Chief of Police to include the vendor's proposed purchase agreement and dog specifications.

B. All canine teams designated for patrol function shall receive training through an approved training host. All new canine teams shall attend, successfully complete and demonstrate proficiency in all training requirements as recommended by the hosting agency and as required for certification.

C. Each patrol canine will be trained at a minimum and show proficiency in basic obedience, suspect apprehension to include a verbal recall and a verbal bite release, tracking, building and area search, evidence search, agility and any other training determined to be in line with best practice and certification requirements.

D. The canine handler will be trained to safely deploy and care for their assigned canine in accordance with departmental policy and applicable laws.

E. **Maintenance Training**

1. The RCPD Canine Unit will comply with or exceed industry best practices which are currently 16 activities/hours per month of maintenance training.
2. At least 10 hours of the required 16 activities/hours of training per month will be scheduled as supervised maintenance training with the Montgomery County Police Canine Unit.
3. Obtain annual certifications in their respective disciplines.
4. The K9 Unit Commander will maintain records of all training received by the canine handler(s) and canine(s), as well as all certifications held by the canine team(s).
5. If during canine training the canine team is notified that its services are needed for an incident, if possible, training will be suspended, and the canine team will respond.

F. **Maintenance Training Documentation**

1. Maintenance training notes will be detailed and accurately reflect the exercise, performance and progress of each canine team.

2. Supervised maintenance training notes will be completed in the K9 Track system jointly by the Montgomery County Police (MCPD) K9 Unit training coordinator and each canine handler assigned to the training day. Completed training notes will be reviewed and approved by the MCPD designated trainer.
3. Canine handlers are required to complete their maintenance training notes, both supervised and unsupervised, in a timely fashion. Notes will be submitted for approval no later than 1 week after the training date.
4. All training and certification entries in Dog Team Pro will be periodically reviewed by the Department's Training Coordinator.

G. Annual Certification/Registration

1. The Administrative Services Bureau Commander will be responsible for canine registration to include:
 - a. The Maryland State Police Licensure Division
 - b. City of Rockville Licensing
2. Patrol Dog Certifications will be completed according to the current applicable requirements, policy, and laws.
3. The handler is responsible for maintaining certifications for each discipline and producing the document for court or other administrative proceedings. A copy of each certificate will be retained by the K9 Training Supervisor.
4. Any canine who fails any of the certifications will have no more than 30 days to remediate and pass the certification test. If a canine fails to pass the rescheduled certification test within the 30-day time period, that canine will be deactivated. The supervisor will make an immediate notification to the K9 Unit Commander who will determine if further training will be conducted or if the dog will be removed from service.

5. The Bloodhound Team shall complete an annual certification evaluation to document team proficiency and reliability. The evaluation shall meet the following minimum requirements:
 - a. Minimum 3/4-mile trail.
 - b. Minimum 90-minute trail age.
 - c. Minimum 4 direction changes.
 - d. Minimum 2 surface transitions.
 - e. Urban and environmental distractions and normal human scent contamination when practical.
 - f. Scent article and/or start-point procedure documented.
 - g. Handler blind to the route and location of the trail layer.
 - h. No assistance or directional guidance from the evaluator.
 - i. Demonstrated ability to maintain and work the assigned human scent.
 - j. Successful scent discrimination and identification/location of the trail layer.
 - k. Independent evaluation by an experienced law enforcement K9 handler with demonstrated training and experience in human scent trailing.
 - l. Pass/fail result documented and signed by the evaluator.
 - m. Annual recertification required.

- n. **Certification Documentation** - The certification record shall include the date and location; evaluator; handler and Bloodhound; trail distance and age; surfaces and transitions; direction changes; weather and environmental conditions; known distractions or contamination; scent article or starting procedure; team performance; final result; evaluator comments; pass/fail determination; and evaluator signature.
- o. **Continuing Proficiency** - Annual certification does not replace routine proficiency training. Teams shall participate in regular documented training involving urban and residential areas; hard surfaces and natural terrain; surface transitions; aged and unknown/blind trails; cross-tracks and human scent contamination; environmental distractions; scent discrimination; negative trails when practical; and varied weather and environmental conditions.
- p. **Operational Documentation** - Operational deployment records shall document, when practical, the starting location and basis for selecting it; scent article used; estimated trail age; known contamination or distractions; environmental conditions; significant changes in the Bloodhound's behavior; loss and reacquisition of scent; direction of travel; surface transitions; and final outcome. Certification, training, and deployment records shall be maintained as part of the team's proficiency and performance history.

G. **Housing and Basic Care**

- 1. RCPD canines live with their assigned canine handler at the handler's primary residence. The canine is the sole property of City of Rockville.
- 2. Canine handlers are expected to treat their canine in a humane fashion. Any canine officer who mistreats, abuses, or mishandles their dog in any way will be subject to disciplinary action and removal of the animal.
- 3. When off duty, the canine shall be housed in the kennel provided by the city unless under the direct control and supervision of the assigned canine officer. In the event of extreme weather, the canine may be sheltered inside the canine officer's residence and contained in an approved crate or kennel. Each canine officer is responsible for the actions of their canine(s).
- 4. City provided housing for the canine will be subject to an on-site annual inspection by a K9 Unit Commander or their designee. After an agreed upon inspection date and time is established, the handler will make sure the person completing the inspection has access to the property.
- 5. No dog or animal, other than the city owned canine, will be placed in, or tied to the kennel.
- 6. Canine officers will feed their assigned dog(s) to maintain optimum health and working

weight. The canine handler's supervisor will monitor body condition and weight during regular maintenance training session. The city will provide or approve all dog food offered to the department canine(s).

7. RCPD canines will always have access to fresh and clean water.
8. Canine officers will dispense all required preventative medications (e.g. heartworm and flea and tick products) and supplements as directed by the department approved veterinarian to their assigned canine(s).
9. Canine officers will physically inspect their dog(s) daily for injury, sores, illness, and parasites. Any injury, illness or condition not requiring veterinary treatment will be reported to the officer's supervisor during the canine officer's normal work hours.
10. Canine officers will groom their dog(s) regularly to remove dead hair, dirt, and debris. The canine will be bathed as necessary to ensure good hygiene.
11. Canine officers using RCPD canines for breeding purposes is strictly prohibited.
12. Canine officers will not allow members of the public or minor children (under the age of 18) to feed their assigned canines.
13. Canine officers will ensure that the canine is wearing a police ID collar at all times when the canine is away from the canine handler's primary residence.

H. Canine Boarding/Contracted Vendors

1. When a canine officer is on vacation and away from their home, the canine will be housed at an appropriate boarding facility authorized and under contract with the city.
2. The canine officer will advise their supervisor of the dates and location where the canine is being boarded.
3. All boarding invoices will be submitted electronically as soon as possible to the Office Manager to enter and file.
4. Canine officers will provide the boarding facility with a supply of dog food sufficient to feed the canine for the duration of the boarding as well as medications and supplements as prescribed.

I. Veterinary Care

1. It is the policy of the canine unit to maintain all department owned canines in optimum health and working form. City of Rockville is responsible for veterinary expenses incurred

for department owned canines.

2. Canine officers will schedule their assigned canine(s) for an annual physical with the veterinarian under contract. Notice will be provided via email to the K9 Unit Commander to include the date and time of the appointment. If an appointment is cancelled, the officer will provide a reason to their respective supervisor for the cancellation.
3. For regular or emergency medical care occurring during normal business hours, canine officers will use a veterinarian under contract.
4. If an injury, illness, or condition occurs after normal business hours and delaying care would significantly affect the health of the canine, treatment may be provided by an emergency veterinarian hospital.
5. In the event of an emergency, the health and wellbeing of the canine takes priority. Notification to the canine officer's supervisor will be made as soon as practical but no later than 1 hour after arrival at the treating facility.
6. In the event the canine is referred to, or requires the services of, a veterinary specialist, the canine officer must receive authorization from their supervisor before making an appointment.
7. Canine handlers will notify the K9 Unit Commander at the completion of all veterinary visits and provide the following information: diagnosis, treatments administered, procedures recommended or completed, medications administered or prescribed, and any follow up requirements.

J. Canine Retirement

1. The decision to retire a department owned canine is the responsibility of the Chief of Police or his designee. Input from the affected canine handler, K9 Unit Commander and veterinary recommendations shall be considered when making this decision. The standard criteria are provided below. Any issue that permanently affects the operational capacity of a canine may trigger retirement.
2. The maximum service age for a patrol canine is 10 years. Any extension beyond maximum service age must be approved by the Chief of Police or their designee.
3. Any canine sustaining injury or illness that compromises their ability to perform their duties will be evaluated for retirement.
4. Any canine failing to perform to minimum certification standards may be considered for retirement. Any canine that displays failure during deployments may be considered for retirement.

5. Other issues, conditions, or circumstances that render the canine ineffective or unsuitable for continued service may trigger a consideration for retirement. Other issues, conditions, or circumstances that affect the handler may trigger a retirement for the handler's assigned canine.
6. When a canine has been deemed "retired", the canine handler shall first be afforded the opportunity to adopt the canine. Depending on the circumstance the Chief of Police or their designee reserves the right to deny the ability for the handler to adopt the dog.
7. If it is determined that it is appropriate for the dog to be adopted, a canine release form, releasing the City of all ownership and responsibility for the dog and approved by the Office of the City Attorney will be signed by the Chief of Police, the City Manager and the party or entity assuming full responsibility for the canine.
8. Once the release form is executed, the canine becomes the sole property and full responsibility of the adopting party or entity. The City of Rockville will have no further responsibility or liability for the canine.
9. In the event the canine handler retires from the Rockville City Police Department in good standing, but the work life of the canine has not been exhausted, the Chief of Police reserves the right to make decision to retire the canine early upon recommendation of the K9 Unit Commander.

K. Residential Kennel and Crate Installation and Relocation

1. The Department will provide an approved outdoor kennel and indoor crate for the residence of each assigned K-9 handler. The Department will also cover the costs associated with the initial delivery and installation of the outdoor kennel.
2. Because the purchase, delivery, and installation of the outdoor kennel represent a significant investment of Department resources, handlers are expected to remain at the approved residence for a minimum of one (1) year following the initial installation.
3. If a handler voluntarily relocates their residence within one (1) year of the initial kennel installation, the handler will be responsible for all costs associated with removing, transporting, and reinstalling the outdoor kennel at the new residence.
4. The Office of the Chief of Police may waive all or part of the relocation costs when justified by the circumstances, including when the relocation is beyond the handler's reasonable control or when the waiver is determined to be in the best interest of the Department or the police dog.

Circumstances that may be considered include, but are not limited to:

- a. A job transfer or relocation involving the handler or the handler's spouse.

- b. A change in family situation resulting in relocation.
 - c. A significant financial hardship.
 - d. A medical Necessity involving the handler or an immediate family member.
 - e. A safety or security concern affecting the handler's residence.
 - f. Other circumstances approved by the Office of the Chief of Police.
5. Handlers shall notify the K-9 Supervisor through their chain of command as soon as practical before relocating. The Department will review the circumstances surrounding the move and determine, in writing, whether the handler will be responsible for all or a portion of the relocation costs.

XV. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

1. This General Order shall be reviewed annually by the K9 Unit Supervisor to ensure compliance with current laws, training standards, and best practices. The review shall also include any active Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or cooperative agreements with other law enforcement agencies to ensure they remain current and operationally effective. Updates or recommended revisions shall be submitted through the chain of command for approval.

XVI. EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS (See Appendix A)

G.O. 4-41 APPENDIX A: EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

Canine Handlers will be issued the following specialized equipment as approved by the Administrative Bureau Commander:

1. Canine officers will be issued the canine utility uniform. The "RCPD K9" patch will be sewn on each shirt sleeve with rank insignia sewn just below the patch.
2. Rain gear appropriate to the canine mission; to include a jacket and pants
3. Cold weather jacket
4. Canine ID collar
5. Remote training collar
6. 6' training lead
7. Long line, 20' and 30'
8. Muzzle
9. Tactical tracking harness
10. Outdoor kennel enclosure with appropriate shelter
11. Crate for indoor containment
12. 2 water buckets, heated and stainless steel
13. Food pan
14. Grooming tools
15. 2 infrared beacons

Canine Team

16. GPS WiFi Collar
17. Ballistic Vest
18. Training Balls
19. Tugs and Bite Sleeve

*****All equipment will be maintained and inspected per department General Orders. Canine officers are subject to departmental grooming standards. *****