



Amber Ribbon Report

Best Practices for Fire Service Canines

August 2023







Foreword

Firefighter mental health and wellness is now a common talking point in many of today's fire departments. The identification of our firefighters that may be dealing with issues is of paramount importance. One of the most successful ways to help people manage their stress is with the benefit of support dogs. They can be support dogs, therapy dogs, comfort dogs or some other title but they all can provide a certain level of relief. Studies clearly show the results gained by the introduction of these dogs into the fire stations. If this is effective as it is preliminarily showing, we as fire chiefs can offer this benefit to our people with compassion and stress reduction for their benefit.

Many years ago, we became a part of critical incident stress management (CISM) and the benefits of those teams. We had a regional group that created a response guideline for when they were needed. That remained an option up through today. A few years back, the practice of developing and collaborating a Peer Support group. While the result is focused primarily on assisting our crew-

members, they have different ways of reaching that goal. In my area we now have a regional Peer Support Network that was initiated by our county fire chief's organization and has now grown to multi-county utilization. One piece of that program is the dogs that can be brought into a department to help remove the stress and anxiety of the heat of the moment.

When I started to research how to build a successful fire department canine support unit in my department, I could not find a common direction from any source. While many departments have embarked on this journey, there are no standards that I could find to get information from, or the guidelines published to help me. With that thought in mind, I chose to work with people from all across the country and Canada to help put processes down on paper. This process was built with providing "Best Practices" as a baseline. We also offer success stories from agencies that already are using dogs. Our compilation includes data from a wide range of people with varied interests in these animals. Breeders and trainers bring their expertise. Fire departments that have programs offer their experience in how they accomplished what they did. We include veterinarians to provide what is the best practice for the dogs. Then we have input from Peer Support/mental health and what their work brings. Finally, we have a team of established chief officers and supporting staff to use their experience and how they manage their departments and the roles within their agencies as it relates to the therapy dogs and firefighter mental health.

Good mental health is a multi-faceted approach to helping our people and supporting them in ways that work for the firefighters and their families. It also will benefit their fire department family and the coworkers in their stations. We must do whatever is possible to help with the mental health and wellness inside our departments. This problem has become a big concern to chiefs and administration. Firefighter suicide is at alarming levels. Dogs are a part of the solution just like mental health professionals and counselors. Work/ life balance is another big issue in maintaining good mental health.

As we move forward, consider the utilization of these dogs within your organization. The benefit and rewards are helping your people in processing the situations that they are dealing with. It has been found that simply petting a dog can lower blood pressure and lower heart rate. That in itself is a benefit to the cardio side of our job. The calming effect of the same petting will be visualized in the faces of the firefighters as you watch them. You can hear a relaxed breathing pattern and simply deep cleansing breaths that are done subconsciously.

Take these practices and use them as you need. These best practices will help you in your endeavors. It isn't done overnight but it can be done. This step is a positive approach to an issue in our fire service and an effort to make it better for all of us now and in the future.

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The VCOS International Strategic Initiative Online Network

Mission

To develop and enhance effective, professional leaders of the volunteer and combination fire service by providing tools, resources and representation to lead their organizations effectively.

Vision

Excellence Today. Influence Tomorrow.

Core Values

Commitment – Dedicated to the cause while staying true to the membership, organization, and profession.

Accountability – Take Ownership and hold others to the same standard.

Professionalism – Being ethical, respectful, competent, skilled, and humble.

Integrity – Doing the right thing when no one is watching.

Teamwork – Working together toward a common goal.

Innovative – Looking for the new, now.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	9	Associated Partners and Agencies	25
Problem Statement	10	Fire Service Canine 7 Success Stories	26
Purpose Statement	10		
Meaning of Amber	10	Canine Needs & Information	46
Amber Report Questions	11	Breeders – General Information	46
Background	11	Selecting Breeder	45
Focus	13	Selecting A Dog	47
Direction	13	Service Dogs Qualifications	48
Definitions	14	Information About Service Dogs	48
Benefits of Canine Support	19	Breeders, Trainers, Canine Groups, and Orgs with Canine Programs	50
Considerations for Canine Teams within the FD	20		
Training	21	Appendix A	60
Canine Good Citizen	22	Certifying Agencies	
Foundational Canine Needs	23	Appendix B	64
Dog Health Insurance	23	Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures Relating to Canines	
Fire Department Needs	24	Appendix C	103
Fire Department Chief and Staff Team	24	Veterinarian Information	
External Peer Support Teams	24	Appendix D	112
		Animal Assisted Crisis Response Dogs	
		National Standards	

Fire and Emergency Service Members

Throughout history canines have played an important role in fire and emergency services. Who doesn't remember the stories of their childhood, the Dalmatian running alongside the horse drawn apparatus, always present as the firehouse dog. Other breeds like the Saint Bernard were associated with alpine search and rescue, German Shepherds associated with explosive detection, Labradors with accelerant detection and the list goes on. Today we look to our canine companions as therapy, service, emotional support, crisis response, and comfort dogs to name a few.

The VCOS established a committee to develop a report on canine support in today's fire and emergency service organizations. Thanks to the committee members whose passion and commitment developed another comprehensive report.

With most of our reports we associate a color to reference the specific topics that have been addressed and this report is no different. After some discussion it was decided to consider Amber which the committee researched and noted with amber, we can't help but feel joyful, vibrant and spirited, it effortlessly puts others in a good mood.

The Amber Ribbon Report was written to provide guidance, roles and recommendations including best practices and considerations for a successful canine program centric to the health and well-being of our personnel. Please read and keep this report handy if you consider beginning a canine program within your organization and enjoy the benefits of our canine companions.

Stay Safe,

Chuck Flynn

Chair- Board of Directors VCOS/IAFC

Deputy Chief East Granby Fire Department - CT

Introduction



Canines have been a part of the fire departments for many years. This report will provide direction and “Best Practices” for any fire department to assist in building their own Fire Service Canine group. While we will define the various types of canines in use, this report will look at the area of greatest need and interest for today.

The use of canines is prevalent for many aspects within emergency services organizations. The term “working dog” is used to collectively identify various roles that canines and handlers may hold. However, regulating organizations, such as the AKC or CKC, have not set standards for every contemplated role. The fire and EMS services have used dogs for decades, initially as firehouse dogs that lived with and responded with the crews. Today, the role of the canine has changed and continues to evolve.

While the IAFC-VCOS does not intend to answer all the questions surrounding the use of canines, the intent of this Amber Ribbon Report is to provide a foundation and best practices when an emergency organization wants to utilize the unique benefits of dogs. There is much literature concerning dog use including the efficacy of therapy dogs for mental illnesses. Whether the dogs are used as companions, service, therapy, arson, SAR, or other capacity, a set of best practices should be followed to protect responders and the public, alike. These guidelines should start with breeder standards and selection, progress through liability issues, and care and maintenance concerns with the dogs and handlers.

There is much confusion about what a service, therapy, support, or comfort dog really is. Service dogs carry a specific set of rules and regulations as far as access. The others various dogs do not have the same level of access but are more useful in a therapy type role. Service dogs are to be used by a single person and not in a group or team.

Problem Statement

The problem surrounding the use of canines in fire and medical organizations is that there is a lack of knowledge concerning the standards, guidelines, and liabilities necessary to address when using dogs in roles within the service. Moreover, the inconsistency with recognized standards and definitions, i.e., AKC or CKC, make decision-making harder for leadership. There is no comprehensive guiding document currently available to help interested potential canine team leaders start to build their plan. Fire fighters, EMT and paramedics of all ranks can benefit from the use of canines within the department. Post Traumatic Stress is now being recognized as a dangerous issue within the station walls but there is relief by using dogs to interact with fire and EMS personnel and help to unload those.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Ribbon Report is to identify and define roles and standards for the use of canines within fire and EMS organizations specific to employee mental health. This may include further defining titles and roles of both the canine and handler, such as, companion dog or therapy dog. Liability should be an area that needs to be considered.

Meaning of Amber

In selecting the color Amber for this ribbon report, here is what the color means: Amber encourages us to be confident and fearless. Amber believes that we accomplish more when we choose to be bold. If you're timid or reluctant to try new things, find inspiration in the color amber. Most notably, amber is an optimistic hue. When in the presence of amber, we can't help but feel joyful. What's more, amber is vibrant and spirited, so it effortlessly puts others in a good mood. Spending some time with amber could be just what you need to turn your frame of mind around. With its connection to nature, amber is thought to have magical capabilities. As a warm and inviting color, amber is revered as a protector. Amber is outgoing and enjoys making new connections. This yellowish-orange shade would love to get to know you. All it asks is that you show it kindness in return. What's more, wearing the color amber makes you more approachable. Those who like keeping to themselves in public shouldn't don amber clothes. When you think of autumn, the color amber likely comes to mind. The shades of orange found in amber give it an autumnal feel. This is why amber is such a warm tone. It's also associated with the cozy atmospheres you see around this time.

Amber Report Questions

In order to answer or provide guidance to the stated problem and purpose, the following questions will be explored to provide constructs and underpinnings for sound decision and policymaking.

- 1. How are dogs used in fire and EMS organizations for mental health, and how are their roles defined?**
- 2. What standards are available for breeders, trainers, and handlers for dogs in fire and EMS organizations?**
- 3. What liabilities exist that must be addressed, and policies developed when contemplating the use of canines for mental health within fire and EMS organizations?**

Background

Dogs have been a part of the fire service since the 1700's. Originally as support of the horses and protection of the carriages, it became apparent that the dogs had a calming effect on the horses. The practice of fire dogs continued into the 20th century although their role had changed since the invention of motorized fire apparatus. They moved to represent fire fighters during school demonstrations and other public education events. Departments promoted the practice as a friendly and safe place to be for the public.

In the last 10 years, the practice of therapy and support dogs in the fire stations for the benefit of the fire fighters has become more common. Awareness regarding firefighter stress and PTSD as well as a decreasing stigma surrounding behavioral health, are making it easier to talk about for the better good of department members. CISM and Peer Support teams use the canines as another way to bring in additional support by providing comfort to people on duty. This support helps to mitigate stress experienced by personnel.

LETTER

Joseph Chornock, CHS III

Maryland Fire Chiefs Association

Membership Secretary 2021-2024



I have a daughter that was suffering from the loss of some very good friends from suicide while she was working at Millersville University in Lancaster, PA. She became very depressed, and it reached bottom when she was working at a local campground during the summer break and was called upon to respond to a camp site for an unresponsive person. Allison was the only person at the campground trained in CPR. She sprang into action and performed perfect CPR until the local EMS arrived, but the camper didn't survive.

Allison was placed on medication for depression, and it really affected her in other ways. She went to therapy, and it helped a bit, until she got her puppy.

She got an American Cocker Spaniel, and we named it Button.

Allison decided to make button a support dog and started the training classes as soon as she was old enough. Button changed Allison's life, it gave her a companion that she needed and the challenge of training.

Button became a support dog for the students at the university even before she could officially graduate and become a certified support animal.

**MU Campus Recreation on Instagram:**

Button has become a celebrity on campus and Instagram.

I have been amazed by my daughter's transition from her work with Button, her support animal.

I realize that this doesn't deal with the fire department, but the effect it has had on a university and its students is worth passing on. Check out @buttonattheville. Thanks for what you are doing.

Joe

Fire/Rescue Chief (Ret)

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Focus

This report will define and explain the various canines in use in the fire service today but will be focused on therapy and support type of dogs. Further addendums to this report may include other specialties. Canine use has become a large part of the fire service today and in many cases, an invaluable resource for fire departments.

Direction

This program will require careful consideration to move forward. This report is intended for departments considering the utilization of canines in this role and provides information to make good decisions in considering establishing this valuable resource for departments. The report will cover as many topics as possible to introduce the reader to what to expect and current best practices. There is a great deal of work to do to make this become a reality but can be one of the most rewarding programs to implement and support.

When a department began looking into getting a dog for the fire department, it was a struggle to find any information. The information that was previously out there was not consistent in any way. There were no guidelines or best practices to work with or use as a guide. The subject of canines in the fire service is very much a hot topic and popular currently and showing no signs of abatement. With behavioral and mental health issues now in regular conversations, there should be data and information available to help chiefs and leaders make an informed decision.

Once the decision is made to move forward with implementing a canine member as part of the departments' behavioral health team, there needs to be a commitment to take the best care of the dog and provide for its safety. They will be an interactive part of the life in that station for an extended time. These animals look for you to provide the care needed to allow them to be there for the firefighting team.

Definitions

Therapy Dog

A therapy dog promotes improvement in human physical, social, emotional, or cognitive function, and functions in either group or individual settings. By providing comfort and affection, therapy dogs play a role in animal-assisted intervention (AAI) that helps people with or without diagnosed or physical conditions¹⁵. A therapy dog used in human AAI is not recognized by the ADA as a service animal. AAI is classified as either animal-assisted therapy (AAT) or animal assisted activity (AAA). An AAT is either delivered or directed by health or human service providers working within the scope of their profession and is documented and evaluated, whereas an AAA is not.

Service Dog

Dogs that have been individually trained to perform a specific task for individuals who have disabilities. The disabilities can vary greatly, and so do the tasks that the service dogs perform. Service dogs can aid in navigation for people who are hearing- and visually impaired, assist an individual who is having a seizure, calm an individual who suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and even dial 911 in the event of an emergency. Many disabled individuals depend on them every day to help them live their everyday lives. The ADA explains what businesses and state/local governments must do to make sure that they do not discriminate against a member of the public with a disability who uses a service animal.

Generally, businesses and non-profits that are open to the public as well as state/local governments must allow service animals to go to most places where the public can go. This is true even if they have a “no pets” policy.

The legal definition of service dog – § 35.104 Definitions. Service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability . . . The effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

DEFINITIONS

Service Dog (cont).

Service Animals are animals which are specially trained to perform tasks or work that a disabled person cannot complete on their own. Having a disability isn't enough — your dog must be trained in specific tasks (our guidelines state you must have at least two tasks) that you would otherwise have difficulty completing on your own. Under the law it's permissible for people to ask you what tasks your dog performs, so you should be prepared to explain.

Crisis Response Dog

Crisis response dogs are trained to handle stressful, crowded situations so that they can help people remain calm in disasters. Not all therapy dogs have the temperament to be crisis response dogs.

These dogs assist people struggling with the aftermath of natural disasters, like hurricanes, fires, floods, epidemics, and tornadoes. Teams of certified crisis response dogs and their handlers also aid individuals affected by man-made disasters. You may have seen footage of canines greeting students returning to campus after a school shooting or heard about crisis response dogs helping communities recover from acts of terrorism.

Several agencies provide certified crisis response teams to community and government organizations. When a crisis occurs, these agencies reach out to their teams to see who is nearby and available to help.

Crisis Response Canines are a type of therapy dog. These unique dogs work during disasters to help first responders and survivors decompress and recover. Some fire departments keep them on staff, but others have volunteer teams they partner with to provide crisis relief services.

Crisis Response Canines must be calm and well trained, with a good temperament and an inherent love of people. Most units require certification from a recognized organization, such as HOPE Animal-Assistance Crisis Response.

Emotional Support Dog

Emotional support animals (ESAs) provide comfort to their owner and only their owner. Unlike service dogs, ESAs are not trained for specific tasks or duties. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), owners of service dogs receive special accommodations for their dogs. Owners of ESAs do not. As of 2021, U.S. airlines are no longer required to accommodate ESAs as service dogs; but if the airline chooses, they may allow ESAs to travel as pets in an under-seat carrier or as cargo. Owners are now responsible for any associated fees. See AKC Government Relation's flyer for more information on the topic.



DEFINITIONS

Comfort Dog

A comfort dog is a very special kind of animal. They assist people affected by natural and man-made disasters. That's why they're also known as crisis response dogs.

After a hurricane, severe flooding, or a tornado, medical teams need people to stay calm. Only then can they tend to their wounds. A comfort dog will approach the disaster victims and calm them down. Their help is precious!

There are organizations who train animals to be comfort dogs. When something bad happens (a forest fire, a school shooting, and so on), they're contacted. They then take these loving animals to where the community needs them most.

Fire Station or Facility Dog

Everyone needs a mascot, and fire departments are no different! Thousands of fire departments around the country have a firehouse dog on staff. These well-loved canines live at the firehouse and are cared for by the department's firemen. Many of them are trained as Fire Safety Dogs, and they travel to schools and events showing off fun skills like "Stop, Drop, and Roll!"



The following dog groups are classified as scent dogs. These dogs are in the same defined group with sub-specialties as listed:



Tracking Dogs

Follow scent trails left on the ground by wandering people. These specialized scent work dogs excel at recovering people on foot, whether they want to be found. When the trail is fresh, a tracking dog can follow it through a variety of terrains, including urban ones like concrete or asphalt. Some tracking dogs can follow trails that are weeks or months old.

Fire departments commonly use tracking dogs to help recover lost children or missing elderly people. Bloodhounds are the most well-known tracking dogs, but Labradors, German Shepherds, and other working dog breeds often perform the job well.

Arson Dog

An arson dog is a dog which has been specially trained and certified to detect and respond to trace amounts of ignitable liquids which could have been used to start a fire. Materials like gas, naphtha, butane, and kerosene, among many others, are commonly known as “accelerants,” referring to the fact that they can be used to accelerate a fire. Arson dogs are more properly known as accelerant-detection dogs, because they search for traces of accelerants which could be used to prove that a fire is arson.

A wide variety of dog breeds are used as arson dogs, although Labradors are especially common. Many arson dogs come from police and guide dog training programs which they proved unsuitable for, and their training takes at least three months, and often longer. At the end of training, an arson dog has learned to signal his or her handler about the presence of traces of accelerant to receive a food reward, and he or she is also capable of navigating hazardous or challenging environments.

DEFINITIONS

Cadaver Dog

A cadaver dog or human remains dog is a special type of dog which has been trained to search for cadavers and human remains. With the use of a cadaver dog, rescue crews can identify dead bodies in wreckage for future removal, and cadaver dogs can also be used by crime units to find areas where a cadaver might have been buried, stored, or dismembered. These canines may have macabre jobs, but they are very useful additions to the police forces in the areas where they are used, and they have some of the best noses in the business.

As human remains decay, they produce a variety of very distinct odors. While most of us would probably prefer to avoid ever experiencing such odors, for cadaver dogs, the odors are like a signature, because they appear nowhere else in nature. A cadaver dog can detect human remains through concrete, buried underground, or at the bottom of a body of water, using its extremely well-honed noses to search for faint traces of the chemicals emitted by the human body during decomposition.

Search and Rescue Dog

From missing persons cases to natural disasters, dogs have been an integral part in finding people in dire situations. Search and rescue (SAR) dogs can either use a scent in the air or the scent of a specific object to find who they're looking for. They can be used in many different situations, including disasters, cadaver searches, drowning situations, and avalanches.



Benefits of Canine Support



Numbers show that the first responders suicide incidence has continued to increase. The issues that are faced daily include dealing with what is seen by responders. First responders can see more things in a day, week, or month than the general population may ever see. Post traumatic stress disorder is a real-life problem for all members. It doesn't matter how tough you are, people need to address the issues. Seasoned fire department members realize what can happen when those emotions are internalized. In many cases, nothing may ever be shown by an individual, but in some cases it may all be expressed in some external way. The hope is that the behavior is not destructive.

Peer support teams or providers can help to mitigate stress and issues and assist in finding methods to organize thoughts and actions with a positive out-

come. K-9 teams all over are being trained to be peer support members and help their fellow responders. Some behavioral health teams have built an impressive number of members on their response team so that the supporters do not expose themselves to a point of becoming overwhelmed on their own. An addition to the peer support teams, there are now therapy/ support dogs for fire, EMS, dispatch, police, and rescue departments. These specialized animals are trained to provide support in many ways. They can be emotional support, therapeutic support, or even grief support. These animals have been instructed and qualified to assess and pick up on people who are experiencing a stress event or are exhibiting a stress trait. Each dog is evaluated on an individual basis as to how they socialize with various groups of people. They have had exposure in fire stations, dispatch centers, police stations, or rescue companies on a regular basis BEFORE any interventions are attempted. They should be familiar with being around the equipment along with the noises in that environment. Once they are comfortable, you can watch a dog work in the room. Many times, they will go from person to person to greet them. When they pick up on something from an individual, they will provide an interaction such as sitting or leaning on a person or somehow seeking that person's attention. You will see people who initially were expressing behaviors such as foot tapping, fidgeting, or hyperactive become calm, relaxed, and at rest.

Consideration for Canine Teams within the FD

Decision making

The decision to bring a canine into the fire department is a very big step that involves multiple considerations, adjustments, and commitment. There will need to be many in place when making this choice. Large groups may require the use of multiple dogs because dogs too can become overwhelmed. That is one of the considerations when building your team. Look to neighboring departments who can assist by having a dog there to complement your dog.

Some of the topics for determining your plan of action will include:

Ownership – Who ultimately owns the dog?

Will the dog be the pet of one of your members, or will the department own the dog? Individual dog ownership versus department/ community ownership.

Costs – These are appreciable to add to your department, however there may be opportunities to partner with community groups, foundations, and fund raisers to help in the funding of the dogs. Reimbursements for training time, out of station responses, insurance and daily dog supplies, food and needs are just a few of the considerations that will be having to be considered.

Housing – Where will the dog be housed? The dog needs a home. If the department owns the dog will someone be assigned to take the dog home or is there a specific person at the station that will be taking care of them?

Compensation – Will there be compensation for the handler? What vehicle is safe for transporting the dog. Overtime for the handler is possibly a factor.

Welfare of the dog – These animals will quickly become part of our fire and EMS family. Veterinary costs are just like what we spend on our firefighters themselves. Dogs need preventative care on a regular basis, and we need them to be in top shape to do their job. Should any illness or injuries occur, they need to be addressed by a vet.

Training – The training itself will be demanding of the handlers and departments time. Training at the level needed can be greater than just a house pet.

Insurance – The individual owner and the department administration should discuss the need for both liability insurance as well as health care insurance for dogs. Either of these can be expensive in the long run but having protection in place from the beginning can help to protect the dog, handlers, and departments.

Training



There is not a specific standard for training and certification of any of the dogs such as therapy, support, comfort, or facility dogs. This alone can be cause for alarm since there is no national standard. Departments often look for certifications and qualifications to establish the best practices in what they do. The most practical minimum accepted standard is the AKC Canine Good Citizen (CGC). This is described in this document in more detail. The intent is meant to provide some level of understanding of what the dogs responses will be in various situations. There is an evaluation by a qualified person to determine the approval of the Canine Good Citizen performance.

Training of the dog handlers must also be considered. These people will have a great deal of work to make this a success. There may be daily training needed to keep the dogs sharp, safe and those around them

safe. Exposure inside fire stations is a start to the world of firefighters. The sounds and sights are different from every other place they can be. Many loud unexpected noises may happen at any time day or night. It benefits all parties involved to get to departments and stations when there is no need for the services of the dogs. This allows them time to get their indoctrination to being in a firehouse. Spending time with the firefighters, EMTs and officers in the station is a good opportunity to introduce the dogs to this new world. It then makes it easy to have interaction of the dogs and allow the people in the station to have direct contact with the dogs. Be aware that some people may not be comfortable initially.



Canine Good Citizen Test Items



1

Accepting a friendly stranger

Evaluator approaches and pretends to shake hands with handler, (Hands 6- 12" apart). Evaluator does not touch dog.

2

Sitting politely for petting

Evaluator pets dog: dog must show no shyness or resentment.

3

Appearance and grooming

Evaluator inspects dog, combs, or brushes lightly, examines ears and each front foot.

4

Out for a walk

Handler takes dog for a short walk including right turn, left turn, about turn, and stop.

5

Walking through a crowd

Dog and handler walk close to several people; dog may show causal interest but not jump up.

6

Sit and down on cue/Staying in place

The handler shows that dog can do both sit and down, then chooses a position, leaves dog, and goes to the end of a 20 ft. line, and returns immediately.

7

Coming when called

With dog still on 20 ft. line from Test 6, handler walks out 10 ft. and calls the dog.

8

Reaction to another dog

Two handlers and dogs' approach, pretend to shake hands (hands 6-12" apart), exchange pleasantries, then move on.

9

Reaction to distractions

Distractions are presented; dogs may not panic or show aggression.

10

Supervised separation

Handler goes out of sight for 3-min. Dog is held on a 6-ft. leash by an evaluator.

● 4 levels of the Canine Good Citizen program:

AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy, Canine Good Citizen, AKC Community Canine, and AKC Urban CGC.

Go to link:

<https://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/canine-good-citizen-test-items/>

Foundational Canine Needs

Departments must consider the overall wellbeing of the dogs. Consideration to having multiple dogs or utilization of regional teams/ groups to share the load. In large scale events, a single dog can become overwhelmed. Veterinarians should be consulted on a regular basis to make sure the health of the dogs is maintained. Overextending the services of a dog can do permanent harm to the dog as well.

The department has to consider what items are needed for the benefit of the dogs, including integration of veterinary services.

Health Care Insurance for Dogs

Departments and handlers will need to consider providing health insurance for the dogs. Expenses can get high for unexpected fees for health care. These plans can be tailored to individual needs for what is the best coverage for each agency. You should contact your local vet or insurance agent for more information.

What do the plans cover?

- Accidents, including broken bones, sprains, lacerations, and poisoning
- Illnesses, including allergies, ear infections, arthritis, and cancer, and more
- Preventive care, including checkups, vaccinations, and flea/tick preventive

If you have the dog in the City's name (city owns the dog) often times it would be covered under liability insurance as would a human employee.

Fire Department Needs

Fire Department Chief and Staff Team

Items to be considered by fire departments:

✓	Administrative piece of study.
✓	Insurance for dog – liability and health care insurance
✓	Consolidate SOPs with others in the group and develop a unified document that is representative of the committee.
✓	Managing canine teams in the fire station
✓	Benefits that have been uncovered for using therapy dogs on the fire scenes to help reduce the stress and anxiety for firefighters. Actual event of lowering blood pressure and heart rate on the scene and/or following incidents.
✓	Managing canine teams in the community.
✓	Consideration of regional teams and deployments.

External Peer Support Teams (Fire Department Use of External Teams)

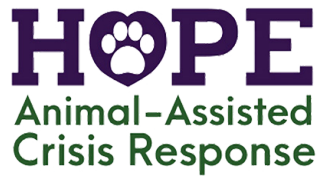
Departments may utilize working with an external peer support team that has therapy dogs as a part of the team. These can be helpful by reducing any costs associated with ownership. The disadvantage is loss of control of the canine team. Many times, these teams do not have an emergency services background and have issues being in that environment. Consider:

- Value of canine teams when dealing with people involved in specific emergencies.
- Helps in reducing stress for your teams.
- Integration of canine(s) or canine into your behavioral health program.
- Clergy and clinician utilization.
- Benefits of utilizing dogs in debriefing.

Associated Partners and Agencies

There are agencies that develop and work with therapy and support dogs. There are several agencies across the United States that have the most experience in developing dogs or canines.

This chapter lists those agencies and gives directions as to what they do and what they offer.



<https://www.hopeaacr.org/>



<https://crisisresponsecanines.org/>



<https://www.therapydogs.com/>



<https://petpartners.org/>



<https://k9forchrist.org/>



<https://thinlinesd.org/>



<https://firstrespondertherapydogs.org/>



Fire Service Canine **7 Success Stories**

26

Several departments have had successes in their therapy dog programs. We can all learn from their success and some individuals that have had personal contact as a member of the team are sharing a brief description or overview of these programs.



#1

Washington DC Fire & Rescue

LOCAL 36 / DC Fire and EMS Peer Support Team

Guidelines for Service, Therapy and Support Dogs

First and foremost, the dogs belong to the handlers. Any costs incurred are the responsibility of the handler unless specifically stated and agreed upon by Washington DC Local 36 or DCFEMS. The dogs were brought into the program to be utilized as needed by the Peer Support Team and requested by the members of the Department as emotional support, and / or as an asset to assist with traumatic incidents or stressful situations occurring within our profession. Requests should be made through the Peer Support Team leads and / or the Coordinator of the team. The dogs are members of the Peer Support Team and are designed to be for our members above all other requests.

The dogs are not to be assigned to a shift (meaning brought to work) by the handlers on a regular basis unless specifically requested. Transportation for the dogs is also the responsibility of the handlers unless a specific need or request arises and will be ultimately approved by the Peer Support Team Coordinator. All leave requests for training, visits, occurrences, and public appearances should be coordinated through Peer Support Team Leads or the Coordinator.

Training certifications for the dogs should be on file with the Peer Support team and the handlers have documents on file as well.

Currently, all the dogs assigned to the Peer Support Team or registered Service Dogs. AKC does have a Therapy Dog Registration and all dogs should acquire this certification. It does require documenting visits, but it is not a difficult task. All station visits and appearances can be used. Attached to this will be an actual AKC form to use. CGC (Canine Good Citizen) is another certification that is from AKC. This will be required of all dogs assigned to the Peer Support team.

There is a distinct difference between Service dog and Therapy dog. A Service dog is assigned to a specific person with needs through the ADA. This allows a dog access anywhere a person can go. A therapy dog can be denied access to areas and limited travel. If the Peer Support Team was requested for service to another jurisdiction, this may become an issue for accommodations and travel. All station visits, appearances or public events should be documented for both Department and AKC records.

Handlers should also check with their personal insurance carriers for an umbrella policy to cover any occurrences with their dogs. This is for your protection outside of Department and Local 36 coverage. This is a new program for all of us. We can certainly add to this at any time. Any suggestions are greatly appreciated and as we move forward it will give us a better insight as to what works best for all involved.

#2

West Haven Fire Department – Connecticut Service Support Dog (SSD) Program 2-22-23



The nature of firefighter operations creates an environment of high stress, danger, and emotion. As a result of these occupational factors, stress, anxiety, poor overall health, and wellbeing are common among firefighters.

In partnering with a nationally known non-profit, K9's for Warriors, a Station Support Dog (SSD) has been offered to be donated for use at the West Haven Fire Department (WHFD). As part of the WHFD Wellness Program, The SSD will be added as a tool for community outreach outside of the firehouse, stress-reduction program meant to assist employees when dealing with traumatic or emotionally difficult situations, or just as a way to alleviate the daily stressors that are common within the profession of firefighting.

The SSD will assist first responders and all staff within WHFD to cope with exposure to traumatic events and support efforts aimed at increasing resilience to improve mental health and wellness.

General SSD areas of service:

1. Daily station interactions with duty crews.
2. Peer-to-peer consultations and support.
3. Community outreach events such as school visits, expos, social events, public gatherings, and educational programming.
4. Post-Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) debriefings both internally & externally.
5. Visits to West Haven schools, business, and City offices, and neighboring fire departments for public outreach.

Trial Period

Due to the unique nature of this pilot program, the SSD will be given a trial period of 90 days. This evaluation period will allow WHFD to monitor for behavior, fit, and overall member support of this new program. At the end of the 90-day trial period, at the discretion of the Chief of Department, the program may be continued or ended. During this trial period and beyond, ownership will remain with the Primary Handler. This will ensure that if the program is ended due to any of the above reasons, the SSD will not be returned to K-9's for Warriors, per the program policy.

Station Support Dog Handlers

The Primary Designated Handler will be the owner of the SSD and responsible for carrying the care and wellness of the dog. The Primary Handler will retain ownership of the SSD, including in the event of job position change, or separation from WHFD.

The SSD will reside at the Primary Handler's residence as the SSD's permanent home. This will include days not on duty, nights, weekends, holidays, and anytime the Primary Handler is not working at WHFD or related events. The SSD may from time to time take a "day off" during the Primary Handler's scheduled workday as needed for the health and wellness of the SSD. This will occur at the discretion of the Primary handler and conveyed to the Chief of Department.

Up to 2 reserve handlers may be designated, at the discretion of the Chief of Department, to serve as back-up handlers to the Primary handler. They will be trained per K9 for Warrior training program standards.

The reserve handlers' tasks may include taking the SSD to events if needed when the primary handler is unavailable and additional care for the SSD as need.

Caring For the SSD

All equipment, supplies, services, veterinary care, pet insurance, and supplemental training necessary for the care and well-being of the SSD will be supplied by WHFD or through donations of items or services made to WHFD for the SSD from community partners.

Veterinary care shall be handled by a licensed veterinarian. The SSD shall be kept up to date on all annual shots and shall receive monthly heartworm preventative treatment and flea/tick medications, which shall be administered by the Primary or back up SSD trained handler(s). These costs will be covered by WHFD while the SSD is an active member of the department.

- Approved treats shall be kept to a minimum to avoid unnecessary weight gain and related health issues. No table food is to be given to the dog at any time. Only treats authorized by the SSD's handler. Grooming of the SSD shall be done in accordance with veterinary recommendations.
- The SSD shall, at a minimum, receive monthly baths.
- Nail trimming shall be completed as needed.
- The SSD is authorized to be transported in the Primary Handler's vehicle, and any
- other WHFD vehicle at the discretion of the Chief of Department.
- Equipment and supplies shall be provided as follows to include a minimum:
 - o The SSD should wear a vest reflecting he is an emotional support service animal while "working" whenever possible.
 - o The SSD shall also be issued identification confirming the SSD is a member of WHFD.
 - o The SSD should be leashed, when necessary, in public outdoors and as needed indoors in public. The SSD will be allowed to be unleashed when in WHFD buildings and when appropriate off duty.
 - o An appropriate animal crate will be provided for the SSD for off-duty use when needed.

FIRE SERVICE CANINE SUCCESS STORIES

WEST HAVEN FIRE DEPARTMENT - CONNECTICUT

Training

1. The SSD has been trained by K9s for Warriors to act in a service dog capacity. The SSD will be transitioned to become an emotional support dog, the SSD's training shall be maintained. The primary handlers of the SSD shall reinforce commands and training goals.
2. K9s for Warriors will provide training to the Primary SSD handler at the time the SSD is donated to WHFD.
3. Trained SSD handlers will refresh their training by viewing the training videos made available by K9s for Warriors.
4. Newly identified SSD handlers can be trained by individuals who have received training from K9s for Warriors.
5. Continued SSD training will be a part of the Primary Handler's workday as covered under the Wellness section of the Primary Handler's job description.

Emotional Support Activation

- **Immediate activation:** The Chief or his designee may request the SSD to the scene or the station following a traumatic event. The SSD, if already on duty, would be transported in a department vehicle by the Primary handler.
- **Delayed activation:** The primary and more common response following a traumatic event is for the SSD to visit a station the next shift or schedule time and date following the event. The requesting party will make arrangements with the Primary Handler in conjunction with the Chief, to bring the SSD to visit. Also, an Officer on duty can call and request a visit if they deemed it beneficial to their crew.
 - o Request can also be made to participate in public relation events i.e., School or nursing homes, parades or other public activities determined by the Chief of Department
- **Outside activation:** From time to time the Chief may receive a request from an outside agency for a response by the SSD and Primary Handler. If available, the SSD and handler may respond, or SSD may respond with a reserve handler, at the discretion of the Primary Handler and Chief of department.

Opting out

- All members shall have the choice to opt-out of interacting with the SSD. These members may choose to, based on allergies or other personal reasons.
- Department members who wish to not share a space at the same time or interact with the SSD shall make this request clear to their supervisor.

Misbehavior

In the unlikely event of an incident, such as an injury or bite involving the SSD, the following shall occur:

1. The SSD shall immediately be secured in a safe location away from the injured person.
2. Emergency medical care shall be provided, if required. The SSD handler's supervisor or another on-scene supervisor shall be notified as soon as practical.
3. The injury and scene shall be photographed by a supervisor.
4. The SSD handler shall complete an animal bite report within the reporting system and shall ensure witness statements are obtained and documented.
5. If an employee was injured, a supervisor shall follow the WHFD documentation procedure.
6. The responding supervisor shall ensure the Chiefs office is notified and the SSD's primary and secondary handlers are aware.
7. The SSD shall not be permitted back into a workspace until the Chief of Department has reviewed the incident and a decision can be made regarding the SSD's return to work.

SSD Retirement

After approximately 8 years of age consideration should be given to retirement of the SSD. This may occur earlier if medically necessary and/or deemed as such by the Primary handler, with communication of the SSD designated veterinarian and the Chief of Department.

Ownership of the SSD will continue to be the primary handler to which it was assigned. If the handler is unable to take ownership of the SSD then it will pass to another handler or member of the Department that wishes to adopt the SSD.

Upon retirement, the SSD's financial support shall be the sole responsibility of the Primary handler.



#3

Delhi Township FD Comments

Delhi Township, Ohio

Katie Locasto



I found articles and studies on how impactful having a dog in the fire house could be. I started researching, talking to different departments around the country that had therapy dogs, and formulated a Standard Operating Guideline, Letter of Intent, projected common questions from co-workers and the public, and then presented it to my Fire Chief with printed articles and facts. Chief Campbell's closing statement to me was "Start looking for a dog!" I then reached out to my co-workers to see what they thought of the idea and to see if there was an allergy issue. I sent out a survey with general questions to see if the guys would be intrigued by having a dog at the fire house. I had 34 people in my department complete the survey and the majority were very positive about the idea but had lots of questions.

Weeks later I went to Clermont County Animal Shelter without any intention of leaving with a dog, but I did! Ember is a 2-year-old Pyrenees Pit who was surrendered on Thanksgiving. I adopted her on January 6th, 2023. I went back and forth with the dog selection process whether to go purebred or rescue. It ultimately boiled down to needing a dog who was low-shedding and had a great temperament; Ember is just that! Raising a puppy with the schedule I work now would not have been feasible.

As of right now we are in basic obedience training until June. Obedience will then be followed by therapy training which will take about 3-4 months. Ember's projected start date will be in the Fall of 2023. **Attached is the drafted SOG my fire chief and I are still working on, my letter of intent to the fire chief, and the common questions me and some co-workers came up with for when the public or other employees have questions.** Right now, I bring her in on my off days to just hang out and to off-duty training to get her used to the stations and the firefighters. Once she gets her certifications she will be on my schedule (24/48).

With this being so new I can only speak on the process gearing up to getting a dog and the training it entails. My strategies included many articles involving therapy dogs in firehouses, the benefits of having a therapy dog in the workplace, and the community aspect of having a department "mascot."

Roadblocks

1. After many discussions, everything Ember will need at the fire house (food, treats, toys, etc.) is on me. I decided to not have a house fund for her since she will be on my schedule so not everyone will get to experience her for 24 hours.
2. Deciding on what type of dog to get.
3. The entire training process and medical bills for Ember are covered by me.
4. The only thing I need from the township is insurance for Ember when she is on duty. I also have Ember on my homeowner's insurance.

Key Findings

1. Facts, facts, facts. Find as many articles and data as you can on how pet therapy benefits the workplace and the mental well-being of others.
2. NFPA is a great source to use for statistics on firefighters (suicides, LODD, emotional trauma, etc.)
3. Talk with other departments about their programs by comparing them and adapting it to your FD needs.
4. Surveying your department - there will always be controversy but majority rules. Find out what your peers are willing to put forward to pet therapy (support in the program, funding, needs for the pet).
5. Take the community into consideration.
6. Basic obedience is a great idea to do before therapy training. It aids in building the relationship between you and your dog prior to therapy.

#4

San Bernardino County Fire Department

San Bernardino, CA

BJ Myers

Engineer



In San Bernardino County we have 5 K9s and we utilize them for various tasks. I would also add that the K9s have been very helpful in peer support as well as eliminating stress in our members. We have been working on using our K9s in a dual role to better market them.

We are currently training our dogs in tracking live humans as well as crisis intervention. 3 of our K9s are currently working on our COAST teams. Our COAST teams consist of a police officer, a firefighter, and a social worker and a K9. The team has been very successful in eliminating calls for both fire and law enforcement. We also have the ability to transport patients to the appropriate facility. The model has proven to be very successful, and we continue to work on improving our mission. We service all members of our community and everyone who travels through. We have the support of local government and the members of the community. I feel very highly that K9s can serve a purpose in the fire service. Scout is my service dog, and she has saved my life. I am dedicated to helping any and all members of the fire service community in any crisis they are experiencing.

At your request, you asked about the COAST team here in Fontana. The Fontana Police Department COAST team is an extension of the department's Multi Enforcement Team (MET). The COAST Team primarily handles individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis. We also assist with the unhoused in the city as well as all individuals who live and travel through the city. We attend city and local events in an effort to educate the community. We also sponsor holiday events for the city's schools and community centers. Another unique component to our team is we educate the families of the individuals we serve. The team is made up with a police officer from the city of Fontana, a firefighter from the county and a social worker also from the county, and last but not least Scout our 2-year-old K9.

#5

Independence Fire Department

Independence, KY
Kenny Schroeder, Firefighter/Paramedic



First responders and pets have been connected since the beginning of time. Maybe not as far back as cavemen and dinosaurs, but close. Dalmatians have been spotted in fire stations across the country and can be considered a fireman's best friend. Police officers have enlisted the services of K-9s for years to help fight crime with a nose for solving cold cases. Is there more to this first responders and four-legged friend companionship? Yes, there is!

My name is Kenny Schroeder, and I am currently a firefighter/paramedic with the Fort Mitchell Fire Department, Kentucky First Responder Peer Support Team Coordinator and Team Coordinator for the Pet Therapy Support Team for 1st Responders. I met Larry Bennett in early 2021 when I joined the Tri-state Peer Support Team where he was also a member. I later met his dog, Frye, and learned about the Pet Therapy Support Team he was forming to assist the Tristate area. After attending a visit, he had scheduled with the Burlington Fire Department in Burlington, Kentucky; I was hooked. Imagine going to work every day as a First Responder prepared to assist our communities on potentially their worst day. First Responders handle emergencies to perfection as they exhaust their internal resources in the process. In walks a smiling volunteer with a furry friend by their side and you can immediately feel the energy in the room flip. Smiles are seen throughout the agency as tails wag back and forth in a frizzy. What I described is what pet therapy for first responders is all about and exactly what I witnessed at the Burlington Fire Department that day in 2021. Therapy pets are proven to have a positive impact on mental and physical health. Studies have shown that interacting with animals can improve coping and recovery, enhance morale, decrease stress, and reduce the effects of PTSD and emotional distress.

My family adopted our first dog, Baxter, an Australian Labradoodle in June of 2021 as a family pet with the intention to train him to be a therapy dog for the Pet Therapy Support Team. I sought the assistance of Larry



Pictures of our dog Baxter with my family and Independence Fire District Family (2022).

FIRE SERVICE CANINE SUCCESS STORIES

INDEPENDENCE FIRE DEPARTMENT

and Pet Partners as we worked to get him trained. To date, he is a wonderful family dog but has not yet passed the Pet Partners certification process.

In July of 2022, I had the opportunity to retire from my full-time position as a Lieutenant at the Independence Fire District. After recognizing the opportunity that existed by retiring, I officially retired from the Independence Fire District September 1st, 2022, after serving the community for 26 years. It was at that time my life began to spiral

out of control. I lost the connection that I had with my fellow first responders spending a third of my life with them daily and my purpose in life. If not for the help of my wife, family, friends, and God I would not be here today. I knew the resources that existed to assist First Responders, in fact I was drawn to them, but I did not seek help for myself. In November of 2022, only by the grace of God, I attended a three-day intensive therapy retreat known as Save a Warrior in Hillsboro, Ohio which saved my life. I assisted Larry with outreach and scheduling of the Pet Therapy Support Team for the remainder of 2022 and into 2023. Larry fully retired at the end of 2022, resigning also as the coordinator of the Pet Therapy Support Team. In December of 2022, Larry asked if I would lead the Pet Therapy Support Team moving forward. I was honored that he chose me to lead and grow the team. Along with Amanda Kinman (first responder spouse) and Debbie Bauer (Retired Cincinnati PD), we organize visits to local fire departments, police departments, dispatch facilities and other municipalities across the Tristate area with our amazing team of handlers and pets. Our team of 20 volunteers excel at what they do and do it all out of love for those that keep us safe every day. We provide stress relief visits to agencies on a monthly basis and respond with team members that are Animal-Assisted Crisis Response (AACR) certified when requested after critical incidents. This, in my opinion, is the best way to run a pet therapy program to assist multiple departments in a region.

Why are programs like pet therapy so important to me? After spending over 20 years in a career of fire and emergency medical services, I found out what it is like to have my own worst day. And if not for resources available, like pet therapy, I would not be here today. I am grateful for Pet Partners and the many people that have worked over the years to develop and implement the programs available today. I live for every single day, enjoy sharing my time and talents with others and surround myself with people and animals that love me. That is my 'why.' What is yours?

If you need help or are in crisis, please do not hesitate to get the help you need.

Call 911, 988 / **Go to** <https://tsfirstresponderpst.org/> **or** <https://www.kyffps.org/> / **You are not alone!**



#6

Pet Therapy Support Team of Greater Cincinnati Cincinnati Area – OH/KY/IND



Chief Kevin Hardwick has asked us to share how the Pet Therapy Support Team was formed in 2021, visiting a different fire department each month, and has now expanded to include response to critical incidents involving fire, EMS, dispatch and law enforcement.

In 2023, I asked recently retired Lieutenant Kenny Schroeder to take over the Team; feel free to reach out to us if interested in forming a Team in your area.



FRYE (8-year old Lab)

Lawrence T. Bennett, Esq., Emeritus Professor /
Educator; Program Chair, Fire Science & Emergency
Management, University of Cincinnati.

Lawrence T. Bennett, Esq., Emeritus Professor /
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Cell 859-630-8746.

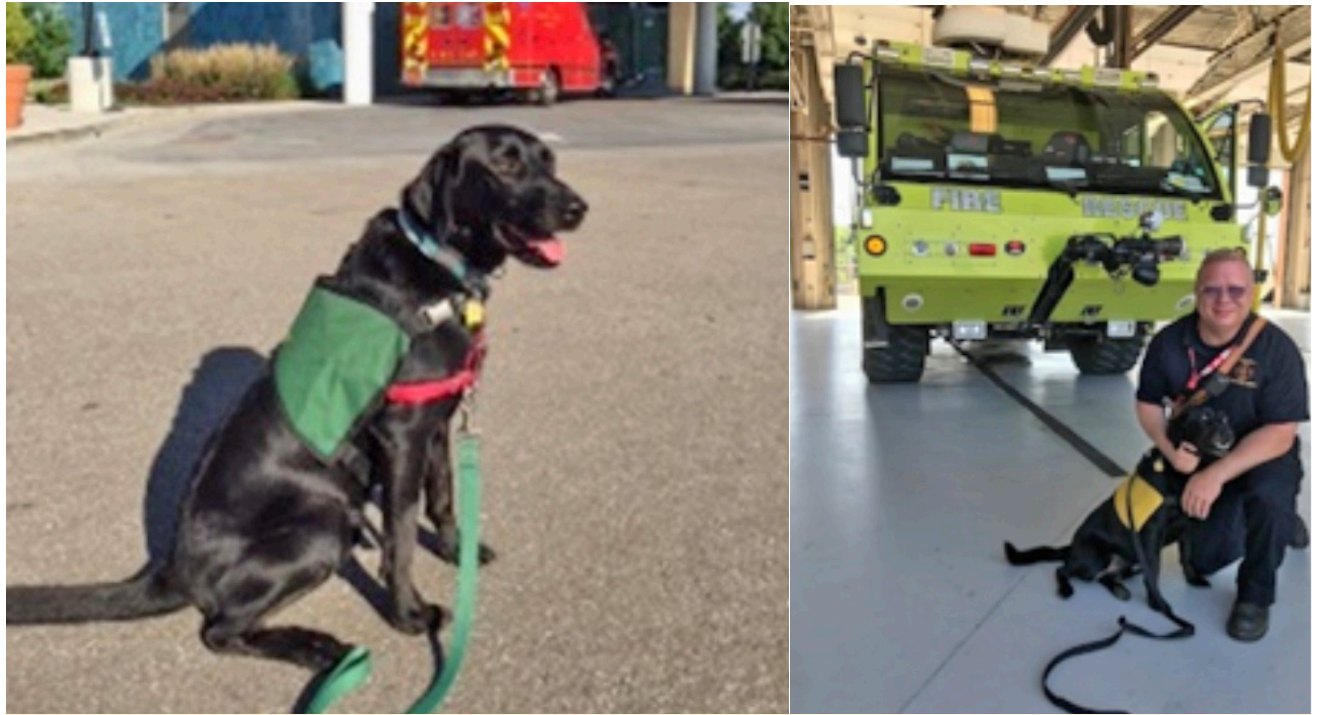
My Pet Therapy dog FRYE and I for several years
have been visiting hospital Emergency Depart-
ments and 911 Dispatch Centers. As a member
of the Tri-State Peer Support Team - [https://
tsfirstresponderpst.org/](https://tsfirstresponderpst.org/), I also attended several
training sessions at fire departments with FRYE
and saw the positive impact of having a loving pet
at the station.

In 2021, I reached out to local Chapter of a na-
tion-wide Pet Therapy group, and the Pet Therapy
Support Team was formed. Three requirements:
(1) be a currently tested / insured member of the
group; (2) once a month visit a 911 Dispatch Cen-
ter of your choice - so you get to know our indus-

try; and (3) join FRYE and me for monthly fire department visits. By the end of 2021, we then firmed up
2022 schedule of fire department (located in 5 SW Ohio counties, and Northern KY). By end of 2022, I
firmed up 2023 schedule and asked Kenny Schroeder to take over the Team He has done a great job!

FIRE SERVICE CANINE SUCCESS STORIES

PET THERAPY SUPPORT TEAM GREATER



FRYE visit at Greater Cincinnati – Northern KY Airport

Not surprisingly, with these “stress relief” visits, has come requests to respond to critical incidents. Without disclosing confidential information, we have responded to several emergency response organizations after critical incidents, including following:

- Multiple children killed in structure fire;
- Child killed, firefighter injured in structure fire;
- Child walk away from mental health facility, drowning;
- Police officer killed putting out stop sticks on Interstate;
- Police officer suicide.

Each pet must be certified and insured. Attached are two examples of testing that FRYE has recently passed with a nation-wide Pet Therapy group, as well as testing with a local Pet Therapy group.

Pet Partners Testing & FRYE AKC testing

#7

Huntington Beach Fire Department Peer Support K-9 Program



Our department started the peer support K-9 program in February of 2022. Our program was inspired by the Los Angeles County FD's comfort dog program that we became acquainted with during a mutual aid response for peer support after their tragic murder suicide at Fire Station 81. After experiencing how diffusing and comforting it was to have Milo around, we knew we had to start a program for our department. Our first step was to reach out to Jake Windell from LaCoFD, who is the handler for Comfort Dog Echo, and gather all information needed for us to get started. A few of the hurdles for an organization are having buy-in from the department, procuring a dog, and cost.

Getting Buy In

We found that it really helps to have an open-minded command staff that is supportive of your peer support team and values the mental health of the members of your agency. That's not to say that you can't accomplish this without the support, it just may take a bit more work. If you have support, or not, out of the gates one of the best things you can do is gather all of the information regarding these programs. Stuff like statistics and information related to the benefits of canines on mental health, put a proposal, estimated start up and annual cost sheet, as well as a policy. One of the biggest hurdles is Risk Management. They are going to question how you plan on addressing a member who is allergic, or fearful of the canine. They are also going to be concerned with the dog biting someone.

The way we addressed the allergy, or fear is to cover it in our policy. Our solution has two options. If the person is working a trade or OT at the canine station, then they can have the option of switching stations with another person of equal rank. The next option is the handler and canine would pack up and switch stations for the shift. In over a year of operating our program we have yet to run into this situation, but it is covered in our policy. Another way to make sure that we are limiting allergens is by placing his kennel in an open area and not in sleeping quarters. We also don't allow our canine on beds. The handlers maintain consistent grooming to lessen shedding. Another way to limit this issue is by procuring a hypoallergenic canine.

To help lessen the fear of the canine biting someone we had a meeting where we shared some social media posts of other canines doing the same work effectively. We also explained to them the breeds chosen to do this work are non-violent breeds, they and the handler are highly trained, and if your city/county has law enforcement with bite dogs then this is a much easier sell because your canine should be able to be added to the same policy very easily.

Along with all of this other info, to get buy in is making sure you have a line on procuring a dog. You don't want to give them any reason to doubt or delay the program.

FIRE SERVICE CANINE SUCCESS STORIES

HUNTINGTON BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

Procuring a dog

There are a few avenues you can go down to procure a canine. You can buy a dog specifically trained for this type of work, you can seek out an organization willing to donate a canine, or you can train your own personal dog to do the work.

The most expensive way:

Having the department purchase a dog and getting it all trained up is the most expensive (cost is upwards of \$25,000) but can be a relatively quick way to get the program up and running depending on the availability of canines. This way is similar to what the police do for their K-9 programs. The dogs come trained, and all the department has to do is select the handler and send them off to bond and train with the canine. Typically, the major problem with this is the cost and commitment to training for the handler.

The most ideal way:

Getting a canine donated to your team by an organization is, in my opinion, the most ideal and common way to procure a canine. There are a variety of organizations willing to donate a canine to your program. Some of them have some costs associated, some have no cost, some have high training standards, and some do not. It's up to you to find what the best option is for you. In Southern California there are many options, but here are a few:



The Patriotic Service Dog Foundation
www.patrioticservicedogfoundation.org



Working Dogs For Warriors
www.workingdogsforwarriors.com



Paws For Life K9
www.pawsforlifeK9.org



K9 Companions
www.k-9companions.com

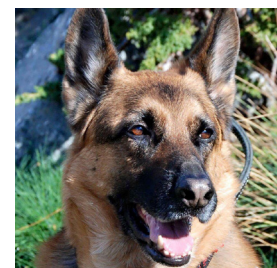


Guide Dogs
of America



Tender Loving
Canines

Guide Dogs of America
www.guidedogsofamerica.org
(They might be able to donate
a dog that failed the program)



Thor's Hope
www.thorshope.org

The most complicated way

Having your own dog trained up for therapy, or if your dog is already being used as a therapy dog in a civilian capacity and you want to start using it for your department is a bit complicated. The main reason it is complicated is because it is a personal dog, and it complicates the liability of your agency. It can also cause some pushback from your department members who are wondering why they can't just use their dog and why they can't be selected to be a handler. Also, in the case of someone trying to train their dog, there is always the chance that the dog fails to certify. If this happens, the question becomes who is on the hook for the cost and how do we start over? Do we use the same handler? There is now a delay in getting the program off the ground. Also, these dogs have a relatively small window to be certified. They can be certified as young as one year old and as old as 3. The reason for the age limit is younger than one they are not experienced enough, older than 3 and you may not get as many years of service life out of them. Ideally you want to get 6-8 years of service life out of them.

The Cost

Depending on the route you go to procure the canine you may be looking at \$25,000 for the canine, about \$4,000 for the initial start-up and roughly \$2,500-\$3,000 annual for the dog's needs barring any unexpected medical. There is also the potential cost of compensation for the handler. These dogs can be very busy so if you are planning on compensating the handler via a bonus, or overtime for when they are used it can get a bit expensive and it may also give people the wrong motivation for being a handler.

We currently don't compensate the handler monetarily, but our department pays for anything our canine needs including veterinarian needs. The reason we do it this way is because we want the handler to be committed to the program out of passion not compensation. Also, we didn't want costs to get too high and make it easy for the department to shut down the program or force the handler to take on the program without the compensation they were once receiving. To pay for our canines' needs, our handler is given a city card (Cal Card) that is to be used for purchases related to the canine and the receipts are turned in at the end of the month.

The way we attempt to offset some of the costs is done in a few ways. We sell items related to our canine Kingman. We have plush stuffed animals, t-shirts, stickers, challenge coins, and single, or monthly donation options. These are run through our non-profit called the Huntington Beach Fire Outreach Foundation. We have trading cards that have a QR code on the back that can be scanned for donations, and we also run an Instagram account to keep people fired up and informed of our program.

Handler Selection

The handler selection can be done any way that works for your team. In our case our handler is the one who brought the idea of our peer support canine program to our team. The handler did all the work from procuring our dog, to writing the policy, proposal, and cost sheet. Our handler is a well-respected member of our team and was able to put in the time and effort needed to become a handler. Another common way is to go through an interview process. Some of the recommended requirements and traits of your handler should include someone who is a member of the peer support team, passionate about peer support and being a handler, an active member of the team, will always be aware of the dogs best interest, has good boundaries, is willing to say no to requests, someone who would be a handler regardless of any pay or incentive offered, ideally they don't have other dogs at home, but that is not a deal breaker as long as their dog is well behaved and gets along with other dogs. Below is a list of questions with recommended answers.

Dog Handler Questions

- 1

You and your canine are scheduled to attend a LODD funeral from the beginning of shift to the afternoon. The night before two local high school students tragically die in a car accident and your Peer Coordinator is requesting you to go to the vigil which starts at 8pm and goes until 10pm. How would you handle this situation?

Looking for them to say no to the vigil because it's too much for the dog to do both and the priority is with our first responders above community. Bonus points if they offer to attend a request at the high school at a later date if offered.
- 2

Tell us about your previous experience with dogs.

No experience needed. Just someone eager to learn and work with dogs.
- 3

Why do you want to become a peer support canine handler?

You want someone who expresses their passion for peer support and what dogs do to enhance that. Looking for someone not motivated by potential financial gain.
- 4

What are some of the benefits of having a trained peer support dog in the department?

Releases oxytocin, calms the room, is the ultimate ice breaker, helps people process their trauma, is a pleasant distraction, reduces stress, makes it ok to smile and laugh.
- 5

How would you handle a situation where some of your coworkers are critical of your dog or the program?

Looking for someone to not get defensive, but also not let it get out of hand. You want them to approach the issue calmly and ask questions. Why do they feel that way, what do they think would make the program better, what are their expectations of the program etc. Take time to educate them about their canine and the program.

6 You are participating in a debrief and you are requested to give an introduction about what your dog does and why they are there. How would you go about giving that introduction?

Introduce the canine by name give a fun fact about your dog and its background, give them expectations like your dog is highly trained, but is still a dog and may want to spend time sniffing a trash can before coming over to be pet. Let them know that your dog may or may not get to come to everyone during the debrief but encourage them to pet and give your dog some love. Advise them they can always interact after the meeting if they don't get time with them during it. Stuff like that.

7 The requirements to become a handler may mean that you have to spend two or more days a week for 4-6 months training with your dog before becoming certified. Is that something you are willing to do and have the time for?

Looking for someone that is in the right stage of life to be able to take on a great responsibility. They need to have the time to commit fully to the program.

8 Can you tell me the difference between a service dog and a therapy dog?

Service dog performs a task for their handler, interrupting if they sense low blood sugar, calming PTSD related symptoms, opening doors and pushing buttons etc. They also have access rights, which means they are allowed to go anywhere their handler goes. They are also not allowed to be pets while they are working. Therapy dogs do not have access rights and do not perform tasks for their handlers. They can only go to dog-friendly locations or places they are invited to. Petting these dogs is allowed and highly encouraged.

43

Lessons Learned

- Be prepared and have answers for any questions that may arise when getting the approval to start the program.
- Be prepared to be really busy and pulled in many directions.
- Be prepared to be the face of peer support for your department.
- Be able to say no to requests that you don't feel your dog, or you are up for, even if it comes from the Chief.
- Be prepared to do some press and public speaking.
- Be prepared for the negative comments from your coworkers because this is new, and they may not understand the necessity.
- Be prepared for people to have their opinions about your dog, you as a handler, your rules for your dog, or even the whole program.
- Be prepared for the extra work added to your normal station routine, like walks, training, playtime etc.

**NORTH COLLIER FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE DISTRICT**

NCFR Canine “Tank”

During the pandemic, the North Collier Fire District developed animated characters Firefighter Frank & his canine partner Tank in an effort to reach our youngest residents. We wanted to continue providing children with fun and educational safety messages even though we could not visit them in person at their schools. The videos were successful, and as we came out of the pandemic and were back in the schools, we further developed the Frank & Tank series adding more videos, including a tour of a Fire Truck. We even made a special edition video just for teachers, which included a lesson plan along with Firefighter Frank instructing the kids at the end of the video to line up and go outside to meet the real firefighters. The teachers were asked to play the video 10 minutes prior to the arrival of our crew. The videos were so popular, and the kids were excited to meet the real firefighters and also wanted to meet the real Tank. The problem was that there was no real Tank; until August 2021. Then, the North Collier Fire PIO found a four-week-old puppy who looked just like the animated Tank. With the permission of the Fire Chief, she worked with the shelter, adopted the real Tank, and he reported for duty on 09-11-2021; he was only ten weeks old.

Tank has been an absolute blessing for the entire department and has provided so much more than just capturing the attention of our youngest residents. He is a wonderful companion to his handler(s), brings joy each time he is at the station (s), and provided love and support at our EOC throughout Hurricane Ian. The community adores him, and he has assisted our public education campaigns tremendously.

With almost no experience with canine department dogs, North Collier Fire decided to have the PIO adopt the dog. Tank has been added to the department's insurance policy. The department reimburses expenses like veterinary visits and other items. We have developed a relationship with a local (also a national company) training facility called Sit Means Sit. The department pays all expenses for training and boarding. We are in the process of developing formal policies and procedures and are hopeful that Tank will lead to more fire department canine roles at North Collier Fire.

The Frank & Tank series on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@franktank5522>



Canine Needs & Information

Breeders – General Info

Breeders have special knowledge about various dog breeds. Consideration of the different breeds and the specific needs of the varieties are part of this work. Any breed can work with training. Some breeds are better choices than others.

Evaluate any breed for specific characteristics. Specific dog breeds work well in the therapy environment. Establish breeding standards that would evaluate temperament and other qualities during the breeding process. Consider the use of multiple dogs during an incident. Mixed breeds or rescues should be discussed as well as donated dogs.

Selecting a breeder

When selecting a breeder here are a few things to consider: Is the breeder ethical? Is the breeder a member of their breed club? This is important as they value the standards of the breed and the breed achieving the breed standards.

- Do they test health according to the breed recommendations (i.e., heart, eyes, hips, elbows, etc.) for both the sire and dam?
- Do they genetic test to ensure breeding is free from genetic defects?
- Do they have any proven service/therapy/comfort/SAR “working” lines?
- Do they temperament test? Do they follow any type of puppy training, (i.e., Puppy Culture, Avidog, etc.)?
- Do they take back a dog if the department is no longer to support it?

An ideal breeder would be one who specializes in working lines suited for your working role, performs appropriate testing on their breeding dogs, provides early neurological stimulation for puppies to prepare them from birth for their working environment. The breeder should be an ongoing resource to the handler.

Most breeders who breed working lines breed with the intent to produce sound temperament, longevity, genetically clear, workable, and structurally sound dogs.

Selecting a dog

Choosing the right traits whether you go through a breeder, a rescue or family dog; it's important to make sure the dog is sound in training and exhibits the right temperament to do the job. If choosing a dog from a rescue or your own pet, it is highly recommended that you have an animal behaviorist temperament test the dog prior to committing to the training to make sure the dog would be a good fit.

Training a working dog is hard work for both the trainer and the dog. Finding a dog with the right characteristics for a working dog helps to make the process less challenging. The following is a list of characteristics that you may want to consider when looking for your working dog:

- Motivated by food or toys
- Medium level of energy (enough to work, but not overly stimulated)
- Adaptable to many different situations
- Graceful, not clumsy
- A desire to please and interact
- Not reactive if someone accidentally injures him or her
- Not anxious or jumpy
- Trusting and eager to please
- Has a desire to interact with people
- Able to focus, not easily distracted
- Does not startle easily

For any dog to work in public access, they need to be smart, biddable, motivated to learn, comfortable around strangers and all types of distractions/sounds, decently confident, have a strong work ethic, good problem-solving skills, and be good at generalizing (apply their skills to new contexts without needing additional training). The dog should not require a leash or any other device to control them; even if all gear is off/dropped the dog should maintain the same level of proper response to handler and ability to work regardless of the environment.

What type of dog should we choose?

When choosing a dog for your department it's highly recommended you choose a dog that is stable and exhibits a sound temperament. There are some breeds that are preferred for work, such as a service dog. Through study and research, they have discovered that a Labrador retriever, golden retriever, and poodle all possess the traits to be successful in working role. When considering a breed, consider the life span, size, health traits, coat upkeep, overall appearance, and the breed's trainability.

Service Dog Qualifications

What Qualifies a Dog to Be a Service Dog?

Departments must familiarize themselves with what a “Service Dog” is and how it compares to the other titles for canines. If you suffer from an emotional or physical disability you may be wondering what qualifies a dog to be a service dog.

Can My Dog Be a Therapy Dog?

Many people ask the question of whether their current dog can be a therapy dog? The answer to this question is dependent on what you need your therapy dog to do for you. If you have a dog for emotional support or to help you with stress and/or anxiety, then there are no restrictions on the canine companion. In fact, an emotional support animal (ESA) can be anything from a snake to a horse but know there are restrictions on this type of “therapy” animal.

However, if you require a dog to do more than just offer comfort, then you will need the canine to be properly trained to do the tasks required. For example, if the dog is required to pull a wheelchair, then a Chihuahua will not be considered a service dog as it simply would not have the strength to perform this task.

Obedience Training

Whether you train your dog yourself or enlist the help of an agency or professional trainer, your therapy dog must be obedience trained. This entails the basic commands of sit, stay, come, down, drop, heel and leave. Depending on the breed of dog you have chosen or already have this can take weeks to months to accomplish.

Socialization Skills

Another important quality your therapy dog must possess is socialization skills. A skittish, hyperactive, or unruly dog will not do well as a therapy dog. Your dog must be quiet, calm, relaxed, alert, and of course, friendly.

Work Tasks

To qualify as a service dog your canine demonstrates the ability to do the work tasks that you cannot do for yourself. This can include fetching medicine bottles, opening drawers, or even alerting you to a drop in your blood glucose level or of an oncoming seizure.

Public Access Training

How your dog behaves in public areas is crucial to having a service or therapy dog. These working dogs must not respond to any of the abnormal noises, commotion, chaos, food smells or people when out with their handler. This type of training may take several months before your dog is desensitized to the hustle-and-bustle of being in a public place. Some dogs may never have the ability for this type of public access training and therefore would not be considered a service dog.

Information About Service Dogs

There is confusion about the use of a service dog. This explains the information relating to service dogs.

Service Dog Rules

Because a service dog is there to help the handler there are rules your dog must follow when out in public. These include:

- No sniffing of people or merchandise.
- No barking at people or other animals.
- No begging for food or table scraps.
- No jumping onto people or objects.
- No lunging at passing people or other animals.
- No overexcited or hyperactive behavior.
- No eliminating in an inappropriate area. Dogs must learn to relieve themselves on command.

Handler's Behavior

There are a lot of rules for a service dog to follow, but what about the handler? Some agencies may have you sign a form that both you and your service dog will behave accordingly when out in public. This can include:

- Being prepared to answer the questions of “is the dog a service dog and what task does it perform for you?”
- Being polite, confident, and courteous even if the people you are dealing with are not familiar with the American Disability Act and service dogs.

Although it is not required by law, a service dog vest and/or badge is helpful when taking your working dog out into the public. You may also register your service dog with a reputable organization. This informs people visually that your dog is there to provide you with a service and not just a pet you are trying to “break the rules” with.

Service Dog Qualification Is a Process

Having a properly trained and accredited service dog is a process that takes time. Even though you can take an ordinary dog and turn it into a service dog, it will have to exhibit the qualities it takes to do this important work. It is also highly recommended to start your service dog training when your dog is just a puppy. Teaching an “old dog new tricks” will be much tougher, and a dog may not be able to accomplish all the tasks and training required to be a full-fledged service dog.



Breeders, Trainers, Canine Groups, and Organizations with Canine Programs

50

This section is for the groups above to share information about their individual groups so that fire departments can get additional information to make the determination of initiating a program. This information is not an endorsement but simply a point of contact with information applicable to this report.

Thin Line Service Dogs: West Virginia



Thin Line Service Dogs (TLSD) was co-founded by Wayne and Anjanette Montano. Anjanette uses a service dog because of back injuries and Wayne is a firefighter and Veteran. Thin Line Service Dogs serves First Responders and Veterans with a BOLD PURPOSE through breeding and training. The non-profit was established in 2021.

The couple were moved by the findings of The Ruderman Family Foundation White Paper. It said that First Responders are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty. The report goes on to say that “suicide is a result of mental illness, including depression and PTSD, which stems from constant exposure to death and destruction.”

The name Thin Line is in reference to a line of danger which First Responders and Veterans voluntarily cross for the greater good of society. A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

What We Do

Thin Line Service Dogs (TLSD) is a pioneering organization that provides service dogs to First Responders and Veterans at no cost. Our goal is to train dogs to enhance the lives of the heroes who have selflessly served. We select and train assistance, mental health, medical health, and facility service dogs.

Go to: <https://thinlinesd.org/>

First Responder Therapy Dogs



A wide range of first responders including firefighters, paramedics, EMS, dispatchers, search and rescue and law enforcement answer the call to help and protect. Being on the frontlines can be physically and mentally challenging, and these everyday heroes often suffer from mental health challenges.

First Responder Therapy Dogs leads the way in addressing the mental health needs of first responders by providing emotional support using therapy dogs. Our goal is to provide this free service to as many first responders in as many locations across the country as possible. We provide this service in-the-field with a hands-on approach.

Research shows that therapy dog services positively impact this population's mental health issues. The use of therapy dogs has demonstrated the following outcomes:

- Reduce stress and anxiety
 - Lower blood pressure and slower breathing
 - Improve overall mood elevation and mental state
 - Increase productivity due to better mood and mental state
- First Responder Therapy Dogs, INC is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit.

Go to: <https://firstrespondertherapydogs.org/>

Absolutely Pawsitive Canine



Crisis response teams are NOT a form of therapy dogs and should not be classified as such. These canines are considered when traveling and on scene to rank with working canines such as TSA and search & rescue canines.

They have spent time and training to ensure the canines:

- 1) demonstrate an innate desire to do the work,
- 2) have the necessary safety skills to perform appropriately around people and other canines,
- 3) have the ability to work around and in high stress, potentially evolving, environments.

At the end of this report is the National Animal Assisted Crisis Response Standards. Although these are not 'mandated' they have been recognized and used by the larger crisis organizations as guidelines for training and certifying of canine teams, either meeting or exceeding these standards.

Be careful about the use of therapy/comfort level dogs for the Fire Dept, we want to be sure that the canine being used is capable of dealing with the environment and stress that is inherent to a fire house. Most therapy dogs are not capable of handling this level of stress on a consistent basis, hence the reason all the "therapy" dogs who were used at 9/11 never returned to therapy work. They were burnt out. It is one of the current challenges the crisis trained canines face with the public, helping individuals understand that although all crisis/trauma canines can probably do therapy work, all therapy canines cannot necessarily do crisis/trauma work. I believe using the term 'therapy' may have the fire departments only looking at therapy level dogs. Better to set a stronger expectation from the beginning by using terms like crisis/trauma/support.

Look to professional organizations, like NATIONAL Crisis Response Canines, who have been in existence since the early 2000's when it comes to training and assessing the canines. This is something they have been doing for years, tweaking, and improving the process for both sides of the team,

1. Crisis canine teams that deploy to crisis/disaster and assist first responders where needed to aid individuals affected or the first responders working the disaster/crisis.
2. CISM canine teams that are either embedded within an organization or individually certified with various first responder entities.

The CGC is a good starting place to get dogs ready for the more intense training required to be a crisis/trauma/support dog. Even AKC states that the CGC certification does not mean a dog is ready or capable of 'therapy' certification. But the CGC is just a starting place, not the end requirement. Skills beyond the basic CGC skills that you will want to consider for your crisis/trauma/support canine.

- o Ability to work on visual cues only (during peer support you do not want to interrupt the flow by having the handler have to verbally cue the canine, handler needs to be seen and not necessarily heard for the healing process)
- o 'Behind' some scenarios require your canine to either walk behind you for safety of due to tight spaces
- o 'Automatic wait' for doorways, considered a safety cue
- o 'Under' ability to queue your canine to go under, when traveling used to have canine calmly settled under seat on planes or buses, or tables.
- o 'Stop' ability for your canine to stop immediately on cue, safety cue
- o 'Go' ability for your canine to move forward in front of you but not leaving handler
- Canine does not self-deploy. You do want a canine with a natural affiliative
- o nature, but it needs to be under control and only deployed on cue. Depending upon environment (safety) and the individuals for which they are responding (some people don't like all dogs, some don't like big dogs, and some don't like small dogs) determines whether the handler deploys the canine.

And the handler – it is important that recognition of the need to have a handler who is trained to recognize the stress signals being given by their canine, and the humans for which they are responding. Training on how to appropriately handle situations for both the humans and the canines (Psychological First Aid) should be of equal importance as unintentional mishandling can inadvertently cause further damage for the human and/or cause the burnout/damage of the canine. Also, consider adding a requirement of pet CPR/First Aid for the handler.

Cynthia 'Cindi' Stone

CPDT-KA, PTI Absolutely Pawsitive Canine

Shock Free*Fear Free* Pain Free NATIONAL Crisis Response Canines

954-805-3703 | www.apcanine.com | apcanine@gmail.com

HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis



HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response (AACR) is a network of canine-handler teams and team leaders. Since 2001, HOPE's mission is to provide comfort and encouragement, through animal-assisted support, to individuals affected by crises and disasters. We deploy teams free of charge.

Website: www.hopeaacr.org / phone: 1-877-HOPE-K9s

Crisis Response Canines

HOPE canines are specially trained to work in active crisis situations where stress and emotional levels are elevated. Their calm, gentle presence promotes comfort, support, and de-escalates tense situations. The quiet presence of a HOPE canine offers peace amid chaos and confusion.

55

About HOPE

- HOPE is an international, all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.
- HOPE collaborated to establish the National Guidelines for AACR.
- HOPE monitors and updates their AACR onboarding and training process.
- HOPE teams are professional and complete yearly background checks and required education.
- HOPE has seven regions led by Regional Manager (RM).
- HOPE has more than 200 certified teams threaded across the United States and Canada who are poised to serve.
- HOPE teams are insured under a \$2 million-dollar general liability policy.
- HOPE canine teams are available to deploy, when invited, in the U.S. and Canada.

Deploy HOPE

- Initiate deployment by calling 1-877-HOPE-K9s.
- HOPE RM gathers information, then distributes and activates teams.
- HOPE TL are on-site as a liaison for the deploying agency for coordination.
- HOPE teams are self-contained, self-sufficient, and absorb deployment costs.
- HOPE deploys and frequently encounters intense and unpredictable situations.

HOPE's Teams Experience

- Varied means of travel: car, bus, airplane, train, boat, etc.
- Unpredictable conditions requiring continuous monitoring for safety.
- Variable situations with intense emotion, loud sounds, unpleasant odors, and other conditions.
- HOPE teams coordinate with other agencies for efficiency.

HOPE Teams in Action

- Science continues to prove that animals are a positive factor to help cope with traumatic events. HOPE teams bring this to real life events.
- HOPE deploys with professionalism and specialized training that allows for teams to gently be infused into critical situations. HOPE helps to calm the chaos.
- HOPE teams engage with the crisis response support structure to provide unconditional support.
- HOPE teams offer unconditional support and are a welcome diversion for first responders and survivors.
- HOPE deploys for drills, trainings, reenactments, debriefs and other situations.
- HOPE deploys with TL to assist and monitor canine-handler teams for stress.

HOPE's Partnering Agencies Include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Local Fire Departments | • FEMA |
| • Local Police Departments | • American Red Cross |
| • Local School Systems and Colleges | • National and State VOAD |
| • Cal Fire | • Salvation Army |
| • Various Military branches and locations U.S. | • Veterans Associations |
| • Coast Guard | • National Center for Missing and Exploited Children |
| • Homeland Security | • Local, regional, and state court systems |
| • U.S. Secret Service | |

HOPE is a network of specially trained canine-handler teams and team leaders. Infuse HOPE teams into a stress-filled environment to promote unconditional calming and peace.

Kathy Olin

President / HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response

hopeaacr.org | president@hopeaacr.org

National Crisis Response Canines



NATIONAL Crisis Response Canines, an international all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization, is formed by volunteers. Volunteers who understand and have been trained to utilize the healing nature of the Human+Canine Bond. Since 2003 they have used the power of this bond to inspire resilience and recovery both during, before, and after disasters for individuals affected by crisis and disaster, and those responding to aid during the disaster. The presence of the crisis response canine team reminds the individual of their own strengths, resources, and resilience, and inspires the individual to take the next steps towards recovery even when it seems out of reach.

While responders typically have a higher resistance to the effects of trauma and crisis, responders may experience compassion fatigue as a result of prolonged exposure to compassion stress and where the

BREEDERS, TRAINERS, CANINE GROUPS, AND ORGANIZATIONS WITH CANINE PROGRAMS

NATIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE CANINES

emotional output is high. (*Charles Figley, Green Cross*) The presence of the crisis response canine team provides respite for the responder. The canine serves to remind them that there is a safe haven for them, and an appreciation for the difficult work they choose to do so that others may be safe.

NATIONAL Crisis Response teams only deploy upon request and have been trained to adhere to the ICS. The methods we use are evidence-based and developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN www.nctsn.org) and SAMHSA (U.S Department of Health and Human Services - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration www.samhsa.gov). Training for all our canines follows current science-based positive methods recommended and approved by the American Veterinary Association and the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior.

NATIONAL Crisis Response Canine teams go through a vigorous training program that meets and, in places, exceeds the National Guidelines for AACR. These training protocols have been, and continue to be, developed from listening and learning over the years of experience in the field by our volunteers and science-based research by supporting organizations. All NATIONAL canine teams and volunteers are required to complete yearly background checks and ongoing education. All NATIONAL Crisis Response Canine volunteers are covered by a \$1,000,000 insurance policy and are self-reliant (absorbing all expenses related to deployment).

NATIONAL teams have been trained to expect and adjust to the unexpected. They are trained to handle various forms of transportation, from a simple car ride to being air-lifted by helicopter. They bring their own safety gear for unexpected terrains and have been trained for a variety of environmental challenges (sounds, odors, volatile emotions, etc.).



BREEDERS, TRAINERS, CANINE GROUPS, AND ORGANIZATIONS WITH CANINE PROGRAMS NATIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE CANINES

To request NATIONAL teams, one need only - Initiate request by text, phone call, email, or completing an online request on our website.

917-217-9966 | national@nationalcrisisresponsecanines.org | www.crisisresponsecanines.org

Once requested NATIONAL will:

- Confirm information with requesting agency (local contact if different, size, etc.), and then send out a call for action to our certified teams,
- Ensure there is an on-site liaison for the requesting deploying agency for coordination; as well as, to monitor the canine-handler teams for stress, and
- Maintain contact with requesting agency and other agencies as the evolving crisis/disaster requires.

Some of the areas in which NATIONAL has deployed:

- Blue-Sky Drills
- Community Activities
- Ongoing Training
- Blue-Sky Certification & Reenactments
- Local and national disasters/crisis
- Debriefs (for both first responding agencies as well as business and community)

NATIONAL Partnering Agencies include, but are not limited to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Local Police Departments | • Local Fire Departments |
| • Local EMS | • Local Mental Health Agencies |
| • Local School Systems | • Local Universities and Colleges |
| • Homeland Security | • Local, regional, and state court systems |
| • Military Branches (based on location) | • FBI |
| • FEMA | • National and State VOAD |
| • Veterans Association | • American Red Cross |
| • Salvation Army | • National Center for Missing and Exploited |
| • Various religious organizations
(based on location) | • Children |

NATIONAL Crisis Response Canines is committed to helping when someone is hurting, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, gender, gender status, political or legal status, nationality, or any other aspect that makes us unique yet universally human.

Cynthia 'Cindi' Stone, CPDT-KA, PTI

President / NATIONAL Crisis Response Canines



Appendix A

Certifying Agencies



American Kennel Club

AKC Therapy Dog Program

The Purpose of This Program

The purpose of this program is to recognize AKC dogs and their owners who have given their time and helped people by volunteering as a therapy dog and owner team.

- The AKC Therapy Dog™ program awards official AKC titles to dogs who have worked to improve the lives of the people they have visited.
- AKC Therapy Dog titles can be earned by dogs who have been certified by AKC recognized therapy dog organizations and have performed the required number of visits.
- AKC does not certify therapy dogs; the certification and training is done by qualified therapy dog organizations. The certification organizations are the experts in this area and their efforts should be acknowledged and appreciated.

61

Why Did AKC Start a Therapy Dog Title?

AKC has received frequent, ongoing requests from dog owners who participate in therapy work to “acknowledge the great work our dogs are doing.” Many of our constituents are understandably proud of their dogs. Earning an AKC Therapy Dog title builds on the skills taught in the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy® and Canine Good Citizen® programs, which creates a sound and friendly temperament needed by a successful therapy dog.

Therapy Dog Titles

- **AKC Therapy Dog Novice (THDN)** | Must have completed 10 visits.
- **AKC Therapy Dog (THD)** | Must have completed 50 visits.
- **AKC Therapy Dog Advanced (THDA)** | Must have completed 100 visits.
- **AKC Therapy Dog Excellent (THDX)** | Must have completed 200 visits.
- **AKC Therapy Dog Distinguished (THDD)** | Must have completed 400 visits.

How to Earn the Title: Qualifications

To earn an AKC Therapy Dog™ title, you and your dog must meet the following criteria:

1. Certified/registered by an AKC recognized therapy dog organization.
2. Perform the required number of visits for the title for which you are applying. For your convenience in helping you track your visits, you can use the Therapy Dog Record of Visits Sheet.
 - o **NOTE: A VISIT IS ONE DAY PER FACILITY/AGENCY.**
 - o **FOR A SINGLE FACILITY:** As an example, if you see multiple clients over a 2-hour time period on the same day, that is ONE VISIT. [In a hospital, you visit Mr. Jones, Ms. Smith, Mr. Roberts, Ms. White, this is ONE VISIT, not 4 visits].
 - o For each day/date at a facility, no matter how many clients one sees, this counts as 1 visit. If you take a break and return to the same facility on the same day, this counts as ONE VISIT.
 - o **For MULTIPLE FACILITIES:** Example: You do therapy work on your day off. In the morning, you go to an assisted living facility. You take your dog home at lunch to rest. In the afternoon, you go to school. THIS IS 2 visits, no matter how many clients you see per facility.
3. AKC Therapy Dog Distinguished (THDD)
Must have completed 400 visits.
4. AKC Therapy Dog Excellent (THDX).
Must have completed 200 visits.
5. AKC Therapy Dog Advanced (THDA).
Must have completed 100 visits.
6. AKC Therapy Dog (THD).
Must have completed 50 visits.
7. AKC Therapy Dog Novice (THDN).
Must have completed 10 visits.
8. The dog must be registered or listed with AKC.

All dogs are eligible to earn AKC Therapy Dog titles, including purebreds and mixed breeds. To earn an AKC Therapy Dog title, dogs must be registered or listed with AKC and have a number. This includes any one of these three options:

APPENDIX A | CERTIFYING AGENCIES

1. AKC Registration Number (purebreds with registered parents)
This is often known as the “AKC papers” provided to a dog owner by a breeder. If you have received a registration paper from your breeder or previous owner you can register online.
2. PAL Number (purebreds not registerable)
PAL is Purebred Alternative Listing. PAL (formerly called ILP) is a program that allows unregistered dogs of registerable breeds to compete in AKC Performance and Companion Events. PAL dogs include the many wonderful purebred dogs who may have come from shelters or rescued without AKC registration.
3. Canine Partners Number (for mixed breeds or non-registerable)
Used by mixed breed dogs (and dogs otherwise not registered with AKC such as some purebreds from other countries). A special Canine Partners Therapy Dog Enrollment Form is available for mixed breed Therapy Dogs needing to obtain a dog number in order to receive their Therapy Dog Title. This form must be submitted together with the.

Canine Good Citizen Certification

AKC has a Canine Good Citizen certification for any breed. This is based on criteria that must be tested by an authorized evaluator certified to perform that test by AKC.

AKC believes that all dogs can be good dogs, and all owners can be great owners, all it takes is a little bit of training, lots of love, and of course, plenty of praise along the way.

That’s why they created the Canine Good Citizen™ (CGC) program: an expert-made training program designed to help you and your dog be the best you can be—together.

Canine Good Citizen is a 10-skill test that teaches good manners to dogs and responsible dog ownership to their owners.

CGC is open to all dogs—purebred and mixed breeds. There are no age minimums or limits for participating in the Canine Good Citizen program.

AKC also has a program for puppies. Check out the specialized training program for puppies, AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy, which teaches the basics to get your puppy off to a good start and is an excellent first in-person training class.

Canadian Kennel Club


The Canadian Kennel Club works closely with the American Kennel Club and many of the programs are identical. These commonalities help to maintain consistency across the border.



Appendix B

Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures Relating to Canines

64



This section has current SOP's or SOG's that we have permission to share with this publication. This will help departments in building those for their departments. These documents can provide a great point of reference for departments expanding their service with canine teams. We are providing these "Best Practices" that can be shared and modified for a particular agency. These are all inclusive with this data by using a wide variety of fire departments such as career, volunteer, combination, private, metro, small, large, or whatever the case may be. This is policy practices that any department can take from to build their own department standards.

Front Range Fire Rescue - Colorado



Policy 917

Policy Manual

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The Purpose of This Program

917.1 OBJECTIVE

Front Range Fire Rescue recognizes the value of canine therapy in support of the mental health and wellness of all members. Agency leadership believes that appropriately trained therapy dogs

917.2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of FRFR.

917.3 POLICY

The basis for a successful therapy dog program lies in the temperament and training of both the dogs and their handlers. Individual FRFR members seeking to become involved as approved handlers of FRFR therapy dogs must complete an application to be approved for participation in the program. The application process will include documentation from a licensed veterinarian or other qualified professional dog trainer that the dog's temperament has been evaluated and found to be appropriate for that of a therapy dog. Additionally, the "candidate" dog must be appropriately trained so that it does not present a safety risk for members and visitors to FRFR's facilities.

Refer to the Therapy Dog Application for additional information.

Only one dog will be allowed per station during each operational shift. Members assigned to work in Administration, Life Safety, or Training may also be approved to participate in the program, with no more than one dog on-duty each day in these program areas. All dogs participating in the program must be spayed/neutered and possess and maintain the AKC Canine Good Citizen test.

All expenses relating to a member's participation in the Therapy Dog Program are the sole responsibility of the member, including treatment for injury/illness of the dog while participating in the program.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

FRONT RANGE FIRE RESCUE - COLORADO

The member's participation in a therapy dog evaluation and/or training program is not considered to be on-duty time and, as such, is not eligible for compensation or worker's compensation coverage. Members approved to bring their dogs to work through the Therapy Dog Program acknowledge that they are responsible for providing for the care and feeding of their dog while the dog is in an FRFR facility.

The Deputy Chief of Life Safety will serve as the primary point of contact between members and The Therapy Dog Program Leadership.

917.4 PROCEDURES

917.4.1 Behavioral Evaluation:

Members desiring to have their dog approved to come to work with them through the Therapy Dog Program must first have their dog evaluated for acceptable behavior. All behavioral evaluations must be performed by a licensed veterinarian or other appropriately certified individual who is trained/experienced in providing behavioral evaluations. Members are responsible for scheduling and paying for the behavioral evaluation of their dogs. Members should request written documentation of the behavioral evaluation, as well as a brief summary of the training/experience of the examining professional.

917.4.2 Obedience Training:

In addition to having the right temperament, therapy dogs must also have the obedience training necessary to ensure the safety of members and visitors to FRFR facilities. The member is solely responsible for paying for all costs associated with participating in any obedience training that is required for their dog. Part of the application process for participation in the therapy dog program will include observation of the dog's behavior in a group setting by program leadership. There is not a specific trainer or training program that is required by FRFR. Rather, the member is encouraged to find the training that they feel is the most appropriate for their dog. The American Kennel Club website (<https://www.akc.org/products-services/trainingprograms/>) may serve as a helpful resource for members who are looking for qualified trainers, but it is important to note that the selection of a training program is solely at the discretion of the member and their dog.

917.4.3 Application:

- Member's name and current shift/station assignment
- Members are expected to communicate with their co-workers and chain of command about the member's interest in his/her dog participating in the program
- Breed, gender, age, and name of their dog
- Documentation to indicate that the dog has been spayed/neutered
- Documentation of the current vaccination and registration/licensing status for their dog
- Documentation of the dog's behavioral evaluation by a licensed veterinarian

Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received. Each application will be reviewed by the Deputy Chief of Life Safety, Therapy Dog Program coordinator, and Health and Wellness:

- Program leadership, with input provided by the applicant's co-workers, direct supervisor, and shift Battalion Chief.
- To be approved for participation in the program, the member must be in good standing.
- Only dogs with favorable behavioral evaluations will be considered for participation.
- Dogs must be spayed/neutered and must be current on all required vaccinations prior to acceptance into the program
- The member is responsible for maintaining all of the dog's vaccines throughout participation in the program.
- Due to the possibility of members and/or visitors having allergies to dogs, preference will be given to non-shedding dogs; however, all dogs that receive approval from the behavioral evaluation will be considered for participation. Members will be notified of the status of their application within ten (10) business days of their application being received with all required documentation.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

FRONT RANGE FIRE RESCUE - COLORADO

917.4.4 Application Review:

Therapy Dog Program Leadership will review all submitted documentation in the order it was received. Within ten (10) days of receiving a completed application and all necessary supporting documentation, the member will be contacted to schedule an observation of the dog's behavior at a fire station and in a group setting. The observation will include exposing the dog to the sounds of a fire apparatus, including backup alarms, as well as observing the dog's behavior among strangers in a small room. The dog should be comfortable in all settings and should allow him/herself to be petted and handled by strangers without showing aggressive or fearful behaviors. This observation is not compensable time for the member. During this same ten (10) day period, Program Leadership may contact the member's co-workers and chain of command to ensure they support the member's application. Members may be approved for participation in the Therapy Dog Program only after verification that all documentation listed in 917.4.3 has been provided, and after successful completion of the observation by Program Leadership. Members whose dogs have met all FRFR requirements for participation in the program will be notified via email within five (5) days after completing the observation session. The member's direct supervisor and shift Battalion Chief will be copied on this email.

917.4.5 Insurance:

The FRFR liability insurance policy provides coverage to approved therapy dogs while the member is on-duty in FRFR facilities and apparatus. This coverage does not extend beyond FRFR facilities and apparatus. This coverage includes accidental damage that may be caused by the dog. No additional liability insurance is required for members participating in the Therapy Dog Program; however, members may voluntarily elect to add liability insurance at their own cost. Members are solely responsible for any veterinary care needed by their dog. Therefore, members participating in the Therapy Dog Program are encouraged to purchase and maintain veterinary emergency insurance to assist with cost recovery for any injury/illness

917.4.6 Requirements for Owners of Therapy Dogs: Approved therapy dogs must wear an identification tag that displays the dog's name and also contains the owner's emergency contact information at all times when on-duty.

1. Members with approved therapy dogs shall provide the agency with 24/7 emergency contact information in the event the member becomes unable to care for their dog due to calls for service or extended absence from the station, or if the dog needs emergency veterinary services. Emergency contact information will be provided to the member's direct supervisor and shift Battalion Chief.
2. Therapy dogs may wear FRFR-approved and/or FRFR-issued items that clearly identify them as a Therapy Dog while on-duty (e.g., vest, bandana, collar, badge, etc.).
3. Members who bring therapy dogs to work must be able to care for their dog throughout the duration of their shift and ensure the station and work environment remain in good conditions at all times.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

FRONT RANGE FIRE RESCUE - COLORADO

4. Members are expected to communicate with their co-workers and chain of command to ensure that their dog's presence at the station does not interfere with daily schedules and/or expectations.
5. Members are responsible for providing their therapy dog with food, water, bedding, treats, toys, and medications at all times when on-duty and in an FRFR facility.
6. The member is responsible for cleaning up after their dog on and off FRFR premises, as well as proper exercising/walking as needed when on-duty.
7. The member is responsible for maintaining all required vaccinations for their approved therapy dog, as well as maintaining appropriate licensing/registration of the dog per the member's county of residence. The member is also responsible for providing their dog with an annual wellness exam by a licensed veterinarian. The member shall provide copies of all current documents to Program Leadership.
8. In general, members shall not take their dogs with them on calls for service. Special exceptions may be made by a Chief Officer. On-duty members with approved therapy dogs may be assigned by the on-duty Battalion Chief, or another Chief Officer, to visit any on-duty company to provide post-critical incident support. Additionally, a Chief Officer may request an off-duty member to bring their approved therapy dog to an FRFR facility to provide post-critical incident support or to support a community relations event. Such participation outside of the member's regular work schedule will be compensable as on-duty time for the approved member(s).

917.4.7 Therapy Dogs Beyond FRFR Facilities: Participation in the FRFR Therapy Dog Program does not meet the same requirements for national certification of therapy dogs. Members may seek to participate in nationally recognized programs that provide training and certification for therapy dogs working in larger public facilities, such as airports, schools, nursing homes and hospitals. Members who elect to participate in such programs do so at their own cost and on their own time. FRFR leadership maintains sole authority to determine if a dog meets agency requirements for participation in the FRFR Therapy Dog Program.

917.5 REVISION HISTORY

03-23-2022 Original draft of policy submitted to Fire Chief for review and approval 08-09-2022 Policy updated/revised in its entirety

917.6 REFERENCES

West Metro Fire Rescue Therapy Dog Program

Alliance of Therapy Dogs website

Georgia Granger - Founder of numerous therapy dog training programs

See attachment: Therapy Dog Application.pdf

Newport Beach Fire Department

Policy and Procedure Manual



Volume: 2 - Human Resources

Chapter: 5 - Health and Wellness

Subject: 6 - Canine Peer Support Program

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy establishes guidelines for the Newport Beach Fire Department Peer Support Canine Program.
- 1.2 The Newport Beach Fire Department Peer Support Canine Program has been created to support members of the Newport Beach Fire Department as they process both work and personal stress. The Peer Support Canine Program intends to:
 - 1.2.1 Promote mental and emotional well-being of employees.
 - 1.2.2 Provide emotional support and comfort to firefighters and their families.
 - 1.2.3 Respond to critical incidents at the request of management and/or Peer Support Coordinator.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 Applies to all members of the fire department.

3.0 Policy

- 3.1 The Newport Beach Fire Department has allowed the use of certified support canine(s) to assist members as a part of the Peer Support Program.
- 3.2 Handlers and Peer Support Team Dogs will be identified in Appendix A.
- 3.3 The Peer Support canine is not allowed in the following areas within the station:
 - 3.3.1 Bathrooms, sleeping quarters, laundry area, workout area.
 - 3.3.2 The kitchen and dining areas will be off-limits during mealtimes. The dog will be confined to his crate during these times.
- 3.4 When all personnel are out of the station, the peer support dog will be confined to his crate, as trained.
- 3.5 The apparatus bay will be off-limits, while bay doors are open, unless the dog is on-lead with a handler.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

NEWPORT BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

- 3.6** The dog shall not be permitted on the furniture in the station (i.e., recliners and beds). This is to reduce the likelihood of contaminating the fabrics with allergens.
- 3.7** In the instance of out of station personnel being assigned to the station on detail or overtime, that have pet allergies, shall be confined to his crate for the duration of the shift in which that individual is in the station. If this will exceed 4 hours in the crate, a backup plan should be initiated.
- 3.8** The designated handler will be responsible for exercising the dogs daily, cleaning up bowel movements, brushings, baths, and continued training.
- 3.9** The handler will stow all equipment at end of shift; area where canine was crated will be swept and mopped by handler.
- 3.10** The dog will be on lead whenever they are beyond the grounds of the fire station.
- 3.11** The dog will be on lead on the grounds of the fire station if they are subject to contact with the public.
- 3.12** The Fire Chief or their designee may revoke or disapprove a canines' station privileges at any time.
- 3.13** Canines not designated as part of the Peer Support Team are not allowed to be housed at the station.
- 3.14** No more than two approved canines will be housed at a station at any given time.
- 3.15** Information sheet and Move Up Company Sheet shall be kept updated by handler and posted in visible location on canine peer support's crate at all times. Refer to Appendix B.
- 3.16** Ownership
- 3.16.1** The Peer Support Team Canine(s) will be assigned to the Newport Beach Fire Departments' Peer Support Program and is owned by the organization from which they are donated from.
- 3.16.2** The city is not responsible for financial aspects of the canine. Insurance, licensing, veterinary services, food, equipment and supplies, and other needs are funded by NB Firefighters Association for the duration of the canine's peer support service life with the Nbfd Peer Support team.
- 3.17** The dog will be subject to the following requirements and the existing laws and regulations of the OC Animal Control:
- 3.17.1** The dog shall be licensed to the NB Firefighters Association.
- 3.17.2** The dog will be on lead whenever they are beyond the grounds of the fire station.
- 3.17.3** The dog will be on lead on the grounds of the fire station if they are subject to contact with the public.
- 3.18** Veterinary Care:
- 3.18.1** The dog will have a healthcare insurance plan that covers both emergency care and well visit care.
- 3.18.2** All necessary vaccinations and possible future medications shall be covered by the insurance plan.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

NEWPORT BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

3.18.3 An emergency veterinarian within a 20-minute duration from any NBFD station will be identified, in the event that the dog needs immediate or emergency medical care due to sickness or injury.

3.19 Designated handler responsibilities and selection process:

3.19.1 The canine Peer Support Team handler shall make every attempt to attend peer support team trainings, remain active in the program and respond to events when called upon to do so.

3.19.2 It is the responsibility of the handler to meet requirements, including on-going training and annual recertification, through the organization for which the peer support canine has been donated.

3.19.3 Current Peer Support Members will be notified of the opening for designated handler and will have the opportunity to apply.

3.19.4 Applicants will be reviewed and interviewed by the Peer Support Team Coordinator, management and organization funding the canine.

3.19.5 Applicants will be an active member of the NB Peer Support Team.

3.19.6 The Newport Beach Fire Department Peer Support Team will continue to assess the need for additional dogs and designated handlers.

3.20 Separation from Team

3.20.1 Conduct unbecoming of either member of the Canine Peer Support Team (handler/canine) could lead to a reevaluation of active permanent termination from the Team.

3.20.2 The following are possible examples of conduct unbecoming:

3.20.2.01 Canine showing aggression or biting.

3.20.2.02 Canine inability to act in a disciplined or controlled manner in public.

3.20.2.03 Canine destructive to city property

3.20.02.04 Handler's persistent and unexcused absence from trainings, events and/or incidents.

3.20.02.05 Handler's breach of confidentiality.

3.20.02.06 Any other conduct unbecoming as per departmental policy.

3.20.3 Handler can choose to end their active participation as part of the Canine Peer Support Program through a chain-of-command communication. Communication should also extend to the Peer Support Program Coordinator. At any time one of the above happens, the Training Organization shall be notified immediately, and dog will be returned.

4.0 Definition

- 4.1 Peer Support Team Canine:** – A canine with specialized training to assist Peer Support members during CISM debriefings, Major incident responses, and all other responses of the Peer Support Team.
- 4.2 Handler:** A trained and identified NBFD person, who is a member of the peer support team and has been certified as a handler with a designated Peer Support Team Canine.
- 4.3 Peer Support Team Coordinator** – the designated supervisor of the Peer Support Team. Responsible for coordinating and approving requests of the Peer Support Team and Peer Support Canine Program.

5.0 Responsibilities

- 5.1** All Personnel: shall comply with this policy, relative to their position and interaction with the Peer Support Team, Peer Support Team Canine, and the canine handler.
- 5.2** Supervisors shall be responsible for the implementation and adherence to this policy.

73

6.0 Procedures

- 6.1** The Peer Support Team Canine(s) are available to respond to stress reaction incidents, one-on-one or group settings, and can be requested through Battalion Chief, Operations Chief, Fire Chief or Peer Support Team Coordinator.
- 6.1.1** BC approval is to be required prior to a response or deployment by the Handler and support canine while on-duty in order to evaluate and meet the operational needs of the department.
- 6.2** Peer Support Team Coordinator shall be notified by the handler within 2 hours of any deployment requests filled by management.
- 6.3** The peer support dog may be activated to respond to any major/critical incident, de-briefing/ debriefings, hospital visits, home visits, station visits, community events, media events, or anytime that the support dog may be deemed necessary to respond with the approval of the Peer Support Team Coordinator.
- 6.4** The handler has the right to refuse a response for any reason.
- 6.5** The dog will wear a service vest when in the public and at the discretion of the handler. In the station and on station grounds the dog is not required to wear a service vest.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES NEWPORT BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

- 6.6** The handler and Peer Support Coordinator will have a procedure in place for care of the canine and/or pick up in the event of an extended, unanticipated deployment by the handler or if the handler is otherwise unable to care for the canine while housed at a fire station.
- 6.6.1** Procedure will be approved by Operations Chief.
- 6.6.2** Procedure will be shared with the handlers' supervisor and Battalion Chiefs.
- 6.7** Strike team deployments as part of a single resource Canine Peer Support Team will be at the discretion of the department needs as determined by the Battalion Chief or Operations Chief.

7.0 Revision History

Appendix A

Peer Support Canine Program
Members

Peer Support Program Coordinator Approved Canine Team:

1. Handler: Chad Duncan
Canine: Tora-Patriotic Service Dog
Foundation December 2022

Appendix B

Information posted on crate

Tora

24 Hour Emergency Veterinarian
VCA West Coast Specialty and Emergency Hospital
18300 Euclid St, Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Extended Incident/ Out of Station Contact List
Primary: Kristin Thompson
Secondary: Tom Tackett

Daily Schedule

This is a general schedule and may be changed depending on scheduled training and calls.

0630-0730: Feed, Walk, Bathroom
1000: Bathroom Break and training
1300: Bathroom Break
1500: Bathroom Break and training
1630: Walk
1900-2000: Kennel for the night

Move-Up Companies

Please read this entirely before removing the dog from his crate.

This is Tora and she's the Nbfd Peer Support Therapy dog.

1. She can stay in her crate for up to 4 hours
2. If you think she's been in the crate for over 3 hours, or if you think she needs to go to the bathroom please take her outside.
3. If you need to take her outside, YOU MUST use a leash which should be on top of this crate. Anytime she is out of her crate she is required to be on a leash attached to her collar.
4. Her water bowl is in the kitchen by the window.
5. Tora is on a special diet. She is fed once a day in the morning. Please do not give her any food or allow her to eat anything off of the ground.
6. Once she has had a chance to go to the bathroom and drink water, please put her back in the crate.
7. When in doubt leave her in the crate, and call Chief Kristin Thompson.
8. Do not allow her on the apparatus floor, or out of the station.

V2, C5, S6: Canine Peer Support Program – 1

Delhi Township Fire Department – Ohio

Therapy Dog Standard Operating Guideline



I. SCOPE

All Department Personnel

II. PURPOSE

The Delhi Township Fire Department recognizes the value of canine therapy in supporting the wellness of our employees. Certified therapy dogs or dogs in the therapy certification process through Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD), or other similar program deemed appropriate by the Fire Chief, will be allowed to accompany their owner/handler while at work, subject to the provisions of this policy.

III. PROCEDURE

1. Dog must be certified by the American Kennel Club (AKC) in Canine Good Citizen (CGC). The dog must successfully complete the CGC certification process through the AKC within 6 months of enrollment, or the dog will not be permitted to come to work with their owner/handler.
2. Dog must be rolled in the Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD). Dog must have approval from the training program move to the next step in the process. Once training has been achieved, the dog must be enrolled in the therapy dog certification process through the ATD, and the dog must successfully complete the evaluations in the certification process.
3. After successfully completing the evaluations in the ATD therapy dog certification process, the owner/handler shall submit a letter of interest to the Fire Chief. Letters of Interest will be reviewed by the Assistant Fire Chief and the Fire Chief.
4. Approval to have a therapy dog accompany their owner/handler to work while on duty at DTFD depends upon the following approvals:
 - A. Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief and Shift Captain
5. Once all approvals have been secured, the owner/handler will be allowed to bring their dog to work with them while they are on duty.
6. The dog must successfully complete the therapy dog certification process through ATD within 6 months of enrollment, or the dog will not be permitted to come to work with their owner/handler.

7. Owners/handlers must meet and maintain all requirements necessary to maintain active membership with the ATD.
 - A. ATD certification ensures the dog is safe to interact within DTFD facilities and with the community.
 - B. Owner/handler and DTFD will be required to provide work insurance for the dog while at work with their owner.
7. All expenses will be the responsibility of the dog's owner/handler. All training costs, ATD certification and membership fees, and personal insurance fees will be the responsibility of the owner/handler.
8. Only one dog shall be allowed per station each 24-hour shift.
9. Owners/handlers assigned to Administration shall coordinate bringing their therapy dog to work with the Fire Chief.
10. Owners/handlers must care for the dog throughout their 24-hour shift and ensure the station/work environment always remains in good condition.
11. Owners/handlers are responsible for providing the dog with food and water, bedding, and treats during their shift.
12. Emergency contact information for the dog shall be provided to the direct supervisor if the owner/handler becomes unable to care for the dog.
13. Therapy dogs and their handlers may be asked to visit with crews other than their assigned crew to provide post-critical incident support, at the discretion of the owner/handler and the Fire Chief. Therapy dogs may participate in community-related events at the discretion of the owner/handler and Fire Chief.
14. The dog must wear an ID tag with the owners/handler's emergency contact information at all times.
15. Dog will wear a harness that clearly identifies the animal as a therapy dog between 0800 and 1700. Dogs will also wear harness during community-related events.
16. Owner/handler will maintain awareness of the mental health of the dog and provide "down time" for the canine to decompress from stressful events.

The following pages are provided by the Huntington Beach Fire Department.

Organizational Manual Huntington Beach Fire Department

Applicable (✓) to the following personnel:

✓ Fire Administration	Fire Prevention	Fire Captain	Fire Paramedic
✓ Chief Officer	✓ Fire Suppression	Fire Engineer	Firefighter
✓ Ambulance Operator	Marine Safety		

Responsible Party: DC Operations **Last Review:** October 2020
Peer Support Dog Program

Intent

The Huntington Beach Fire Department Peer Support Dog Program has been created to support members of the Huntington Beach Fire Department as they process work and personal related stress, trauma, and over stimulation. The Peer Support Dog Program:

- Promotes the mental and emotional well-being of employees.
- Provides emotional support and comfort to firefighters and their families.
- Responds to critical incidents at the request of management.
- Recognizes signs of agitation, anxiety, or stress and to interrupt those behaviors.

Definitions of Terms

Peer Support Dog – A canine with specialized training to assist Peer Support Team members during critical incident diffusions, debriefings, major incident responses, station visits, and any other response requests of the Peer Support Team.

Lead Handler – A trained Peer Support Team member that has been certified as a handler with a designated Peer Support Dog.

Peer Support Team Coordinator – The designated supervisor of the Peer Support Team. Responsible for coordinating and approving requests of the Peer Support Team and the Peer Support Team Comfort Dog Program.

Policy

- A. The Huntington Beach Fire Department has allowed the use of highly trained and certified comfort dogs to assist department members as part of the Peer Support Team.
- B. Peer Support Dogs are available to respond to any incident and can be requested through the on-duty Battalion Chief, or the Peer Support Team Lead as seen necessary.
- C. If the peer support dog is with a lead handler, who is on duty, the comfort dog will have unrestricted access to the living quarters when on duty personnel are in the station with the following exceptions:
 - 1. When all personnel are out of the station, the peer support dog will be confined to their kennel, as trained.
 - 2. The apparatus bay will be off limits while bay doors are open, unless the dog is on lead with the lead handler, or fire department personnel.
 - 3. The kitchen and dining areas will be off limits during mealtimes. The dog will be confined to its crate during these times, with the exception of the need to house the dog in the dining area due to station layouts.
 - 4. The bathrooms will be off limits at all times.
 - 5. The dog shall not be permitted on the furniture in the station (recliners and beds). This is to reduce the likelihood of contaminating the fabrics with allergens.
 - 6. In the instance of station personnel being assigned to the station, on detail, or overtime, that have dog allergies, the dog shall not have free access to the living quarters, but rather be confined to their kennel for the duration of the shift in which that individual is in the station.
 - 7. The designated lead handler will be responsible for exercising the dog daily, cleaning up bowel movements, cleaning the kennel, feeding, and continued training.

D. Ownership

- 1. The Peer Support Dogs will be owned by the organization for which there are donated from, and assigned to the lead handler on the Peer Support Team. The City of Huntington Beach will be responsible for the financial, insurance, licensing, and liability of the peer support dog during their service life with the Peer Support Team.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

HUNTINGTON BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

2. The dog will be subject to the following requirements and the existing laws and regulations of the Orange County Animal Control:
 - The dog shall be licensed to the City of Huntington Beach.
 - The dog will be on lead whenever they are beyond the grounds of the fire station.
 - The dog will be on lead on the grounds of the fire station if they are subject to contact with the public.

E. Veterinary Care

1. The dog will have a healthcare insurance plan that covers both emergency care and wellness visit care.
2. All necessary vaccinations and possible future medications shall be covered by the insurance plan.
3. An emergency veterinarian within 15 minutes duration of station will be identified in the event that the dog needs immediate or emergency medical care due to sickness, or injury.

Procedures

- A. The peer support dog may be activated to respond to any major/critical incident, defusing/debriefings, hospital visits, home visits, station visits, community events, media events, or anytime that the support dog may be deemed necessary to respond with the approval of the lead handler, or the Peer Support Team Lead.
- B. The lead handler has the right to refuse a response based on the need for the dog to rest as to protect the dog from overuse, exhaustion, and burnout.
- C. It is the responsibility of the lead handler to perform continuous and annual recertification through the organization for which the peer support dog has been donated.
- D. The dog will don service vest when in the public and at the discretion of the lead handler. In the station and on station grounds the dog is not required to don a service vest.

Team Selection Process

- A. The Huntington Beach Fire Department Peer Support Team will continue to assess the need for additional dogs and designated handlers.
- B. Current Peer Support Team members will be notified of the opening for the designated lead handler position and will have the opportunity to be considered for selection.
- C. Those interested in the position will be reviewed and interviewed by the Peer Support Team Lead and at least on lead handler.

APPROVED: _____ DATE: _____
Scott M. Haberle, Fire Chief

Start Up and Annual Expenses For Peer Support Dog Program

Huntington Beach Fire Department

Item	Justification	Frequency	Cost
Gunner Travel Crate, pad, tie down straps, name plate, and fan https://gunner.com/products/g1-ken-nel?variant=39378525782215	Highest rated crash test crate for safe transportation of comfort dog in vehicles	One time	\$1279.15
Elitefield 3 door folding soft crate https://www.amazon.com/EliteField-Folding-Out-door-Multiple-Available/dp/B004ABBUKY/ref=sr_1_4?crid=3A-TA92FSEH27Y&keywords=elite-field+3-door+folding+soft-sided+dog+crate&qid=1582229473&spre-fix=elitefield.aps.218&sr=8-4	Mobile Crate to house comfort dog in unassigned stations	One time	\$92.64
Frisco Heavy Duty Fold And Carry Single Door Collapsible Wire Dog Crate https://www.chewy.com/frisco-heavy-duty-fold-carry-single-dp/137159	Wire Crate to house comfort dog at home and at assigned station	One time (x2, one for home and one for assigned station)	\$197.80 (\$98.90 x 2)
Brindle Plush Orthopedic Dog Bed with removable cover https://www.chewy.com/brindle-plush-orthopedic-pillow-cat/dp/180897	Comfort for comfort dog due to it being crate trained to sleep and standby when crews are not in station	One time (x2, one for home and one for assigned station)	\$150.86 (\$75.43 x 2)

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

HUNTINGTON BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

Item	Justification	Frequency	Cost
Health Insurance- Nationwide Pet Insurance https://qec.petinsurancce.com/quote2	Coverage for vet bills and major medical costs for comfort dog	Annual	\$666.54
Work Vest https://usa.juliusk9.com/products/julius-k9-i-dc-stealth-powerharness	Vest to identify comfort dog as a working dog with proper identification	One time	\$105.98
Tactipup Extreme Personalized 1.5" Dog Collar https://www.tactipup.com/collections/tactical-dog-collars/products/extreme-personalized-dog-collar	To identify dog as a working dog with proper identification	One time	\$76.45
Qalo Dog ID Tag https://qalo.com/collections/core-dog-id-tags/products/orange-shield-classic-silicone-dog-id-tag	Soft tag for dog/ owner identification	One time	\$26.87
Elevated dog bowl https://www.amazon.com/URPOWER-Elevated-Adjustable-Stainless-Non-Slip/dp/B08PB9G997/ref=sxin_13_ac_d_mf_rf?ac_md=6-1-R3JleQ=-ac_d_mf_rf&cv_ct_cx=elevated+dog+bowls&dchild=1&keywords=elevated+dog+bowls&pd_rd_i=B08PB9G997&pd_rd_r=5b2017f3-e53a-46e8-8942-5ecfd914d622&pd_rd_w=N-J6Yr&pd_rd_wg=lm8tg&pf_rd_p=b8ef8777-3438-4ec7-96b3-887c3acca37c&pf_rd_r=V3W8KV3ES6KWK0095Z3G&psc=1&qid=1627161626&sr=1-2-7c2506cd-8df8-4615-a3fa-29df101a3d4d	Elevated food and water bowl for home and station	One time (x2 one for home and one for station)	\$75.40 (\$37.70 x 2)
Dog Leash https://www.amazon.com/Viper-Biothane-Working-Tracking-Colors/dp/B01A7H5ZLY/ref=sr_1_12?dchild=1&keywords=10+ft+leather+dog+leash&qid=1629232987&sr=8-12&th=1	For controlling comfort dog on walks and in public	One time (x2 one for home and one for work)	\$52.00 (\$25.99 x 2)

Item	Justification	Frequency	Cost
Custom Comfort Dog Patches	Identification as a Huntington Beach Fire Department Comfort Dog	One time	\$100
Veterinary Deductible Costs	Medical fees not covered by insurance	Annual	\$500
Grooming Costs	Grooming	Annual	\$350
Food	Food	Annual	\$800
Training Tools	Toys and treats for continued training	Annual	\$200

Initial Startup cost	\$4,701.69	Annual Cost	\$2516.54
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Huntington Beach Fire Department



PROPOSAL

Provide for access to a peer support dog for local CISM and Peer Support needs within the Huntington Beach Fire Department, and surrounding Orange County Agencies, to assist members in processing and recovering from job related trauma, stress, and over stimulation.

INTRODUCTION

Fire Department personnel are subject to exposure of extreme human suffering, strong emotional involvement, sporadic high intensity situations, shift work, and extended work periods. These factors impose high stress levels on fire personnel. The need for behavioral health support services continues to grow in the fire service. Along with many of the traditional clinical programs, a shift to what could be characterized as nontraditional, has proven to be beneficial, canine comfort and therapy services.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the human-canine bond is influenced by emotional, psychological, and physical interactions that are essential to their wellbeing of both humans and dogs. Some hypotheses state that if we see animals at rest or in a peaceful state, this may signal humans to safety, security, and feelings of well-being.

Over the last 100 years, there has been a growing body of evidence that animals can be used in various capacities beyond just being pets. In the case of dogs, they can be found in Institutions, prisons, nursing homes and private therapy sessions, serving as comfort or therapy dogs.

Multiple fire departments including, The Toledo Fire Department in Ohio, The Fairfax County Fire Department in Virginia, and The Los Angeles County Fire Department have welcomed dogs into their fire houses. They serve as peer support dogs. Media coverage presented the dogs appearing to help firefighters merely with their presence. A firefighter stated in a TV news interview that it is helpful to have the dog waiting for them when they get back from calls. It gives them a feeling of steadiness and comfort.

The Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) has also studied overall work conditions with dogs at workplaces. Their research concluded “dogs in the workplace were perceived to reduce stress, facilitate social interaction, to serve as an organizational symbol and to serve as a self-expressive function. Workers without dogs in their workplace had significantly higher stress than workers, in the same field, with dogs at their workplace”.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT & PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The International Association of Firefighters released a 2016 report stating “firefighters experience post-traumatic stress disorder at rates similar to what’s seen among combat veterans. Almost 20% of firefighters and paramedics had PTSD, compared with the general population’s rate of 3.5%.

The Ruderman Family Foundation released a report in early 2018 stating “more firefighters died by suicide in 2017 than all of line of duty deaths combined.” This statistic continues to be consistent annually.

In 2019 Governor Newsom signed into legislation AB1116. This Assembly Bill creates standards for first responder Peer Support programs to provide an agency-wide network of peer representatives to assist fellow employees with emotional and professional issues. In addition to AB 1116 Governor Newsom also signed into legislation SB 542. This bill approves workers’ compensation for first responders while they recover from their mental health scars.

Service dogs, particularly peer support dogs, have already been proven by multiple studies to reduce PTSD in war veterans. Specifically, Purdue University studied two groups of Veterans suffering from PTSD, one group with comfort dogs and one group without such dogs. The results show lower levels of depression, higher levels of life satisfaction, higher overall psychological well-being, and less absenteeism from work due to health among those who were employed, who had access to dogs.

The use of comfort dogs to help firefighters has recently been realized locally:

- Thomas Fire
- Montecito Floods
- Woolsey Fire
- Death of Costa Mesa Fire Capt. Mike Kreza
- Glendale Fire Department near miss basement entrapment
- Los Angeles County Fire Department station 81 shooting

The peer support members assigned with these dogs have reported admirable results. Large incidents should not be the only opportunity for firefighters to have access to the assistance provided by peer support dogs.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES HUNTINGTON BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

PROPOSAL & TEST LOCATION

The proposed program would have a peer support dog assigned to Engineer Kane Johnson, C-Shift, Lake Station.

The Patriotic Service Dog Foundation (PSDF) has agreed to provide the dog at no cost to the fire department. All costs for this pilot program will be paid for by the rescue and Engineer Kane Johnson. Engineer Johnson has agreed to pay for the living expenses and healthcare costs for the dog.

Engineer Kane Johnson has volunteered to administer the program and has spoken with FF/PM Jake Windell, from The Los Angeles County Fire Department, who has trained his comfort dog Echo. Engineer Kane Johnson's training profile and training timeline are outlined in the following:

- Engineer Kane Johnson will train voluntarily, and privately, with the organization donating the peer support dog.
- Engineer Kane Johnson is a current member of the Fire Department's Peer Support team.
- The peer support dog would be available to respond to Peer Support CISM debriefings with Engineer Kane Johnson.
- The dog would be trained by a professional trainer from (PSDF) to enter its crate when the station dispatch tones are activated. This would reduce the chances of the dog wandering around the station or getting out of the station when no one is there because of a call.
- The dog will also be trained to not enter the kitchen or dining areas.

EVALUATION

It is recommended that the pilot program be enacted for one year. A full evaluation of the program will be conducted by Peer Support Leads. This information will be the basis for analyzing and researching the benefits of the program, if any, that the therapy dog has supplied. Personnel will also be asked to submit their experiences and recommendations for the continuation or termination of the program. All findings will be submitted to the chain of command for review and direction.

If this pilot does not prove to be successful, Engineer Kane Johnson has agreed to adopt the dog.

PROSPECTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT

The dogs will be available for Peer Support CISM Debriefings, Large incidents, and/or family assistance.

SUMMARY

Our department has been known to be progressive, but unfortunately, we became reactive when we lost one of our own, Eric Wueve. His suicide led to the creation of many Peer Support programs in our county, including ours. Although Eric was working for OCFA when he took his life, he began his career with us and was close with many of our members. We have been very fortunate that we have not been faced with the suicide of a current member of our department. With this program we have the opportunity to be proactive and help our members, as well as others within the county and state.

Many firefighters are living and working with debilitating PTSD every day and continue to hide it. We can start to address these real medical issues, by allowing our firefighters a way to relieve stress





Memphis Division of Fire Services

PURPOSE

Fire and rescue personnel are subject to long work hours, shift work, sporadic high –intensity situations, strong emotional involvement, and exposure to extreme human suffering. These factors can impose undue stress on fire and rescue personnel. The need for behavioral health services continues to grow in the department. One aspect of these services could be canine comfort services. The Assisi Foundation has donated a fully trained and certified therapy dog. The certified canine selected for this program is Wilson, a 1-year-old, neutered male, Golden-Doodle. Wilson will reside with Lt. Amanda Bowen and will accompany her to work to be available to respond to the needs of our personnel as deemed necessary by the Safety Chief.

SCOPE

All personnel

The Memphis Fire Department has endorsed the use of a certified therapy dog in a pilot program. The first site to participate in this program is EMS Training at Chester Anderson Training Academy.

Designated handlers

Wilson will have a designated primary and two secondary handlers to ensure consistent care and accountability.

The following are the designated

Lt. Amanda Bowen-Primary

Paramedic Dennis Bowen-Secondary (Paramedic Bowen will assist Lt. Bowen in the care and well-being of Wilson. Paramedic Bowen has also agreed to take Wilson to a station to provide therapeutic support should Lt. Bowen be unavailable.)

A/Lt. Vince Clark-Secondary (while Wilson is at CATC)

Areas of access for the canine

While on duty at any hour, Wilson will have on his official fire department badge and ID. He will also have on a collar or vest designating him to be a therapy dog.

When at CATC, Wilson will have access to the offices and classrooms with the following exceptions.

- The apparatus bay will be off-limits unless Wilson is on-lead with a handler
- The kitchen and dining areas will be off-limits during mealtimes. Wilson will be confined to his crate in Lt. Bowen's office during these times.
- The outside grounds and parking lots will be off limits unless on-lead with a handler.
- The approved exercise area for Wilson shall be the open field immediately adjacent to the training academy.
- While at CATC, all exterior doors will have a sign alerting visitors of a therapy dog being on the property.

When in a fire station, Wilson will have free access to the living quarters when on-duty personnel are in the station with the following exceptions.

- The apparatus bay will be off-limits unless Wilson is on-lead with a handler.
- The kitchen and dining areas will be off-limits during mealtimes.
- The outside grounds and parking lots will be off limits unless on-lead with a handler.
- The station gym will be off-limits at all times.
- The locker rooms and bathrooms will be off limits at all times.

Daily Care

The authority and responsibility of daily care of Wilson will rest with the designated handlers.

- Wilson will be fed once in the morning and once in the evening by a designated handler. Wilson
- will not be fed table scrapes, food other than the supplied dog food, or treats not approved by the handler.
- The designated handler shall provide a bathroom break for Wilson upon arrival at CATC or the fire station and prior to leaving the facilities.
- The designated handler will ensure that Wilson has appropriate bathroom breaks throughout the course of the day.
- The handler shall ensure that all fecal matter left by Wilson is disposed of in an appropriate and sanitary manner.

Veterinary care

- The primary veterinary care and necessary grooming of Wilson will be provided throughout Wilson's life per the agreement with the Assisi Foundation by PetVax at 4862 Poplar Avenue, Suite 102, Memphis, TN 38117 and groomer to be determined
- All necessary vaccinations and possible future medications shall be provided by Memphis Fire Department throughout Wilson's life per the agreement with the Assisi Foundation.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

MEMPHIS DIVISION OF FIRE SERVICES

- In the event that Wilson needs immediate or emergency medical care due to sickness or injury Memphis Veterinary Specialists & Emergency at 555 Trinity Creek Cove, Cordova, TN US 38018, will be utilized and financial responsibility will fall to the Memphis Fire Department per the agreement with the Assisi Foundation.

In the event of a traumatic injury or serious illness that requires an end-of-life decision to be made, the final decision will be made by Lt. Amanda Bowen.

- Wilson will have an emergency health insurance policy for unlimited emergency coverage provided by the Memphis Fire Department through to be determined and will be maintained throughout Wilson's life per the agreement with the Assisi Foundation.
- The effective date of the policy is to be determined.
- The policy number is to be determined.

Supplies

- All approved dog food and treats shall be provided by the Memphis Fire Department throughout Wilson's life per the agreement with the Assisi Foundation.
- All necessary leads, leashes, crates, harnesses, and collars shall be provided by Memphis Fire Department throughout Wilson's life per the agreement with the Assisi Foundation.
- All other ancillary supplies, such as waste bags, shall be provided by Memphis Fire Department throughout Wilson's life per the agreement with the Assisi Foundation.

Expectations

Wilson is trained and certified to provide comfort and emotional support to all individuals that he comes in contact with; both within the department and civilian visitors. Clinical evidence has shown that the presence of a therapy dog in a given environment can reduce anxiety, stress, and blood pressure for populations experiencing trauma. Therapy dogs are used extensively in fire stations, EMS stations, court houses, and hospitals for this purpose.

- Wilson shall not be permitted on the furniture in the station (i.e., Couches and beds). This is to reduce the likelihood of contaminating the fabrics with allergens.
- Wilson shall not be allowed onto any fire apparatus unless on-lead and accompanied by a designated handler.
- Wilson shall not be allowed to ride in any department vehicles unless proper safe restraint is utilized, accompanied by a designated handler, the unit is out of service, and approved by the Safety Chief.

Insurance

The Memphis Fire Department shall carry liability insurance for the duration of Wilson's life against him biting or harming any individual while acting in the capacity of a therapy dog as he is trained and certified.

Training


- The Sit Means Sit organization will provide all necessary training to the primary handler, either at their facility in Manassas or via live video at no additional cost for the duration of Wilson's life.
- He shall be trained to follow voice commands and hand signals to return to his handlers who will have to be vigilant in reinforcing these trained commands.

Retirement

- Wilson will retire from his work as a therapy dog at the age of 8.
- Upon retirement, ownership will transfer fully to Lt. Amanda Bowen where Wilson will live his remaining years.
- Should Lt. Bowen not be able to care for Wilson for any reason, he shall be returned to Karen Campbell of Hidden Mysteries Farms per the contract agreement.

Ownership

Wilson shall be the property of the Memphis Fire Department, in partnership with Lt. Amanda Bowen. In the event that the Department determines that the pilot program cannot continue, ownership of Wilson shall transfer completely to Lt. Amanda Bowen where he will live out the rest of his life.

	Station Policy – Fire Station 415		
	ISSUED BY: Captain II Tracey M. Reed, Station Commander		
	CATEGORY: Operations	EFFECTIVE DATE: 9 / 8 / 2018	
415.5.05	SUBJECT: Station canine therapy program	REFERENCE: N/A	

The Fairfax County Fire and rescue Department has endorsed the use of a certified therapy dogs in a pilot program. The second fire station to participate in this program is Fire Station 415.

Purpose

The organization Sit Means Sit has provided a fully trained and certified therapy dog, and will provide life-time training for all current and future designated handlers. The certified canine selected for this station is Xander, a neutered male Golden-Doodle. Xander will live in the station 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with the intention of providing a therapeutic outlet for the personnel in the station from the stresses and traumas experienced while on-duty.

Designated handlers

Each shift shall have a designated primary and secondary handler for the canine to ensure consistent care and accountability.

The following are the designated handlers for each shift, with the primary handler listed first:

A-Shift

- Lieutenant Ed DeCarlo
- Technician Theresa Ruffo-Swanson

B-Shift

- Firefighter Lauren Jewell
- Firefighter Thomas P. Johnson

C-Shift

- Master Technician Richard Mungo
- Captain II Tracey Reed

Areas of access for the canine

The canine will have free access to the living quarters when on-duty personnel are in the station with the following exceptions.

- When all personnel are out of the station Xander will be confined to his crate, as trained.
- The apparatus bay will be off-limits unless Xander is on-lead with a handler.
- The kitchen and dining areas will be off-limits during mealtimes. Xander will be confined to his crate during these times.

- The outside grounds and parking lots will be off limits unless on-lead with a handler.
- The station gym will be off-limits at all times.
- The locker rooms and bathrooms will be off limits at all times.
- The laundry room will be off limits at all times.
- The approved exercise area for Xander shall be the open field at the church property at the intersection of Vernon Street and Elmwood Street. The canine may be exercised off lead with two FS415 personnel present.

Daily Care

The authority and responsibility of daily care of the canine will rest with the designated and certified handlers trained by Sit Means Sit.

- Xander will be fed once in the morning and once in the evening by a designated handler.
- Xander will not be fed table scrapes, food other than the supplied dog food, or treats not approved by the station commander.
- The first designated handler to arrive in the morning shall provide a bathroom break for Xander as part of their change of shift responsibilities.
- A designated handler shall provide a bathroom break for Xander as part of their night watch responsibilities each night before going to bed.
- The on-duty designated handler will ensure that Xander has appropriate bathroom breaks throughout the course of the day.
- The on-duty designated handler shall ensure that all fecal matter left by Xander is disposed of in an appropriate and sanitary manner.

Veterinary Care

- Through an anonymous private donor, Xander has a healthcare insurance plan that covers both emergency care and well visit care. This policy covers 80% coverage of reimbursement for Veterinary visits. The private donor will pay the monthly premiums for the service life of Xander.
- All necessary vaccinations and possible future medications shall be covered by the insurance plan. Co-pays and non-covered services will be paid by private sponsors, donations, and if necessary, the station kitchen fund.
- In the event that Xander needs immediate or emergency medical care due to sickness or injury the Pender Veterinary Center at 4001 Legato Road, Fairfax, will be utilized.
- The animal health insurance policy outlined above provides coverage through American Pet Insurance Co.
- The effective date of the policy is _____.
- The policy number is _____.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA. FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Supplies

- All approved dog food and treats shall be provided by private sponsors, donors, and if necessary, the station kitchen fund.
- All necessary leads, leashes, crates, harnesses, and collars shall be provided by Sit Means Sit as part of their contracted service.
- All other ancillary supplies, such as waste bags, shall be provided by private sponsors, donors, and if necessary, the station kitchen fund.

Expectations

Xander is trained and certified to provide comfort and emotional support to all individuals that he comes in contact with; both within the department and civilian visitors. Clinical evidence has shown that the presence of a therapy dog in a given environment can reduce anxiety, stress, and blood pressure for populations experiencing trauma. Therapy dogs are used extensively in court houses across the state of Virginia for this very purpose with victims of trauma.

- Xander shall not be permitted on the furniture in the station (i.e., couches and beds). This is to reduce the likelihood of contaminating the fabrics with allergens.
- Xander shall not be allowed onto any fire apparatus unless on-lead and accompanied by a designated handler.
- Xander shall not be allowed to ride in any department vehicles unless proper safe restraint is utilized, accompanied by a designated handler, the unit is out of service, and approved by the Station Commander.
- In the instance of fill-in personnel being assigned to the station on detail or overtime that have pet allergies, Xander shall not have free access to the living quarters, but rather shall be confined to his crate for the duration of the shift in which that individual is in the station.
- Xander shall not leave the boundaries of the fire station grounds without the express authorization of the Station Commander.

Insurance

The Sit Means Sit organization shall carry liability insurance for the duration of Xander's life against him biting or harming any individual while acting in the capacity of a therapy dog as he is trained and certified.

Training

- The Sit Means Sit organization will provide all necessary training to each of the designated handlers, either at their facility in Manassas or at the fire station at no additional cost for the duration of Xander's life.
- Xander shall be trained to recognize the station alert tones and will return to his crate on his own accord until release by station personnel.
- He shall be trained to follow voice commands and hand signals to return to his crate, direction away from off limits areas, and correct unwanted behavior. The on-duty personnel will have to be vigilant in reinforcing these trained commands.

Ownership

Xander shall be the property of the Behavioral Health Section, in partnership with the Sit Means Sit Organization. In the event that the Department determines that the Xander cannot continue service in the station the Behavioral Health section and Sit Means Sit will work together to find an appropriate home for Xander.

Fairfax County, Virginia – Fire Station Therapy Canine Program



Background

The concept of having a therapy canine in a fire station was proposed to Fire Chief Bowers in the summer of 2017 as an agenda item of an Organizational Cultural Ambassador meeting. Chief Bowers approved the development of a pilot program. The development of the pilot program was assigned to the Behavioral Health Workgroup Chair Captain Best. Lieutenant Katja Lancing proposed that the canine for the pilot program be assigned to fire station 432. She became the lead on making the preparations for the placement of a canine at that station.

96

The direction from Chief Bowers for the pilot was that we would not know if the concept works until we try it for at least an evaluation period. The criteria that was outlined by the Chief was that 100% of the personnel assigned to the station at the time of placement would have to agree to have a canine, and further that they would agree to take care of the canine. The expectation communicated by Chief Bowers was that once the canine was in place personnel transferring or promoting into the station would make an informed decision about whether they could meet the program expectations prior to accepting the assignment. This same idea held true for detail and callback assignments. Additional criteria were that the canine would be required to have a non-shedding and hypoallergenic coat. Also, that the program could not have any financial impact on the department's budget. The specific direction was that the pilot program had to be completely funded by donations. In an effort to support the pilot program the personnel at fire station 432 offered to pay for the dog food and to provide wellness veterinarian care through Technician Linda Neimeier, a licensed veterinarian, assigned to fire station 432.

Captain Best and Lt. Lancing began discussions with Caring Angels, the organization that trains and certifies the canines. Several meetings were held to discuss the overall concept, the appropriate size and breed of the canine, and specific performance requirements for the dog to be safe in the fire station. From these meetings new and innovative training metrics were developed to meet our needs. Caring Angels offered to make a one-time donation of 100% of the breeder and training costs to promote the pilot program. These costs are generally \$7,000 to \$10,000. Subsequently Caring Angels has significantly discounted these fees for canines that are placed in fire stations. It was determined that a medium sized dog would be best for our needs and requirements. It would be large enough to be visible to avoid tripping hazards, but not too big to be obtrusive to the fire station environment. Based on the dogs that were available from breeders at the time a decision was made to go with a golden doodle breed for its size, general friendly personality, hypoal-

lergenic qualities, and non-shedding coat. Wally was selected as the most appropriate dog available, and he began his training. The issue of liability if Wally were to bite or hurt an employee or citizen was addressed by the Caring Angels organization. Once any of the canines complete the Caring Angels training and successfully complete certification Caring Angels assumes liability with an insurance policy that they maintain for the life of the canine at no cost to us.

The trainers were given very specific performance and training requirements to maintain safety for both Wally and the station personnel. He would have to have boundary training to ensure that he would respect the off-limits areas of the station, most importantly to make sure that he would not leave the station or go into the bay on his own. With respect to emergency response for station personnel, Wally would have to be trained to immediately return to his crate when he heard the station alert tones sound and remain there until released by a crew member. Captain Best made it very clear that the canine would have to perform this without assistance from the crew and 100% compliance to not impact service delivery by the station personnel. Also, for the safety of Wally to not wander into the bay while vehicles were in motion responding to calls. This was a completely new performance expectation for the trainers; however, we were assured that it could be accomplished.

In the interim during Wally's training, a station policy for the pilot program at fire station 32 was developed and approved. Each of the shift captains reviewed it with their shift, and then signed the original document to signify that all personnel agreed to comply. All original documents were then put on file with Captain Best in the behavioral health office. It was established that Wally would live at fire station 432, however he remained the property of the behavioral health office. It was established that Captain Best would supervise the program, having authority for all medical and policy decisions. It was established that Wally could only leave the property of fire station 432 with the permission of the station commander and/or Captain Best. It was established that the service life of any station canine would be 7 years at which time an appropriate home for retirement would be determined by the behavioral health office; with certified handlers having first consideration.

Wally's training was completed in approximately 30 days. All of the training requirements were met. Once he completed his training three personnel at fire station 432 were identified as primary handlers. One for each shift. A certification test date was scheduled, and each of the handlers successfully certified with Wally. He went in service at fire station 432 on October 12, 2017.

As our pilot program evolved, we realized that we would have to have an emergency contingent plan for emergent care for Wally if he were to become ill or injured. The behavioral health office researched pet healthcare plans and selected an appropriate policy for emergency care reimbursement. An anonymous donor came forward to provide direct monthly premium payments for the policy.

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA. FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

After Wally went in service Captain Best started to receive a steady flow of requests from other fire stations for Wally to respond to their station following a traumatic call. In addition, there were requests to have “the fire station therapy dog” attend public events. These requests were denied because they were outside the scope of our pilot program. It quickly became apparent that there was a desire and need for a canine that would be available on a daily basis to respond to these requests.

After further discussion with Chief Bowers, Captain Best offered to obtain and train a therapy canine that would work out of the behavioral health office. Captain Best agreed to assume all financial responsibility for the canine with the stipulation that when he retired the canine would retire with him. Captain Best would retain full ownership of the canine thus in keeping with the directive that the program could have no impact on the budget.

Captain Best took delivery of a golden doodle puppy (Belle) on December 28, 2017. The training of Belle started immediately. She was trained and certified to a level to go in service on April 2, 2018. She was fully trained and completed all of her certifications on June 6, 2018. Since going in service, she has had numerous call outs to respond to fire stations for a variety of reasons. She has demonstrated direct therapeutic value for employees in crisis a minimum of four times that was directly witnessed.

Captain Best has received several requests from other stations that would like to have a canine. The first criteria that is discussed is the requirement for 100% of the personnel to agree to have a dog in the station. This requirement is the biggest hurdle, and most stations cannot meet that expectation. If the station can meet that requirement, then the next assessment is whether the station layout is suitable to house a canine. Other considerations are whether there is an appropriate place at the station to exercise the dog outside, and areas for elimination. To date the only other station to meet all of these requirements has been fire station 415. Fire Chief Bowers approved the expansion of the program to station 415. The next hurdle was to find donors to sponsor the costs of the dog, training, and health insurance plan. Also, to identify a canine suitable for our needs. This became a long and arduous process to both find the donors to cover the discounted \$5,000 price tag for the dog and training, and having a dog available to be placed in a fire station. We had to release two trained dogs to other organizations in the process. These canines were ready for placement but the sponsors that had pledged funds could not produce the payments. In the end it took one private citizen donor, and two philanthropic organizations to combine to sponsor the purchase of the canine (Xander) and training for fire station 415. An additional anonymous donor stepped forward to cover the monthly health insurance premium for Xander. Initially, the personnel at fire station 415 agreed to pay for food with their station kitchen fund. However, Captain Reed was able to partner with another local business that donates all of the food for Xander and offers grooming services free. Thus, further reducing the financial impact on the station personnel. Fire station 415 has received donations from county residents specifically to support the canine at fire station 415. A department gift fund account has been established by Captain Reed.

Background

The intention of the program is to return the presence of dogs to the fire stations as a holistic support for the mental and emotional health of the personnel to manage their job-related stress. The intention is for these canines to provide the support for all personnel assigned to the station. Therapy canines are a designation separate and distinctly different than a service canine certification. Therapy canines are trained and certified to provide comfort and care for multiple people and groups. Service dogs are trained and certified to provide care for one specific individual to meet a very particular need. Canines in fire stations have been a traditional symbol of the fire service since the days of the horse drawn apparatus. There is considerable clinical data to support the presence of animals to reduce stress, blood pressure, and the negative effects of traumatic exposure on humans. The utilization of certified therapy canines ensures a level of obedience training and validated performance necessary to safely introduce dogs back into the present-day fire station.

The behavioral health office recognizes that it will be impractical to place a canine in every fire station. As a matter of practicality, not all of our fire stations are designed in a layout that would be a safe or healthy environment for a dog placement. In addition, not all of our employees wish to have a dog at their work locations. With respect to that fact, the behavioral health office does not wish to negatively impact or restrict employee's ability to choose work locations. We do not anticipate the department being able to support more than a total of 5 therapy canines at this time. The program policies are still evolving as we evaluate the efficacy following the most recent placement of Xander at fire station 415. Fire station selection, pre-placement personnel training expectations, implementation of placement process, post-placement canine-training reinforcement, and placement evaluation are all areas of ongoing development as we process the feedback from our personnel that have contact with our dogs.

Prior to any additional canine placements in a fire station the planning cycle outlined above is being reviewed and evaluated to incorporate lessons learned thus far and determine best practices. The focus is on ensuring smooth transition, managing reasonable expectations, and continuing program success.

Performance requirements and expectations

As mentioned previously, there were specific criteria established by Chief Bowers in order to have a dog in the station(s). Below is a list of those requirements, and requirements that have evolved as we evaluate best practices.

- 100% of the personnel assigned to the fire station at the time of the canine placement must agree to have the dog in the station.
- Each Captain in the station will sign a master copy of the station policy to acknowledge that their personnel agree to the above criteria. This requirement has since changed to include each individual assigned to the station will sign the station policy to acknowledge their receipt and understanding of the policy, in addition to agreeing to supporting the dog in the station.
- The approval to expand the program to include any additional canines in additional fire stations will come from the Fire Chief.
- Captain Best will supervise and administer the program.
- The authority to assign a canine, re-assign a canine to another station, or remove a canine from service will rest with Captain Best, with input from the Behavioral Health Coordinator, Caring Angels, the Operations Bureau, and the Health Programs chain of command.
- The canine will remain the property of the behavioral health office.
- The canine would be certified to the therapy canine level.
- Only canines that have been successfully certified to the therapy canine level will be placed in a fire station. In addition to this requirement, an evaluation of the recent placement of Xander Captain Best has established that only canines older than one-year-old be put in service in fire stations.
- The canine would be a breed that does not shed and is hypoallergenic.
- The canine would be trained to return to their crate whenever the station emergency alert system sounds.
- One crate, one training collar, and one training lead will be provided by Caring Angels with the placement of the dog in the station. Any additional crates, collars, toys, leashes, or treats will be the responsibility of the station personnel or an appropriate sponsor.
- Caring Angels will provide lifetime continued training for the canine and personnel at no additional cost.
- There will be, at a minimum, one certified handler on each shift.
- The certified handler on duty will be responsible to ensure that the canines basic needs and safety are met every day. They are not expected to directly provide for each need; however, they will delegate and train other station personnel to assist as needed.
- The canine would be trained not to enter: the kitchen, gym, laundry room, or locker rooms. The canine would be trained to not enter the apparatus bay without being accompanied by a handler.

- The fire station dog would not be removed from the fire station grounds without the permission of the Station Captain and/or Captain Best.
- The canine will always be transported in a crate or appropriate restraint system when in a vehicle.
- The canine will not be transported in an in-service emergency vehicle.
- The canine will not be in or on fire apparatus without being accompanied by a handler.
- The canine will not enter the patient care area of a transport unit.
Appropriate and healthy dog food will be provided by either the station personnel, or an appropriate sponsor.
- No feeding the dog any human food or treats from the kitchen table.
- The canine would not be encouraged to play tugging or chasing games. These activities trigger primal genetic behaviors toward dominance by the canine.
- No rawhide chew treats. (Choking hazard for canine).
- No toys or treats harder or denser than the canine's teeth.
- The dog will wear and display the therapy canine vest when in the public interacting with citizens.
- All personnel are encouraged to attend group continued education dog training classes off-duty with the canine as often as practical to reinforce the base training of the canine.
- Captain Best will maintain a partnership relationship with Caring Angels as a resource for ongoing training and program development best practices.
- The canines will have a service life of 7 years. This is to reduce the chances of having a serving canine pass away at the station.

Program Costs

The initial cost of the canine from a breeder, and the cost of the training to get the canine certified to the therapy canine level is \$5,000.00. This price is significantly discounted from the actual cost of training these canines. The Caring Angels organization is committed to the success of the fire station dog concept and wants to support to best of their ability. This is a onetime cost for each dog. It includes lifetime ongoing training for the canine with the handlers.

Wally

- Cost of canine and training. A complete donation from Caring Angels. ✓ \$0.00
- Cost of dog food per month. Paid by the station kitchen fund. ✓ \$30.00
- Cost of periodic grooming (haircut). Done by station personnel. ✓ \$0.00
- Cost of emergency illness or injury health insurance policy per month. Private donor. ✓ \$35.00

APPENDIX B | FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA. FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Belle

- Cost of canine and training. Captain Best out of pocket less donations. ✓ \$2,000.00
- Cost of dog food per month. ✓ \$30.00
- Cost of full health insurance policy. Wellness and emergency. ✓ \$250.00 deductible ✓ \$60.00
- Cost for grooming per month. ✓ \$40.00

Xander

- Cost of canine and training. Three sponsors. ✓ \$5,000.00
- Cost of dog food per month. Paid by sponsor. ✓ \$0.00
- Cost of full health insurance policy. Wellness and emergency. ✓ \$100.00 deductible ✓ \$72.00
- Paid by a sponsor
- Cost for grooming per month. Provided by a sponsor. ✓ \$0.00

Each of the health insurance policies has a different deductible and 80% coverage for services. These are the most cost-effective healthcare policies that are available based on the research. To this point the station personnel have either paid the difference out of the station fund or received donated services.

Program efficacy

Station dog

The benefit of having Wally in the station was almost immediately evident with the positive change in the atmosphere in the station. This was attributed to Wally being a common focus in the station for all the personnel to cooperate together to meet his needs. By having Wally to watch after he provided them with a sense of purpose inside the station and validated their emotional needs with his affection. He has become a fixture of the station and is popular in the battalion to visit.

Traveling Dog

Belle has been well received in every environment that she has been exposed to since going into service. She is welcomed and popular with the personnel at headquarters. Many request that Captain Best bring her to their section frequently to visit. She has demonstrated her therapeutic value with numerous operations personnel in response to traumatic events/situations. Captain Best has been called out by Battalion Chiefs and the UFOs after hours to respond to fire stations on numerous occasions.

Industry impact

Captain Best has been consulting with fire and police departments all over the country since the inception of this program to assist them with a program within their department. The Snoqualmie Fire Department, near Seattle Washington, recently put a fire station canine in service based on our procedures and Captain Best's collaboration. Departments in Memphis TN and Santa Fe are close to following suit. There is a profound interest in the fire and police community to utilize canines in the workplace.

Appendix C

Veterinarian Information



General K9 Training Tips

Dr. Mark Holmes, DVM

Paws of the Rockies Animal Hospital, Fort Collins, CO

(This information represents the veterinarian above and is not intended as a standard for everyone. IAFC recommends talking with your local veterinarian about the data in this appendix)

Dog obedience is crucial for a happy and healthy pet/owner relationship. Here are some tips and a guide for a positive training experience for you and your pup.

Positive reinforcement is the best tool for training. Positive reinforcement means a desired behavior (like sitting) is made stronger by giving the dog something he wants (like a cookie) when the behavior is performed.

Negative punishment is another good tool for training. Negative punishment sounds terrible, but it means an undesired behavior (like jumping) is weakened by the removal of something the dogs like (like attention from their human).

Reinforce the things you like, remove the reinforcements you don't, and teach an acceptable replacement.

Shaping your dog's attention: rather than asking your dog to pay attention to you, it needs to become your dog's job to pay attention to you when they are with you. This is done easily by building value for paying attention to you.

- Watch your dog and wait to catch him looking at you, once your pup makes eye contact reward him with a treat.
- It may take a while at first but once you've done this several times you will catch your pup looking at you more and more.
- Having your pup's attention on you allows training to go a lot more smoothly. You won't have to worry about distractions when your pup is focused on you.

APPENDIX C | VETERINARIAN INFORMATION

GENERAL K9 TRAINING TIPS

Impulse control

A basic lack of impulse control is at the base of all behavioral problems. Your dog's natural inclination when they want something is to simply go for it, this can lead to poor leash manners and an overall lack of attention on their human. Practice impulse control with these fun games:

- With your dog on a leash, toss out a treat just out of reach. Brace yourself, do not pull your pup back or say anything, just become a post and watch. When your pup stops pulling and looks at you, reward your pup by releasing her to get the treat. Repeat this until your pup looks at you the moment the treat hits the floor.
- Teaching your dog to wait for her food is an excellent way to practice impulse control, it is also a great preventative for resource guarding. Hold your pup's bowl of food up until she sits. While your pup is seated, lower the bowl to the ground, if your pup gets up, raise the bowl again. Continue this until you can lower the bowl while your pup stays sitting. Once your pup looks at you with the bowl on the floor, release your pup with a verbal cue.

Turning your back on bad behaviors

When your pup exhibits a behavior that is not wanted, turn your back on the bad behavior to banish them for good.

- When your pup jumps on you for attention the best way to get them to stop is to actively ignore the behavior, silently turn away from your pup. If you have a large dog or your dog is rough when jumping, try turning around, storming out of the room, and closing the door. By ignoring the jumping behavior and rewarding your pup when they sit or wait patiently for you, your pup will learn what is appropriate and what isn't.
- When your dog barks at you for attention, completely ignore them. Turn your head up and away from your pup with a disgusted look on your face or get up and huff off. If your dog is barking to be let out or in, wait until you get at least 30 seconds of silence before giving into the request and always insist on a sit before you tend to your dog's needs.

Building understanding and value to cues

It can be difficult to tell if your dog knows a verbal cue. If your dog fails to respond to cues it could be a lack of understanding of what is expected or lack of value for the cue.

- Building value: Value must come before the cue. If your dog does not find value in verbal cue, he will not respond to them. If this is the case, shape/capture the response you'd like and reward with lots of high value treats.
- Building understanding: If your dog is not understanding a verbal cue, you must remind him what is expected. That means shaping or capturing the specific behavior and when you get a clear response add the cue just before your dog offers the behavior.

APPENDIX C | VETERINARIAN INFORMATION

GENERAL K9 TRAINING TIPS

Socialization (First 3-5 months)

Socializing your puppy is key to ensuring you'll have a happy, confident, and well-adjusted dog for life. Socializing your puppy will help it become acclimated to all types of sights, sounds, and smells in a positive manner. For example, proper socialization can prevent a dog from being fearful of children, or of riding in a car, and it will help him develop into a well-mannered, happy companion.

The socialization window closes between 3 and 5 months of age, depending on the breed and individual make-up, with easy habituation ending at around 4.5 months of age in the majority of cases. This means that if a puppy does not get sufficient exposure to men with beards before the socialization window closes, the risk of fear responses and aggression directed at men with beards will run higher for that dog as an adult. It can be particularly troublesome because dogs are expert discriminators, and adequate socialization with a wide variety of children and adults is vital.

When socializing your puppy with different people, the single best way to obtain a cushion of confidence from your dog is through hand feeding treats. Rather than simply getting the puppy around young children, have young children hand feed the puppy small, tasty treats with an open palm. Each treat builds up a little more money in the bank for socialization with young children. Another method suitable for dogs who are not food motivated is to have people you are trying to socialize your puppy with engage in the puppy's favorite game.

When you take on a puppy, you assume the role of parent and pack leader, and therefore, during your puppy's early life it is up to you to protect him from bad experiences. This means that you will need to think about the way he is viewing a given situation and, if necessary, modify his experience so he does not become fearful.

Do not act sympathetically if your puppy becomes apprehensive. Showing your concern will cause him to think that there is something to be afraid of. In your attempt to reassure him, you may be inadvertently praising the skittish behavior and your pup will be more likely to continue that behavior in the future instead of becoming a curious and confident dog. In the same regard, do not push your dog beyond his/her limits. If a puppy is frightened by a situation, do not force him forward. Instead, go slow, praise confident behavior (e.g., eye contact, erect posture, curiosity sniffing, etc.), and back off if your dog appears to be overwhelmed. Expose him to as much of a new situation as he can cope with without becoming scared and progress step-by-step from there.

You cannot overdo socialization. The payoff is enormous, especially for your dog's mental and emotional health. Excuses like "reserved with strangers" or "takes a while to warm up to people" or "he's great at home, he must be having a bad day" can be avoided if your dog is socialized properly.

Socialization (First 3-5 months)

The following list is designed to help you get started exposing your puppy to as many situations as possible. This list is not exhaustive.

In most encounters you will be prompting the person to hand feed your pup. When it is an environmental encounter or a young child you will be providing positive reinforcement with treats, praise, or playing with your pup's favorite toy.

People

- Babies
- Toddlers
- Teenagers
- Adults
- Elderly people
- All races
- Crowds
- Disabled people
- Loud, confident people
- Shy, timid people
- Delivery people
- Joggers
- People in Uniform
- People wearing hats
- People with beads
- People wearing glasses
- People wearing helmets
- People wearing hoods

Other Animals

- Dogs/puppies
- Kittens/cats
- Small pets
- Ducks/geese/birds

Environments

- Other houses
- Park
- School
- Country hikes
- Riding in a car
- City walks
- Outdoor restaurant
- Slippery floor
- Party
- Veterinarian office
- Groomer
- Boarding kennel

Other

- Bicycles
- Skateboards
- Roller Blades
- Cars
- Buses
- Trucks
- Heavy Traffic



APPENDIX C | VETERINARIAN INFORMATION

GENERAL K9 TRAINING TIPS

Life Stages: 6 – 16 weeks of age

Vaccinations

Core vaccines:

The best way to manage the dogs and their vaccinations is to have the conversation with your personal veterinarian. There are many of these that should be considered but the veterinarian is the best resource for that information.

Parasite control

Parasite control is another topic of discussion with your veterinarian. This is a vital health issue and must be addressed.

Diet

- Your puppy should eat diets specifically made for puppies.
- Dogs that will grow to be over 50 pounds should be fed diets made for large breed puppies.
- Your puppy will need to be fed a minimum of twice a day depending on his/her age and size.
- Please follow your veterinarian's recommendations specifically for your puppy.
- Additional vitamin supplements are not needed if feeding an AAFCO certified food nor is it recommended.

Behavior

- From birth to 16 weeks your puppy will be very impressionable. Therefore, it is important to socialize your puppy and expose him/her to a variety of people, situations, and environments. Puppies play time and doggy day care are excellent ways to socialize your puppy.
- You should make a habit of handling your puppy's feet, ears, and mouth to make them comfortable with future toenail trims and exams.
- It is recommended to start puppy training classes as soon as possible after their first exam. Normal behaviors your puppy will display include mounting and chewing.
- Provide your puppy with plenty of toys and environmental stimuli.
- Crate-training facilitates house-training by providing your puppy with a place that is their own. Crate-training may also be useful in the future as your pet ages.
- As a general guideline, young puppies can hold their urine about 1 hour longer than their age in months. Puppies normally also have more frequent, softer stools than adult dogs. Puppies should be essentially house-trained by 16 weeks of age.

APPENDIX C | VETERINARIAN INFORMATION

GENERAL K9 TRAINING TIPS

Dental

- At this time, your puppy has all baby teeth, which should start to be replaced by adult teeth after 4 months of age. Now is a great time to start brushing the teeth so your puppy will become familiar with the process.
- Puppies may increase their chewing as the adult teeth are erupting.
- It is not uncommon to see baby teeth in the environment when they fall out.
- Mild bleeding may occur when baby teeth fall out.

Reproduction

- Your puppy's reproductive system is still immature. At this time, mounting is just play or a way of expressing dominance.
- We recommend spaying/neutering small breed dogs between 6-7 months of age and large breed dogs (over 50 pounds) between 6-8 months of age.
- It is common for females to experience puppy vaginitis. If this occurs, you may see mucus strands after urination or a small amount of green mucus on the tip of her vulva. This only needs to be treated if you are seeing signs of a urinary tract infection. Common signs of urinary tract infections include frequent urination, blood in urine, or accidents in house.

Skin

Puppy skin is often dry and flaky until natural oils begin production around 6-8 months of age. Puppies are often itchy due to the dryness. The use of moisturizing shampoos, rinses, or Omega-3 Fatty Acids often help counteract this symptom.

Additional concerns

- Immune System – Your puppy's immune system is considered immature until he/she receives the last set of vaccines at 16+ weeks. Until then, you should avoid exposure to dogs with unknown vaccine history.
- Diarrhea – It is common for puppies to have intermittent diarrhea. This is due to their growing GI tract and dietary indiscretion. Often, diarrhea will resolve on its own.

However, if it is accompanied by lethargy, vomiting, or loss of appetite your puppy should be seen immediately.

- Although regular exercise is important, you should limit it to leashed walks and play.
- Avoid any forced exercise such as taking him/her jogging, hiking, or biking.
- Avoid traumatic jumping off furniture or downstairs to protect forelimb growth plates.
- There are many common household products that can be dangerous to your dog at any age. These include antifreeze, some over the counter and prescription medications, foods such as chocolate or grapes, and some household plants to name a few.

APPENDIX C | VETERINARIAN INFORMATION

GENERAL K9 TRAINING TIPS

Life Stages: 16 weeks – 1 year of age

Vaccinations

Your puppy should be up to date with all recommended vaccines by 4-5 months of age.

Parasite control

- Your puppy should be on monthly heartworm prevention.
- If starting heartworm prevention at 6 months or later, he/she will need to have a blood sample taken for testing prior to starting prevention.

Dental

- At 4 months of age your puppy will start to lose his/her baby teeth and by 6-7 months should have all adult teeth.
- It is common for small breed puppies to have retained deciduous (baby) teeth that will need to be removed while under anesthesia. It is best to do this at the same time as the spay/neuter procedure.
- It is important to start dental care at home as soon as possible. Daily brushing is the most effective but dental rinses and dental chews are also recommended.

Diet

- Large breed puppies (over 50 pounds) should be fed large breed puppy diets.
- Your puppy should remain on puppy food until 8-10 months of age, at this point they can be switched over to an adult diet.
- The switch between diets should be done slowly over a period of 1-2 weeks, to avoid intestinal upset.

Reproduction

- Females will usually have their first heat cycle after 9 months of age.
- Therefore, we recommend spaying/neutering small breed dogs between 4-7 months and large breed dogs (over 50 pounds) between 6-8 months of age.
- Spaying/neutering your puppy will help protect them from life threatening issues only seen in intact animals.

Behavior

- Continue to use “nothing in life is free” for stubborn puppies.
- Your puppy should be house-trained by this time.
- It is important to continue to socialize your puppy and expose him/her to a variety of people, situations, and environments.
- Now that he/she is fully vaccinated it is ok to take him/her to dog parks, pet stores, etc.
- After the initial puppy classes, you can move onto basic obedience classes or more advanced training.

Many dogs experience a regression in appropriate behaviors between 8-12 months of age. Even if your dog has been through obedience training, he/she may act “untrained.” Behaviors such as destructiveness, rebelliousness or challenging authority may be observed.

Additional concerns

- Your puppy’s musculoskeletal system is not fully mature until 1 year of age.
- Although regular exercise is important, you should limit it to leashed walks and play.
- Avoid any forced exercise such as taking him/her jogging, hiking, or biking.
- Continue to not allow traumatic jumping off furniture or downstairs to protect forelimb growth plates.
- Some puppies, especially large breed puppies, may experience Panosteitis, which is like growing pains in children. Signs of Panosteitis may include intermittent limping that tends to change limbs, lethargy, inappetence, and sometimes fever. Treatment usually includes rest, pain medications, and anti-inflammatories.
- As your puppy’s growth rate slows down symptoms will subside.
- Most average-sized dogs are half of their full adult weight at 16 weeks of age. Toy breeds and giant breeds may not necessarily follow this rule.
- There are many common household products that can be dangerous to your dog at any age. These include antifreeze, some over the counter and prescription medications, foods such as chocolate or grapes, and some household plants to name a few.

Appendix D

Animal Assisted Crisis Response Dogs National Standards

This information is provided by HOPE Animal Assisted Crisis Response for the benefit of providing what their standards are for therapy dogs.



Animal Assisted Crisis Response

National Standards

Introduction

The usefulness of canines in times of war and disaster is well-established. Law enforcement the world over uses canines both to patrol and to protect. Customs officials use canines to identify contraband before it enters the country. After 9/11, everyone heard of the heroism of the search and rescue teams in their hunt for survivors. However, there were other canines at 9/11 that few people ever heard about. These canines were not called in to be heroes, but to do what dogs do best: give the unconditional love that has been shown to provide emotional support and stress relief for the responders and survivors.

Many people are familiar with “therapy dog” teams, also known as Animal-Assisted Activities/Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAA/AAT) teams, which visit facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes and schools. The healing benefits of these teams is well documented.

Therapy dog teams were first called in to a disaster site in 1995 by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) after the bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City. In 1998, after the Thurston High School shootings in Springfield, Oregon, therapy dog teams were called in by the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA). Cindy Ehlers and her dog, Bear, were one of the teams to respond to this shooting. When the dogs were present, counselors observed an immediate sense of relaxation and comfort in those experiencing trauma-related stress. The dog’s ability to connect with people experiencing trauma-related stress was the inspiration behind Animal-Assisted Crisis Response (AACR) teams. While working with NOVA personnel, Cindy Ehlers developed a new understanding of the skills and training required of crisis response professionals, and of the specialized training both handlers and dogs would need to serve as truly effective AACR teams.

The first AACR organization, Hope Pets, was founded by Cindy Ehlers in 1999 in order to ensure safe and effective animal-assisted therapy in crisis and disaster situations. The first AACR training workshop was held in July 2000. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Hope Pets was called by the American Red Cross to serve in New York City. Disaster mental health counselors and chaplains present at the Pier 94 Family Assistance Center recognized the AACR team’s ability to engage and relax people in a matter of minutes, providing a sense of safety, comfort, and relief from the overwhelming grief. After watching numerous interactions, a chaplain requested AACR teams for the firefighters at the WTC site.

It was there that an extraordinary miracle occurred. “Their (firefighters) defenses were high.

When the crisis response dogs would come along, they would react and their eyes would light up or they would smile.”² In recognition that AACR dogs are not pets, but rather working dogs, and that the management of AACR teams by a certifying organization is critical to the effective delivery of AACR services, Hope Pets became HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response in November 2001.

Since 2001, the modality of AACR has received recognition and acceptance by emergency responders and other agencies providing disaster relief. AACR services have been requested at the local and national levels. In 2009, crisis response dogs were added to two police and fire departments. The military has recognized the unique ability that dogs have to help alleviate and cope with combat stress. In 2007, two Crisis Response dogs were deployed with a unit to Iraq. As requests for AACR services increase in frequency, and as the number of organizations offering AACR training and certification grows, it is incumbent upon AACR organizations to create AACR National Standards to protect the reputation and regard of AACR as a crisis service.

These AACR National Standards were initiated as a collaborative effort of the two founding AACR organizations: HOPE AACR and National AACR. With almost 200 certified teams and over a decade of combined experience in training and certification, these two organizations have provided support for thousands of individuals and responders. National and state level responses have included Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike, the California wildfires, and the Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University shootings. Local responses have included giving support after events such as the death of a student, teacher, firefighter, or police officer, as well as after house fires and homicides. In addition, teams have worked with Operation Homefront and Operation Purple to provide comfort to soldiers and their families.

Purpose of the AACR National Standards

The purpose of these standards is to give emergency response agencies the information needed to recognize quality AACR teams. In addition, these standards recognize that the support of an AACR organization around certified AACR teams is vital to ensure that safe, services are delivered with the highest possible degree of excellence and professionalism.

Agencies considering which AACR organization to call should look for AACR organizations that embrace these ideals and have achieved the requirements of the AACR National Standards.

By following these standards, AACR teams will have a uniformity of oversight and training and the ability to respond professionally. These standards also address the care and health of the canines, ensuring their safe and humane treatment.

Key Terms

Animal-assisted Crisis Response (AACR)

AACR teams provide comfort, stress relief, emotional support and crisis intervention services for people affected by crisis and disasters in complex, unpredictable environments surrounding traumatic events.

AACR Organization

An organization composed of certified members which supports and manages the delivery of AACR services. These organizations cultivate and maintain mutual aid relationships with other crisis/disaster response agencies.

AACR Team

An AACR team is a canine/handler team with specialized AACR training and certification which provides animal-assisted comfort, stress relief, emotional support and crisis intervention services for people affected by crisis and disaster.

AACR Team Leader

A trained and certified manager who supervises and coordinates the response of up to four canine/handler teams. Typically, the team leader works without a canine.

Incident Command System (ICS)

The ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept developed by the Department of Homeland Security as part of the National Incident Management System. It is a standardized system that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across all functional emergency response disciplines.

Therapy Dog Team

A therapy dog team is a canine/handler team that provides Animal-Assisted Therapy or Activities (AAT/AAA) in predictable environments at facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and libraries.

AACR Workshop

An AACR Workshop is an intense, structured training event designed to encompass the core training requirements as outlined in the AACR National Standards in order to certify AACR teams.³ An introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS) and how it applies to the AACR response group.

The Standards

I. Training

AACR teams must be able to tolerate, adapt and cope with stress and changing environments. The training workshops provided by AACR organizations build the resilience and skills needed by both handler and dog to respond reliably in crisis and disaster situations. Training should be conducted by instructors actively involved in an AACR organization with crisis/disaster experience and knowledge of ICS. Where additional instructor qualifications are needed, they are noted under the appropriate section, outlined below:

The following core curriculum is composed of seven (7) core units. Together, they encompass the minimum standards of training for AACR teams and team leaders.

Core 1 Disaster/Crisis Concepts (2 hour minimum)

This section provides disaster/crisis-related information including:

1. Characteristics and types of crises.
2. Phases of disasters.
3. An introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS) and how it applies to the AACR response group.

Core 2 Crisis Intervention (6 hour minimum)

Instructor to be a mental health professional with education and experience in the field of disaster mental health.

This section should include common reactions to crises (developmental, cognitive, physical, emotional, behavioral, spiritual, and cultural) and are consistent with the protocols in use by other disaster and crisis response organizations. Basic crisis intervention skills should also be covered including:

1. Establishing rapport with individuals coping with crises.
2. Active listening skills.
3. Tips for intervention strategies (do's and don'ts of what to say/do).
3. Elements of various intervention models (CISM, psychological first aid, etc.).

Core 3 Care of the Caregiver (2 hour minimum)

This section covers the impact of crisis work on responders providing services, individual stress management/self-care and group stress management including:

1. Common reactions of responders to crisis work including the concepts of compassion fatigue and secondary trauma.
2. Individual stress management and self-care before, during and following crisis work; group stress management and the debriefing process.
3. Healthcare concerns in crises and disasters.

Core 4 Canine Handling (8 hour minimum)

Instructor must have education and experience in the field of animal behavior utilizing positive reinforcement training methods including experience in behavior assessment and behavior modification.

This section covers a basic understanding and knowledge of canine physical and emotional health, behavior, and body language. Additional knowledge of these components and how they change in crisis/disaster situations is necessary in order to facilitate the humane care of the AACR canine. This section should also contain prevention, management, and implementation skills to change stress-related behaviors including developing the awareness and the ability needed to be proactive and re-direct behaviors if necessary. Training should include the information needed to properly work with and support the AACR canine including:

1. Stress management for canines through recognition, understanding and awareness of the signs of stress; implementation of the skills for preventing and managing it; and the development of healthy mechanisms to cope with stress.
2. Health and nutritional support, hygiene measures and vaccinations for specific types of deployments with increased health risks.
3. Canine behavior encompassing an understanding of canine body language.
4. Handling skills for initial greetings of clients and facilitation of subsequent interactions in order to establish rapport.
5. Safe use of harnesses, booties, leashes, collars, vests, and other equipment.
6. Handling methods that are proven, scientific and research-based. Techniques should include verbal directions spoken in a conversational tone of voice as well as physical cues and signals used as gentle guidance.

Core 5 Team Leader (2 hour minimum)

This section includes the knowledge and skills team leaders need to properly supervise and support AACR teams in the field.

Core 6 Simulated Crisis Exposure (6 hour minimum)

This section includes simulated crisis exposure exercises, specifically role play, simulations and field activities that prepare teams for emotional, unusual, and changing environments.

Core 7 Developing the AACR Canine (concomitant with Core 6)

This section includes practical exercises to help develop the resilience, the acceptance and the skills needed to adapt and cope with stress and the changing environments often encountered when responding to crises or disasters, including:

1. Exposure to different modes of transportation.
2. Conditioning to accept unfamiliar sights, sounds and smells; emergency vehicles and protective gear.
3. Conditioning a wide range of emotional and behavioral responses.
4. Conditioning to accept diverse and high-density populations.
5. Conditioning and training to accept unfamiliar canines, increasing their ability to work and relax in their presence even when in very close proximity.

Additional Training Requirements (to be completed within one year of initial AACR training)

This section includes a list of the minimum required additional training which must be obtained from outside organizations. Documentation from organizations certifying that these courses have been completed with the dates of their completion must be presented to the certifying AACR organization to fulfill these additional requirements. These courses include, but are not limited to:

1. Introduction to the Incident Command System
2. Pet First Aid and CPR
3. Human First Aid and CPR

II. Evaluation

To ensure that teams and team leaders have the knowledge, skills, and aptitude for AACR work, they should be evaluated under simulated crisis environments. The evaluator must be actively involved in an AACR organization, with crisis/disaster experience and knowledge of ICS. Minimum guidelines for evaluators include:

1. Education in the field of animal behavior.
2. Experience as an animal evaluator; ideally, they will also be trained evaluators for their therapy dog organization.

III. Experience

In order to develop teamwork and interaction skills, teams must be active participants in an animal therapy organization to apply for certification. After AACR certification, a team's, or team leader's experience in complex environments, including participation in prior assignments, crisis response drills and training, will influence their future assignments when responding to crisis/disaster situations.

IV. Certification

Certification as a working AACR team by an established AACR organization indicates that a team has the experience, education, training, and aptitude for AACR work and has met the basic requirements outlined in this document. Organizations that provide AACR certification ensure that their teams work safely and effectively in the environments for which they are certified according to their level of skills and experience. Additionally, these organizations will ensure that canine health requirements are met.

Teams must have a minimum of twelve (12) visits over a period of twelve (12) months with an animal therapy organization that has a formal evaluation process before consideration for AACR certification. The following age requirements must be met before consideration for AACR certification:

1. Handlers must be at least 18 years old.
2. Canines must be at least 1.5 years old.

Re-certification requirements include continuing education and participation in training, drills, and deployments. Teams must maintain active participation with an animal therapy organization to develop and retain interaction skills and provide documentation to their certifying AACR organization. Canine health records must be updated and provided to the certifying organization annually to ensure that the canine health requirements are met.

V. Standards of Conduct

While providing services, AACR teams are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Standards for providing services should be written and available to the agency requesting AACR support.

1. **Advocate for their animal at all times including:**
 - A. Keeping their animal free from abuse, discomfort, and distress.
 - B. Providing the animal with regular breaks and sufficient off-duty time.
 - C. Recognizing signs of stress and providing an acceptable outlet. Providing proper healthcare and grooming.

2. Practice proper self-care and stress management techniques.
3. Never discriminate while providing services to any individual or population.
4. Protect the privacy of those served and maintain confidentiality.
5. Treat others with respect and courtesy.
6. Never self-deploy.
7. Never serve outside the scope of their certification/training/assignment.
8. Never serve while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
9. Display AACR identification at all times and provide documentation upon request.
10. Refer individuals to other service providers for additional assistance when indicated.
11. Use canine handling methods as outlined in Core 4, Handler Training.
12. Clean up after their canines.
13. Conduct themselves in a cooperative manner and follow the Incident Command System.
14. Conduct themselves in a collaborative manner when working with other AACR organizations in order to best represent AACR and serve individuals in crisis.

AACR Canines should:

1. Respond reliably to handler commands.
2. Demonstrate an ability to perform tasks when requested.
3. Be able to turn their attention to their handler during distractions and allow the handler to redirect them when necessary.
4. Display healthy coping behaviors during stressful situations.
5. Display friendly behavior at all times.

VI. AACR Organizations

An AACR organization must have a defined and consistent management structure with cohesive policies and processes that assure everyone in the organization behaves safely, competently, legally, and ethically.

AACR organizations should:

1. Have an administrative structure, such as a Board of Directors, that handles fiscal, policy and other administrative matters. Standards in the area of administrative structure include bylaws on file with the state of incorporation and a conflict-of-interest policy.
2. Have operational policies and procedures that are written, maintained and upheld.

APPENDIX D | ANIMAL ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

Standards in the area of policy include a photography policy and an ethics policy.

Standards in the area of procedures include construction of appropriate shift schedules as well as reporting and feedback mechanisms to ensure that any issues which may arise while providing services will be addressed. AACR organizations will also have mechanisms to ensure that members comply with AACR Standards and organizational policies and procedures.

3. Have a clearly defined operational structure when providing services that align with the Incident Command System.
4. 4. Maintain liability insurance coverage for the organization and its members to cover operations and training activities at a minimum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) per incident.

For more information about the AACR National Standards, please contact:

National AACR (www.animalassistedcrisisresponse.org)

HOPE AACR (www.hopeaacr.org)

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