

Canine Training and Certification Program

Statutory Requirement

§ 2172. Canine training standards for police officers.

(a) Establishment.--The commission, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania State Police and municipal police department canine units or officers, shall establish police officer canine training and certification standards, including all of the following:

- (1) Standards for initial certifications.
- (2) Standards for maintenance certifications.
- (3) Record-keeping policies and procedures for police department canine units or officers.

(b) Updates.--The commission shall review and update the standards under subsection (a) as the commission deems necessary and at least every two years.

(c) Notice.--The commission shall transmit notice of the standards established and updated under this section to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

Training and Certification Standards

1. Basic Training

- A. Prior to conducting police operations, a police canine unit must complete a basic training program that includes instruction in basic working dog skills (temperament, obedience, apprehension, etc), applicable specialty skills (patrol, scent, etc), and team training with the assigned handler.
- B. Following completion of basic training, the police canine unit must be evaluated and approved by a police canine trainer operating with the approval of one of the following organizations:

- i. American Mantrailing Police Working Dog Association
- ii. American Police Canine Association
- iii. National Narcotic Detector Dog Association
- iv. National Police Canine Association
- v. National Tactical Police Dog Association
- vi. North American Police Working Dog Association
- vii. Penn Vet Working Dog Center
- viii. Pennsylvania State Police
- ix. United States Customs and Border Protection
- x. United States Police Canine Association
- xi. United Police and Corrections K-9 Association
- xii. Transportation Security Administration

2. Maintenance Training and Evaluation

- A. Every police canine unit shall accomplish 16 hours of monthly maintenance training that includes review of basic skills, specialty skills, and use of force decision-making by the handler.
 - i. Any police canine unit that is unable to complete monthly training shall document the reasons and will be required to make up the missed training at the next available opportunity.
 - ii. Any police canine unit that fails to accomplish monthly training for two consecutive months will be required to be evaluated in accordance with 2.B before being permitted to conduct police operations.
- B. At least once per calendar year, each police canine unit must be evaluated and approved by a police canine trainer as specified in 1.A.
- C. Any police canine unit that fails an evaluation may continue to conduct police operations for a period not to exceed 60 days, during which the canine unit must be re-evaluated and approved.
- D. Any police canine unit not meeting evaluation and approval standards within 60 days will be removed from service until the police canine unit is successfully evaluated and approved.

3. Records and Documentation

- A. Every police department employing a police canine unit shall maintain documentation of all basic and maintenance training for the duration of the police canine unit's service and for at least five years following the end of the police canine unit's service with the department.
- B. Both initial and annual evaluations will be documented on a form promulgated by MPOETC.
- C. All evaluations, whether successful or unsuccessful, shall be maintained for the duration of the police canine unit's service and for at least five years following the end of the police canine unit's service with the department.