Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services

GENERAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER 630.04

Accelerant Detection Canine

OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

Issue Date: **December 19, 2019**
Revision Date: **N/A**

APPLICABILITY

All career, volunteer, and protective service contingent personnel

POLICY

The Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (Department) will utilize Accelerant Detection Canines for the detection of accelerant materials and the recovery of evidence related to fire investigations.

DEFINITIONS

- **Accelerant Detection Canine (K-9; Canine)** – A certified Canine for the purpose of assisting in the examination of a fire scene, area, item, person(s) for the presence of an accelerant.

- **Accelerant Detection Canine Team** – A Handler and an assigned Canine that work as a team to perform fire investigation functions.

- **Handler** – A member of the Fire Investigations Division who has been specifically trained in the care, handling and training of a Canine for various fire investigation functions.

- **In-Service Training** – Training conducted in conjunction with the certifying agency guidelines to maintain skills that must be performed during re-certification.

- **Canine Sitter** – A caregiver, who may or may not be a trained Handler, who assists the primary Handler with his or her Canine duties.

- **Canine Commander** – In most cases, the Captain assigned to the Fire Investigation Division.

PROCEDURES

GENERAL:

- The service life of the Accelerant Detection Canine team is typically at a minimum five years. That time may be extended based on:

- The Department's commitment to the program; and
- The health of the canine.

- The Canine Team will be under the direct supervision of the Canine Commander.
- When the Canine Team is off duty, the team shall be called in as needed. If the Canine Team is not available due to leave or other circumstances, the lead investigator should request an Accelerant Detection Canine from another jurisdiction.
- The Canine Commander shall:
  - Be familiar with policies and requirements for the Canine Team;
  - Ensure the Handler, Canine, and vehicles are all operating efficiently and effectively;
  - Ensure that training needs and requirements are met and that all records and reports are current and properly completed;
  - Arrange for regular inspections of the kennel, equipment, and vehicle of the Canine Team to ensure that they are properly maintained; and
  - Ensure that a good working relationship is maintained between the Canine Team, other Division members and Local, State, and Federal partners.

- When a request for the response of a Canine Team is received, the request will be forwarded to the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), 911 Center, for Computer Automated Dispatch (CAD) entry.
- When the request for the response of the Canine Team is received for an out of jurisdiction response, the Handler shall notify his/her supervisor of their response out of jurisdiction.

TRAINING:

- A training authority certifies each Canine Team in accelerant detection. The team is required to be re-certified annually by the designated certifying authority. The Canine Commander will ensure that the Canine Team maintains annual certification.
  - If for some reason a Canine Team does not re-certify annually, the team will be placed out of service at the expiration date of their certification and the Canine Commander along with that certifying agency will determine the appropriate steps for that Canine Team should this occur within the first five years of certification.

- Accelerant Detection Canines trained under the food reward training program will remain under that training method for the duration of their working life. The Canine Commander and the Handler will ensure that the Canine's training is consistent with the food reward training method.
- The Canine Team shall train seven days a week.
  - Handlers will be permitted a minimum of two hours per day for training and routine care during their normal workweek, pending any exigent circumstances.
  - Handlers will be allocated two hours per day for training during their normally scheduled day off.
  - Handlers are required to complete daily training reports to document all training completed with the Canine.

- The Canine Team shall attend monthly training with the accelerant detection Canine Teams in Maryland and the District of Columbia (DC). If the Canine Handler is unable to make training, it must be approved by the Canine Commander.

CANINE VEHICLE:

- Vehicles issued to a Canine Team are specially equipped with a cage and temperature alarm for the safety of the Canine. The temperature alarm shall be activated whenever a Canine Team is on-duty and/or utilizing the issued vehicle. All safety equipment will be checked weekly by the Handler. Periodic inspection will be completed by a qualified technician to ensure the safety of the Canines.
- Any time the Canine Team is on-duty, and utilizing the issued vehicle, the Canine shall be confined to the specially equipped cage within the vehicle.
- During Preventative Maintenance (PM) of the primary Canine vehicle, another Canine vehicle shall be available for use by the Canine Team or the PM shall be rescheduled for when there is a suitable vehicle with the safety Canine system available for use by the Canine Team.
  - Under special circumstances (i.e., Canine vehicle repairs or out of area assignments), it may become necessary to transport the Canine in a vehicle not equipped with a cage. The Handler shall make every effort to protect the safety of the Canine while being transported during these circumstances.

- If operations require the Canine to be left unattended in the vehicle and the temperature in the vehicle could be expected to rise above 80 degrees or drop below 32 degrees, the following procedures shall be followed:
  - The vehicle shall be parked in a safe and proper location. When available, the vehicle should be parked in a shaded location where it can be viewed by the Handler at all times. The vehicle shall not be left unattended for a period longer than necessary;
  - The transmission shall be placed in park with use of the emergency brake;
  - The engine shall be allowed to run and the vehicle's climate control set to an appropriate temperature;
  - Vehicle temperature alarm sensors and Canine vehicle parking procedures shall not substitute for diligent attention to the ambient temperature by the Canine Handler; and
  - The alarm system shall be checked regularly to ensure that the system is functioning properly. If the alarm system is not functioning properly, the vehicle is rendered unsuitable for Canine transport.

EXAMINATIONS:

- Examinations may include, but are not limited to: buildings, motor vehicles, fields or open areas, parking lots, luggage, packages, airplanes, vessels or lockers.
- The Handler will determine when, and if, the conditions at the scene warrant the use of the Canine. This decision will be made only by the Handler regardless of the rank of the Handler.
- Canine Teams will not conduct an examination under any of the following conditions:
  - The Canine Team does not have the authority to be there (i.e. Exigent circumstances or a search warrant has not been obtained).

- Hazardous materials that would pose a serious or life-threatening hazard to the Canine Team are present.
- A wanted, dangerous, armed, or barricaded subject(s) is present within the area to be examined.
- The location would pose unnecessary risk of injury or death to either the Canine or the Handler.

- Building Examination
  - Prior to conducting an examination, the Handler is responsible for verifying that scene conditions are of minimal risk to the Canine. The Handler will take control of the scene, if necessary, with the assistance of the fire department or other designated law enforcement officers. The Handler will determine the number of persons who will enter the building while the Canine is examining the scene.
  - Depending on the conditions, the Handler may release the Canine off leash to conduct a controlled examination. The Handler shall maintain visual contact with the Canine. Any positive alerts indicated by the Canine during the building examination will be marked at the direction of the Handler.

- Open Area Examinations
  - Based on the circumstances, the Handler will determine when an open area examination is to be used. Depending on the conditions, the Handler may release the Canine off leash to conduct a controlled examination. The Handler shall maintain visual contact with the Canine. Any positive alerts indicated by the Canine during the open area examination will be marked at the direction of the Handler.

- Vehicle Examinations
  - Prior to conducting an examination, the Handler is responsible for verifying that scene conditions are of minimal risk to the Canine. The Handler will take control of the scene, if necessary, with the assistance of fire department personnel or other designated law enforcement officers. The Handler will determine the manner in which the examination will be conducted. Any positive alerts indicated by the Canine will be marked at the direction of the Handler.

- Person/Group/Crowd Examinations
  - In some instances, a Canine Team may be effective in examining people in small groups, or crowds. In these situations, respect for public apprehension and fear of a Canine may require that exposure with citizens be limited. The Handler shall consider the following guidelines:
    - Is there adequate fire or other designated law enforcement personnel available to assist in effectively controlling the crowd?
    - Is the area such that the Handler has adequate working space to properly control the Canine during the examination?

        - Is there an immediate threat to life or property that would be mitigated by use of the Canine?

    - During small group and crowd examinations, the Canine will be on a short leash and under the Handler's control at all times. The Handler will identify any positive alerts indicated by the Canine. If at any time during an examination the Canine exhibits any hostile reaction to an individual or group of individuals, the Handler shall immediately terminate the examination and remove the Canine from the area.

HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES:

The routine care, feeding, grooming, cleanliness, training and maintenance of the Canine will be the sole responsibility of the Canine Handler. All Canine records, including weight and medical history records, will be kept current by the Canine Handler and/or veterinarian.

- The Canine will be groomed, inspected and worked daily.
- The Canine's kennel shall be cleaned and maintained in a sanitary condition.
- Canine food, supplies and equipment are to be purchased by the Canine Handler using the issued PDQ card.
- Service of a licensed veterinarian shall be obtained by the Canine Handler with approval from the Canine Commander.
- In an emergency situation, the Canine Handler shall ensure that the Canine receives immediate medical attention from a licensed veterinarian and the Canine Commander shall be notified immediately.
- The Handler will treat any minor illness or injury to the Canine immediately. If further treatment is needed, the Handler will ensure that care is obtained, as soon as possible, from a licensed veterinarian.
- The Canine Handler will be responsible for the administration of any medication as prescribed by the veterinarian.
- A physical examination should be conducted by a licensed veterinarian annually. The Handler is responsible for maintaining current vaccination records.
- The Canine shall be licensed in accordance with all local and state laws. The Handler is responsible for ensuring that this licensing remains current.
- Canine Handlers will be responsible for the care and upkeep of all equipment issued to them for training and maintenance of the Canine.
- Canine vehicles are to be maintained in good operating order. The interior will be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Any damage to upholstery shall be reported to the Canine Commander and repaired once authorized.
- Canine Handlers will be responsible to obtain all training aids and will ensure that these aids are securely stored.
- The Canine will be allowed to be with the Handler at all times to include, but not limited to: meetings, training, special events, ceremonies, etc.

REPORTS/RECORDS:
The documentation of all activities and performances of the Canine Team is essential. The following reports shall be completed as required:

- A log report of each actual examination conducted;
- A daily training log of Canine activity; and
- A supplemental Canine report will be completed for each investigation when the Canine is utilized as support.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ACCELERANT DETECTION CANINE PROGRAM:

Control of Canines

The Canine Handler is primarily responsible for the care, handling and actions of the Canine. The following are minimum guidelines for the Handler to follow in order to maintain control of the Canine:

- Handlers shall take every precaution to ensure that Canines are not provoked, teased, or otherwise abused;
- When it is necessary to relieve the Canines, Handlers will take the Canine to a proper area and maintain control;
- Handlers shall not leave Canines unattended in offices, unless the Canine is secured in a crate;
- Handlers shall never leave Canines chained in any manner that would permit injury to the Canine or any individual; and
- The Handler is no longer required to exercise immediate control over the Canine's actions once the Canine is returned to the kennel or another designated secure place.

Familiarization

The Accelerant Detection Canine has been selected and trained by experts. Under most circumstances, Canines are stable and predictable in the office environment. The Canine Team will become a common sight throughout the office areas.

The following information should be provided as a guideline for interaction with the Canine and when observing the activities of the Canine Team:

- A Canine that is secured should not be approached;
- Do not run towards or away from the Canine Team;
- Unless the Handler advises otherwise, do not attempt to feed or pet the Canine;
- Do not open a vehicle door if the Canine is inside;
- Do not give the Canine commands; and
- Do not crowd, bend over, tease or try to confine (hug) the Canine.

Formal Canine Demonstrations

- Upon request, the Canine Team may demonstrate its skills for school groups, service clubs, government agencies, and other similar groups.
- Requests for formal demonstrations shall be documented and sent to the Canine Commander.
- Canine requests by local agencies shall take precedence over requests for educational demonstrations.

- Canine Handler demonstrations are designed to exhibit the best aspects of the Canine Team. The following are guidelines for Canine demonstrations:
    - The Handler shall be dressed in his or her field uniform and present a professional appearance;
    - The Canine shall be leashed at all times, except when the demonstration exercise calls for the Canine to be off-leash;
    - As part of the demonstration, the Canine may be walked through the group on-leash;
    - If the Handler deems the situation appropriate, he or she may allow individuals to pet the Canine. The Handler will give instructions to the group on where and how to pet the Canine;
    - Items used for exhibits at Canine demonstrations may include such items as leashes, collars, medical supplies, training tools, food etc.;
    - Examination exercises should be on-leash and short in duration. Examinations should be demonstrated only when the conditions promote a successful exercise free of any conditions that would be harmful to the Canine; and,
    - The Canine Handler must strictly limit public participation in any demonstration.

Canine Bite Guidelines

Should an accidental Canine bite occur to a civilian or Department member during on or off-duty hours, the following procedures shall be followed:

- The Handler shall immediately secure the Canine and then ensure that first aid is administered. If necessary, the Handler will contact EMS, or arrange transportation to a medical facility.
    - Responses out of county shall result in the local fire department providing EMS and arranging for transport, if needed.

- The Handler shall make no statement regarding liability or fault.
- The Handler shall notify the Canine Commander, Howard County Police Department (HCPD), and the Safety officer to respond to the incident location, if possible.
- The Handler shall not sign any paperwork that will hold the agency responsible for payment of hospital charges.
- The Handler involved shall complete a memorandum, DF2 form, and the Accelerant Detection Canine Bite Report within 24 hours and forward via chain of command to Office of the Fire Marshal Bureau Chief. Information in the memorandum shall include a description of the events, witness statements, photographs of the injuries and place of occurrence.
    - Within 24 hours, the Accelerant Detection Canine Bite Report shall be sent to the Howard County Health Department, Bureau of Environmental Health Community Hygiene Program.

- If a Department member is bitten, first aid shall be administered. If necessary, EMS will be contacted, and the member transported to the hospital. The safety officer shall be notified, a memorandum documenting the incident, DF2 form, and the Accelerant Detection Canine Bite Report shall be completed, along with a First Report of Injury form will be completed by a supervisor and submitted within 24hours.

Incapacitated K-9 Handler and/or K9

- In any event where a Canine and/or a Canine Handler is injured, the Canine commander will be notified immediately.
- In the event of an accident or injury that renders a Canine Handler incapable of controlling the Canine, any available Handler from within or outside of the Department will be summoned to take charge of the Canine.
- In the absence of an available Canine Handler, an Department member or designated Canine Sitter who is capable of controlling the Canine will be summoned to take charge of the Canine.

Canine Retirement

- Requests to retire a Department Canine shall be routed from the Handler via the chain of command to the Canine commander.
- The Canine commander will confirm with the Canine certifying organization(s) that the Canine is eligible for retirement.
- Upon confirmation of eligibility to retire, the Canine commander will present the request to the Office of the Fire Marshal Bureau Chief for consideration.
- If retirement of the Canine is authorized, the Canine Handler will be offered the first opportunity to retain the Canine for his or her natural life.
- If the Handler retains the Canine, a Canine Release Agreement shall be signed by the Handler and the Fire Chief. All benefits including veterinary services, food and other related care become the responsibility of the Handler upon retirement and adoption of the retired Canine.

Canine Death

- Once the death of an agency Canine is apparent, the Canine commander will contact the Canine Handler for initial support and assistance.
- If it is determined that the Canine meets the line of duty death criteria, an agency memorial service for the Canine may be arranged upon approval from the Fire Chief.
- Any specific wishes or requests from the Canine Handler shall be taken into consideration when planning memorial recognition.

REFERENCES

- None

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES

New General Order

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Dog Bites and DF-2 Bacterium Report
- Attachment B: Accelerant Detection Canine Bite Report
- Attachment C: Post-bite documentation

APPROVED

Christine Uhlhorn, Fire EMS Chief
Office of the Fire Chief

Author:

Sean Alliger, Assistant Chief
Office of the Fire Marshal

Attachment A

DATE: _____

INC#: _____

SUBJECT: Dog Bites and DF-2 Bacterium

If you have been bitten by a Howard County Accelerant Detection K-9, I would like to inform you of the following:

1. A person who has had his or her spleen removed is at risk of serious infection, possibly life-threatening, from the DF-2 bacterium.

2. The DF-2 bacterium is carried in the mouths of 1 out of every 5 healthy dogs. People without spleens have fewer natural defenses against bacterial infections such as DF-2.

3. If you have had your spleen removed, we suggest you discuss this risk with your doctor.

_____ _____

Name of Person Bitten (Print) Date

_____

Signature of Person Bitten

_____ _____

Name/ID of Handler (Print) Date

_____

Signature of Handler

_____ _____

Witness Name (Print) Date

_____

Witness Signature

Attachment B

Accelerant Detection Canine Bite Report

DATE OF INCIDENT	TIME OF INCIDENT	INC NUMBER	
NAME		DATE OF BIRTH	
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
PHONE	PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME (IF MINOR)		
LOCATION OF BITE (ON BODY)			
DOG INFORMATION			
NAME	PREDOMINANT BREED	CERTIFICATION NUMBER	

I hereby agree to report any dog bite incidents within 24 hours and monitor the accelerant detection Canine assigned to me for a period of 10 days after the date of the bite. At the end of the 10-day period, I will report a healthy dog's status to the Health Department. If the Canine begins exhibiting strange behavior, becomes ill, or dies, the Health Department will be notified immediately by phone at 410-313-1773.

HANDLER SIGNATURE	ID NUMBER	DATE
SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE	ID NUMBER	DATE

HOWARD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Bureau of Environmental Health Community
Hygiene Program

8930 Stanford Blvd, Columbia, Maryland 21045

Phone: 410-313-1773 Fax: 410-313-2648

Attachment C

MARYLAND REPORT OF HUMAN POST-EXPOSURE RABIES PROPHYLAXIS

Completed By Local Health Jurisdiction or Attending Health Care Provider

JURISDICTION: **COMPLETED BY:** **DATE:**

PATIENT IDENTIFICATION

Patient name _____ **Phone** (____) _____ - _____
(Last) (First) (M.I.)

Address _____
Number and Street (Not P.O. Box Number) City County Zip Code

Date of birth _____ **Sex** ❑Male ❑Female ❑Unknown **Is patient Hispanic or Latino?** ❑Yes ❑No

Race Select one or more. If multiracial, select all that apply ❑American Indian or Alaskan Native ❑Asian ❑Black or African American ❑Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ❑White

EXPOSURE INFORMATION

Address of exposure _____
Number and Street (Not P.O. Box Number) City County Zip Code

Date of exposure: (MM/DD/YY) _____ **Time** ❑Dawn ❑Daylight ❑Dusk ❑Dark ❑Unknown

Ownership of rabid/suspect animal ❑Owned ❑Not Owned-Feral Cat Colony ❑Not Owned-Other _____ ❑Unknown

Species (rabid/suspect animal) ❑Bat ❑Cat ❑Cow ❑Dog ❑Ferret ❑Fox ❑Goat ❑Groundhog/Woodchuck
❑Horse/Pony ❑Monkey (Specify Species) _____ ❑Rabbit ❑Raccoon
❑Skunk ❑Sheep ❑Squirrel ❑Other : ❑Unknown

DISPOSITION OF ANIMAL

Was animal tested? ❑Yes **Lab accession #** _____ ❑No ❑Unknown

Rabies test result ❑Positive ❑Negative ❑Unsatisfactory ❑Unknown

10 day quarantine? Date started (MM/DD/YY) _____ Date completed (MM/DD/YY) _____

If quarantine was not completed, explain why _____

Was the animal vaccinated? ❑Yes **Date of expiration** ❑No ❑Unknown

ANATOMICAL SITE OF EXPOSURE TO RABID/SUSPECT ANIMAL (Check all that apply)

❑Head / Neck ❑Arm / Hand ❑Leg / Foot ❑Torso (Trunk) ❑Unknown

TYPE OF EXPOSURE TO RABID/SUSPECT ANIMAL (Check all that apply)

❑Single bite ❑Saliva in eye, nose, or mouth ❑ Saliva contaminating open wound
❑Multiple bites ❑Skinning / Dressing animal ❑Touching / Petting / Treating animal
❑Scratch ❑Bat in room ❑Other:

CIRCUMSTANCES OF EXPOSURE (Check all that apply)

❑Patient approached animal ❑ Animal approached patient ❑Petting / Touching / Playing / Picking up
❑Feeding / Taking food away from animal ❑Skinning / Dressing animal carcass ❑Eating the rabid / suspect animal
❑Treating / Nursing / Examining animal ❑Breaking up fight between animals ❑Unprovoked attack by animal
❑Unknown ❑Other (Explain)

PRE AND POST-EXPOSURE RABIES PROPHYLAXIS

Was patient pre-immunized against rabies? ❑Yes **Date series completed** _____ ❑No ❑Unknown

Type of post-exposure prophylaxis given ❑Complete – HRIG & 4 vaccine doses ❑Incomplete: # of doses given _____
❑Booster – 2 vaccine doses ❑Unknown ❑Not given ❑Other: _____

Reason for not completing PEP ❑Patient refused ❑Animal negative ❑Other: _____ ❑Unknown

Date series started (MM/DD/YY) **Date series completed/stopped** (MM/DD/YY)

COMMENTS

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration, Center for Zoonotic and Vector-borne Diseases,
201 West Preston Street, Baltimore, MD 21201 Phone: (410) 767-5649, Fax: (410) 383-2420
DHMH #4206 Revised (12/10)