



Police Dog Unit Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1154/2025)

Abstract

This policy details the functions and services provided by the Joint Surrey and Sussex Police Dog Unit. It includes the process to be followed when dealing with a dog incident as defined by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy details the functions and services provided by the Joint Surrey and Sussex Police Dog Unit (PDU). It includes the process to be followed when dealing with a dog incident as defined by the Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA) 1991 and the action that will be taken following a police dog bite incident.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy, associated procedures and appendices cover the following:

- The services provided by the PDU.
- Dog requests for both planned and spontaneous dog incidents.
- Dealing with dangerous dogs.
- Dealing with dog attacks on assistance dogs including in private premises.
- Police response to dealing with a police dog bite incident.
- Veterinary and kennelling costs associated with the seizure of dogs by police.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Surrey Police and Sussex Police (hereafter referred to as the Forces) acknowledge that the use of police dogs is a key part of everyday policing activity and provides valuable assistance in the maintenance of law and order and keeping communities safe. In addition, the Forces recognise that incidents of dangerous dog activity are increasing and will ensure any response is reasonable, proportionate and within the legislation provided by the DDA 1991.

Procedure

1. General

1.1 The PDU provide a valuable resource to policing activity by providing general purpose and specially trained dogs to assist police in the following areas:

General Purpose Dogs (GPD)

- Tracking - At the scene of a crime, the dogs will track and follow the scent of a person / persons having made off from the scene.
- Search - The dogs will search buildings and open countryside for suspects, stolen or discarded property, or missing or vulnerable persons.
- Chase and Detain - The dogs will pursue any suspects fleeing, or attempting to flee from a crime scene or police custody.
- Public Order - The dogs are trained to assist public order units with crowd control.
- Firearms Incidents - Some of our GPD have been trained to assist in incidents involving firearms (Firearms Support Dogs).

Specialist Search Dogs (SSD)

- Drugs, Cash and Weapon Recovery - These dogs search buildings, outside areas and vehicles and are capable of detecting both large and small amounts of controlled substances. In normal circumstances the drugs dogs are deployed after any physical searching. Despite the best quality of searching, it has been proven that the search dog is capable of quickly detecting the most well concealed of drug hides.
- Passive Drugs Dogs - These dogs will screen people for drugs and can be used across Surrey and Sussex.
- Explosive Detection - The dogs are deployed across Surrey and Sussex providing the capability of detecting a number of explosive substances. These dedicated dogs are an important tool used in the defensive searching of public military events and political events. The dogs are also available across Surrey and Sussex where spontaneous bomb threats dictate that a building / venue will be evacuated.
- Victim Recovery (VR) - Our VR dogs are licensed to detect human remains, blood and all body parts in any form of decomposition. This can be for either victims of crime or deceased missing persons. The handlers are trained to identify and recognise body deposition sites and graves. There are currently 4 dogs trained. In addition, 2 VR dogs are trained as Drowned VR dogs – they work with the Specialist Search Unit (SSU) to detect bodies in water.
- Digital Detection Dogs - They are trained to locate large / small hard drive, key fobs, USBs - broken down / complete, novelty USBs, SD cards, mini sim cards, Micro SD cards, Digital Cameras including Go Pro, mobile phones, covert tracking devices and Crypto Currency Wallets.

2. Police Dog Unit (PDU) Information

2.1 The PDU are based in the following areas:

- Gatwick.
- East Sussex.
- West Sussex.
- Brighton and Hove Division.
- Surrey Northern.
- Surrey Eastern.
- Surrey Western.

3. Redacted section

4. How to Request PDU Assistance (pre-planned and spontaneous incidents)

4.1 For any dog requirements (including explosives) contact the on-duty dog sergeant who can cover requests for both Forces. Alternatively contact Force Control Room (FCR) (Surrey) / Force Contact, Command and Control Department (FCCCD) (Sussex) who will be able to advise who is on duty and provide contact details.

5. Redacted section

Team: Operations Command