

COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU

NOTICE
1.15

June 28, 2024

TO: All Concerned Department Personnel

FROM: Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau

SUBJECT: POLICE OFFICER III + 3 POLICE SERVICE DOG HANDLER
SELECTION PROCESS – REVISED

This Notice is intended to establish a selection process for the Metropolitan Division (Metro) Police Officer III + 3 Police Service Dog (K-9) Handler position. Metropolitan Division has determined the criteria and an evaluation period to select Department personnel for a position within K-9 Platoon.

The following outline is a summary of the application process:

DEPARTMENT-WIDE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Open to any current Police Officer III+1, Police Officer III, or Police Officer II who is on the current Police Officer III Eligibility List;
- The candidate must have a minimum of four years of experience;
 - Three of which must be in an assignment which qualifies as field experience defined in the Personnel and Training Bureau Notice, dated February 7, 2020, Police Officer III Eligibility Requirements.
- Submission of Transfer Applicant Data Sheet Form 15.88.00 signed by the employee, and their two most recent Standards-Based Assessment Reports;
- Submission of their most current Training Evaluation and Management System (TEAMS) Report for Promotion, Paygrade Advancement;
- Submission of a current Firearm Bonus Course with a qualification score of 340 or higher; and,
- Candidates must be CERTIFIED and ACTIVE in the Patrol Rifle Cadre or have passed Metropolitan Division's Basic Metro School within one year of application submission.

Candidates meeting the above qualifications will be eligible to participate in the K-9 Platoon Handler Selection Process.

K-9 PLATOON HANDLER SELECTION PROCESS

PHYSICAL FITNESS QUALIFICATION

- Candidates who do not have a current qualifying Physical Fitness Qualification (PFQ) score within one year of application, must pass the PFQ;
- Candidates taking the PFQ will not be given a re-test if they do not pass the PFQ the first time; and,
- There will be no make-up test dates.
 - Minimum PFQ scores:
 - 1.5 mile run under 13.5 minutes;
 - 30 push-ups;
 - 40 sit-ups; and,
 - 0 pull-ups.
 - All candidates must attempt pull-ups

TACTICAL SKILLS TESTING

- All Tactical Skills Testing phases will be completed on a single day;
- There will be no make-up test dates;
- Each phase will have a cadre of facilitators/evaluators including a K-9 Platoon Supervisor;
- The K-9 Platoon Supervisor will have final discretion as to the evaluation/scoring of each phase; and,
- Candidates that receive more than one failing score during ANY portion of the Tactical Skills Testing phases, and/or are disqualified for reasons noted in the corresponding phase, will be removed from the selection process.

Obstacle Course

- Completion of the K-9 Obstacle Course at the Elysian Park Police Academy (Pass/Fail)

Firearms Course

- Candidates will be tested on both pistol and rifle weapon systems;
- Both courses will be timed and administered by the K-9 Firearms Cadre;
- Minimum of 70 percent marksmanship score on each weapon system;

NOTE: Any unsafe movement that results in a major safety violation (i.e. shooting out of sequence, weapons manipulation, stepping into another officer's field of fire, covering another officer or instructor with a weapon system, unintentional discharge of a weapon system, and/or violations of the Basic Firearms Safety Rules) will result in disqualification.

Force Options Simulator

- The candidate will be required to complete a series of scenarios as presented on the Force Options Simulator (FOS);
- At the conclusion of each exercise, the candidate will be required to articulate the justification for their actions based on the Department's Use of Force Policy;
- Candidates will be evaluated on communication skills, the use of force employed, and their ability to justify their actions based on Department Policy (Pass/Fail).

Perimeter Exercise

- The candidate will participate in a perimeter scenario with at least one-armed suspect fleeing on foot, and upon assessing the situation should take action accordingly;
- This phase is intended to measure the candidate's critical decision-making abilities, communication skills, and their ability to coordinate Department resources as they relate to foot pursuits and perimeter tactics (Pass/Fail).

Canine Agitation

- Candidates will be evaluated on their ability to follow directions on donning the bite-suit, body positioning and ability to complete basic movement during exercises;
- Canine agitation exercises will involve the candidate taking a bite-hold from a K-9, taking a directed deployment stationary and running from a K-9, and during K-9 Decoy exercises (Pass/Fail).

All candidates that receive qualifying scores during the Tactical Skills Testing phase will move on to the oral interview.

ORAL INTERVIEW

- The purpose of the oral interview is to assess if candidates have a thorough understanding of the job duties, requirements, and other conditions of employment of a K-9 Handler;
- All job-related questions will be generated by Personnel Division; and,

NOTE: Oral Boards will be comprised of at least two K-9 Platoon Supervisors, and a supervisor outside of Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau (CTSOB) command.

- Background investigations will be conducted for those candidates who pass the Tactical Skills Testing and Oral Interview phases.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

- Qualifying candidates will be evaluated for any risk management issues captured in the candidate's work history and personnel package; and,
- Any issues noted will be evaluated by the K-9 Platoon, Metro, and CTSOB chain of command for review and approval to move on to the ride-along phase of the selection process.

RIDE-ALONG

- Each qualifying candidate will be loaned to K-9 Platoon for two weeks;
- The candidate will be assigned to work and train alongside of K-9 Platoon members;
- The candidate will respond to all call-outs during the two-week loan period;
 - Per the latest revision of Memorandum of Understanding No. 24, candidates will not receive stand-by compensation during off-hours
 - Candidates will receive standard overtime compensation for call-outs
- The candidate will be evaluated on readiness, teamwork, participation in training, interpersonal skills, participation in field operations and responsiveness to instruction;
- Candidates who are unable to participate in the ride-along phase of the testing will be disqualified.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- Upon successful completion of the Tactical Skills Testing and the Ride-Along phase, candidates will be placed in a “Qualified Selection Pool.” Candidates will not be ranked in this pool.
- The list of eligible candidates will remain viable for 12 months with a potential six-month extension at the discretion of the Commanding Officer (CO), CTSOB.
- As Police Officer III+3 Handler positions in K-9 Platoon become vacant, candidates will be selected from the outstanding pool; and,
- Prior to the Phase One Evaluation period, candidates must have a suitable back yard, inspected by a K-9 Platoon Supervisor, for the care and maintenance of a K-9.

PHASE ONE EVALUATION PERIOD

- The completion of the Phase One Evaluation Period will generally be completed within four-months;
- The Chief Trainer and the Training Cadre will discuss the Phase One Evaluation, K-9 Handler Skills Rubric-Phase One goals and expectations with the candidate during the first deployment period;
- During this period, the candidate will be introduced to K-9 Policy and Law, K-9 Search Team Tactics, Weapons Proficiency, Basic Decoy Skills, and Participation/Interpersonal Skills;
- The training cadre will document the blocks of instruction covered during the Phase One Evaluation Period;
- The Chief Trainer will document a monthly assessment of the candidate’s performance on the K-9 Handler Skills Rubric-Phase One;
- When necessary, the Chief Trainer and the Training Cadre will discuss any identified deficiencies with the candidate;
- The Chief Trainer, with the support of the Training Cadre, will identify a performance remediation plan if necessary;

- The Chief Trainer will identify when the candidate achieves a level of proficiency in all areas of the Phase One Evaluation Period;
- If the candidate is not satisfactory in all categories at the end of the evaluation period, the candidate will be considered deficient;
- Upon review, the K-9 Platoon Officer in Charge (OIC) will approve the Phase One Evaluation Period documentation for each candidate;
- If the K-9 Platoon OIC and Chief Trainer concur that a candidate is deficient, the candidate will be de-selected with approval from the Metro CO;
- If a candidate is injured during the Phase One Evaluation Period, the evaluation period will be extended an equal amount of time necessary to complete the evaluation; and,
- Upon successful completion of the Phase One Evaluation Period the candidate will move on to the Phase Two Evaluation Period.

PHASE TWO EVALUATION PERIOD

- The Phase Two Evaluation Period will generally be completed by month 12 of the selection process;
- The Chief Trainer and the Training Cadre will discuss the Phase Two Evaluation Period K-9 Handler Rubric goals and expectations with the candidate;
- During the Phase Two Evaluation Period, the candidate will be introduced to K-9 Handling, K-9 Care and Maintenance, K-9 Handler Team Leader Tactics, and Administrative Duties;
- The Training Cadre will document the blocks of instruction covered during the evaluation period;
- The Chief Trainer will document a monthly assessment of the candidate's performance on the K-9 Handler Skills Rubric;
- When necessary, the Chief Trainer and the Training Cadre will discuss any identified deficiencies with the candidate;
- The Chief Trainer, with the support of the Training Cadre, will identify a performance remediation plan if necessary;
- The K-9 Platoon OIC will review and approve Phase Two Evaluation Period documentation for each candidate;
- If the K-9 Platoon OIC and Chief Trainer concur that a candidate is deficient, the candidate will be de-selected with approval from the Metro CO;
- By the end of the Phase Two Evaluation Period, the candidate should have completed a K-9 Team certification; and,
- If a candidate is injured during the Phase Two Evaluation Period, the evaluation period will be extended an equal amount of time necessary to complete the evaluation.

NOTE: It is possible for a K-9 to be disqualified from the Metropolitan Division K-9 training program for several variables which are not the fault of the K-9 Handler. Should this occur, it will not be held against the handler during assessment.

All Concerned Department Personnel

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Appointment to the K-9 Platoon requires the successful completion of the Phase One and Phase Two Evaluation Periods. Vacancies will be filled through attrition based on a package review, chain of command review and approval, with the final approval from the CO, CTSOB.

The leadership within the K-9 Platoon, Metropolitan Division, and CTSOB are committed to ensuring that all Department employees experience a thorough, fair, and impartial K-9 Handler Selection Process.

This Notice supersedes all other existing documents regarding the K-9 Handler Selection Process.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Deputy Chief David J. Kowalski, Commanding Officer, CTSOB, at (213) 486-8780.

APPROVED:



DAVID J. KOWALSKI, Deputy Chief
Commanding Officer
Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau



T. SCOTT HARRELSON, Deputy Chief
Chief of Staff
Office of the Chief of Police

Attachments

**K-9 PLATOON
SKILLS RUBRIC – PHASE ONE**

TASK	BELOW STANDARD	APPROACHING STANDARD	BASE STANDARD	ABOVE STANDARD
K-9 Policy and Law				
K-9 Search Team Tactics				
Weapons Proficiency				
Basic Decoy Skills				
Participation/Interpersonal Skills				

Handler _____

Chief Trainer _____ Date _____

**K-9 HANDLER
SKILLS RUBRIC – PHASE TWO**

TASK	BELOW STANDARD	APPROACHING STANDARD	BASE STANDARD	ABOVE STANDARD
K-9 Handling				
K-9 Care and Maintenance				
K-9 Handler Team Leader Tactics				
Administrative Duties				

Handler _____

Chief Trainer _____

Date _____

K-9 Handler Task and Competency List

Search Team Tactics:

- The handler utilizes appropriate tactics during a K-9 searches, including but is not limited to entries, search patterns, teamwork, use of cover and concealment, and light discipline.
- The handler is proficient in K-9 search team tactics and officer safety protocols.
- The handler conducts thorough searches of assigned search areas.

K-9 Policy/ Law

- The handler understands and applies Department policies and procedures related to search and seizure, and use of force.
- The handler demonstrates a strong understanding of legal concepts related K-9 searches for suspects and evidence.
- The handler understands and applies K-9 Platoon policies and procedures for search, direct-deployment, barricaded suspect, and gas deployment criteria.

Weapons Proficiency

- The handler demonstrates proficiency with handgun, rifle, MP-7, and shotgun.
- The handler demonstrates the ability to safely carry and manipulate firearms during field operations.
- The handler demonstrates proficiency with all assigned less-lethal systems.
- The handler demonstrates the ability to safely carry and manipulate less-lethal systems during field operations.
- The handler properly deploys equipment for K-9 operations, sufficient to maximize the probability of success while ensuring the safety of police personnel and the public.

Basic Decoy Skills

- The handler is an effective decoy by properly reinforcing desired K-9 behaviors.
- The handler properly dons and doffs agitation safety equipment.
- The handler provides the correct and timely verbal, physical reinforcement during training.
- The handler will demonstrate proper mechanics during agitation training so as not to injure themselves or the K-9.
- The handler will demonstrate how to push and then relieve the pressure to channel the dog's natural drives into reliable behavior.

Participation/Interpersonal

- The handler effectively communicates and coordinates actions with other members of the Department in a manner supportive of group goals and objectives.
- The handler maintains emotional control during field operations.
- The handler communicates with coworkers and supervisors to effectively exchange detailed and complex information under varying circumstances.
- The handler demonstrates the ability to work under intense pressure, stress, and physical danger for extended periods.
- The handler conducts training to field officers on a variety of subjects; K-9 tactics and tools, individual officer roles and search team tactics.
- The handler is receptive and responsive to instruction and direction.
- The handler can apply concepts given during instruction.
- The handler responds to all callouts (on-duty and off hour) in a timely manner.
- The handler routinely participates as a decoy during K-9 training.
- The handler routinely participates in tactics exercises.
- The handler routinely participates in obedience, protection, and control, building searches and area search training.

K-9 Handling

- The handler effectively reads and interprets the behavior and signals of their K-9 while engaged in training and during field operations.
- The handler recognizes behavioral and performance problems.
- The handler develops subject matter knowledge related to K-9 behaviors, K-9 drives and K-9 training.
- The handler demonstrates strong command and control of their assigned K-9 during training and field operations.
- The handler demonstrates flexibility, by adapting to the circumstances of the situation and drive levels of the K-9, while training and during field operations.
- The handler provides the correct and timely verbal, physical and e-collar reinforcement during training and during field operations.
- The handler consistently provides training to their assigned K-9 for physical conditioning, obedience, protection and control, building searches, and area searches.
- The handler interacts with their assigned K-9 in a manner that motivates and enhances the workability of their K-9.
- The handler demonstrates confidence and comfort while working with K-9s.
- The handler clearly communicates K-9 performance issues to the Training Cadre.
- Advanced decoy skills properly reinforcing desired K-9 behaviors.

K-9 Team Leader Tactics

- The handler properly deploys personnel and equipment for K-9 operations, sufficient to maximize the probability of success.
- The handler develops, understands, and implements effective K-9 search team plans.
- The handler demonstrates problem-solving skills, reasoning ability, and flexibility sufficient to develop effective solutions to difficult field problems.
- The handler demonstrates the ability to multi-task during field deployments by effectively handling a K-9, managing a search team, and coordinating other resources.

Administrative Duties

- The handler documents daily activities, accurately and timely, in K-9 Officer Logs.
- The handler documents K-9 training, accurately and timely, in K-9 Training Logs.
- The handler documents K-9 searches and contacts, accurately and timely, in K-9 Deployment Reports.

K-9 Care and Maintenance

- The handler provides requisite care and maintenance for assigned K-9: housing, grooming, monitoring the K-9's health, and requesting necessary veterinarian care.

Certification Limited and Full

- Limited Certification Program
 - Obtained after approximately 3-6 months of training.
 - A K-9 team will be certified to search for felony suspects who are not reasonably believed to be armed.
 - Search team consists of all K-9 search team members.
 - Facilitated by the K-9 Training Cadre to ensure that a K-9 and its handler meet the unit standards and will locate suspects in real world field conditions.
- Full Certification to be obtained on a bi-annual basis for the remainder of the team's working career.