

UMB Comfort K-9 Handler Program

344.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The University of Maryland, Baltimore Police Department (UMBPD) is establishing a program that incorporates professionally trained dogs as companions to be used during the daily work of sworn officers (Handlers) of UMBPD. The Handler will be required to attend training to assist the dog's primary role on campus. The dog's primary role will be to provide comfort and emotional support to the community at large. Dogs covered under this program must be purchased by UMBPD and trained by a recognized emotional support and comfort training program. The animal will be the sole responsibility of the assigned Handler, including residing in the handler's home during off hours.

344.2 QUALIFICATIONS AND SELECTION OF HANDLERS

- (a) Openings in the program will be announced via email:
- (b) Qualifications for the Program include, but may not be limited to:
 1. Minimum of at least 1 year of service and no longer on probation;
 2. Must be willing to work on an on-call basis from time to time;
 3. Must be in good standing and receive a meets standard or above on the most recent Performance Development Program (PDP);
 4. Must have a valid driver's license;
 5. Must not have any suspensions, reprimands, and/or written counseling within the last twelve months; and
 6. Must reside in a house or apartment that is owned or leased in the Handler's name, and the residence must be adequate in size, as determined by the Dog Handler Supervisor (DHS).

344.3 SELECTION, EVALUATION, AND PRE-SERVICE TRAINING OF COMFORT DOG

- (a) Dogs will be selected based on their temperament, demeanor, health, behavior, and ability to interact with unknown persons.
- (b) The Dog's initial training will be completed by an AKC Recognized Therapy Dog Organization.
- (c) The Handler and Dog will be specifically trained to offer comfort and emotional support to the community at large, especially individuals facing or experiencing traumatic or stressful situations.

344.4 REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM HANDLER

- (a) Commit to a long-term assignment of at least five years (5) or more;

UMB Comfort K-9 Handler Program

- (b) Commit to completing daily task for the care of the dog, including but not limited to, walking, exercising, feeding, training, brushing, veterinary care, enrichment activities and cleaning the dog's kennel;
- (c) Make pre-approved arrangements, such as kenneling and care of the dog when officer is unavailable for short periods of time (vacation time must not exceed one (1) month). All arrangements must be approved through the DHS; and
- (d) Commit to training requirements provided by a professional trainer.
- (e) Failure to remain in good standing with the UMPBD may result in having the dog reassigned.
- (f) The Handler is provided a 1/2 hour of overtime per day and can leave a 1/2 hour early each day.

344.5 TRAINING OF HANDLERS AND COMFORT DOG

- (a) Comfort K-9 Teams will receive initial and monthly in-service training as established by the professional training program.
- (b) Comfort K-9 Teams will receive an annual evaluation/certification as established by the professional training program.
- (c) Training completed by the Comfort K-9 Team shall be documented.
- (d) Each Handler must successfully complete a professional training program.
- (e) Training with the dog, both on and off duty, as set by the training professional.
- (f) Informal training responsibilities should include, but are not limited to, obedience and regular training exercises as provided by the professional training program on a weekly basis.
- (g) Handlers should regularly exercise the dog prior to any training sessions and it may be done on or off duty, if time permitted.
- (h) Each handler will be evaluated periodically to ensure that the dog is maintaining the requirements of a healthy and professionally trained comfort and emotional support dog.

344.6 ON DUTY

- (a) When the Dog Handler is not engaged in training or animal maintenance, they will be available to aid with public education about the comfort program. They will make visits to schools and buildings on and off campus, and provide assistance at other agencies and sites where their services may be beneficial.
- (b) Handler will have the dog secure on a leash and/or appropriate restraint including but not limited to a soft cloth martingale collar and/or easy walk harness. Handler will be required to seek approval for any restraint device from DHS;
- (c) Handler will be responsible for making sure the dog is wearing the appropriate visual aids to indicate that the dog is currently working;

UMB Comfort K-9 Handler Program

- (d) Handler will be responsible for making sure that the dog is properly secured in the transport vehicle, either in a provided crate, seat-belt or other restraint device as provided by UMBPD; and
- (e) Handler must never leave their dogs alone with an unauthorized individual without prior written approval of the DHS. Dogs must be kept on a four foot or shorter leash, retractable leashes are not permitted, and must be held only by the handler. The leash may not be hooked or attached to handler's body, belt, chair, wall, or other person.
- (f) Handlers must carry current identification acknowledging the status of the dog as an emotional support dog at all times while on duty;
- (g) If the Handler can no longer care for the Dog due to a change in employment status or assignment, the Dog will be returned to UMBPD for reassignment or the Chief of Police may make the decision to retire the dog.
- (h) On-duty job responsibilities may be altered by the DHS or Police Chief to care for the Dog and included in a Handlers' work day to accommodate walks and care of the Dog.

344.7 OFF DUTY

- (a) Perform the following duties while in an off-duty status at your residence during a normal work day:
 - 1. Responsible for allowing Dog to perform necessary bathroom breaks as needed and responsible for cleaning waste to maintain a healthy environment.
 - 2. Any request to exercise the Dog outside of the allotted required daily hours should be discussed with your DHS and documented for prior written approval.
 - 3. Feed your Dog as recommended by the emotional support and training professional and/or approved veterinarian.
 - 4. When necessary, medicate your Dog and address other health care needs as prescribed by the UMBPD – contracted veterinarian or other authority.
 - 5. Clean and inspect home crate daily.
 - 6. Non-emergency veterinarian visits must be approved by the DHS or designee.
 - 7. Under no circumstances should a Dog be groomed, fed, medicated, walked or handled by unauthorized persons. Authorized people may include but are not limited to: immediate family members that live in the household, other members of the UMBPD, or other approved UMBPD personnel.
- (b) Perform the following duties while in an off-duty status at your residence on an excused day off:
 - 1. All duties as listed above.
 - 2. Perform a daily inspection and grooming of your Dog.
 - 3. Disinfect Dog crate weekly or more frequently when the need arises.
- (c) Reporting and Logging Off-Duty Hours

UMB Comfort K-9 Handler Program

1. Duties performed outside of on-duty hours should be documented and submitted to the DHS on a biweekly basis for approval.
2. The expected maximum amount of time allotted to the care of the dog on a daily basis should not exceed 2 1/2 hours, this time includes both on and off-duty hours.
3. The 2 1/2 hours shall include, but is not limited to, care, maintenance, walking and training and may be included in your on-duty job responsibilities.
4. Overtime will be compensable based on submitted documentation of off-duty logged hours in accordance with UMBPD policies and procedures.

344.8 LISTING OF EQUIPMENT FOR COMFORT DOG

The Dog shall be equipped with the following:

- (a) An appropriate collar and leash no longer than six (6) feet.
- (b) A vest or harness marked "POLICE."
- (c) The vest or harness may be adorned with other appropriate patches, badges, or mementos in relation to its service.
- (d) An appropriate sized kennel or safe place will be made available at the station for securing the Dog indoors. Water will be made available for the Dog while being kenneled or stored. The Dog may not be kenneled or stored any longer than four (4) hours without a break, except for cases of emergency.

344.9 CARE, MAINTENANCE & TRAINING

- (a) Handlers are personally responsible for the daily care and feeding of their assigned Dogs, to include:
 1. Maintenance and cleaning of the crate where the Dog is housed.
 2. Provision of food, water and general diet maintenance as prescribed by the Department authorized veterinarian.
 3. Grooming on a daily basis.
 4. Daily exercise.
 5. Maintain a daily log, recording the status of the dog's health, training received, and demeanor. The log is subject to inspection by the DHS or their designee.
 6. General medical attention.
 7. Monthly application of flea and tick and heart worm medication following the scheduled created by the DHS.
- (b) If the Handler is unable to perform these related duties due to illness, injury, vacation, or leave:
 1. Another Handler may be assigned to temporarily care for the Dog at their residence. Prior approval must be obtained.

UMB Comfort K-9 Handler Program

- (c) Care, maintenance and medical will be reimbursed by UMBPD and approved by DHS. DHS will identify the type of food that should be purchased for the dog and any additional purchases as required.
- (d) Handlers will keep a daily log of the Dog's temperament, activities, and behaviors. Any concerns about the temperament of the Dog will be immediately reported in writing to the DHS.

344.10 SAFETY WITH DOG

- (a) Safety is the primary concern of the Handler. They must be mindful that safety and control must be maintained at all times, both at home and when on duty. Handlers shall remember that they are solely responsible for the actions of their assigned Dog.
- (b) At no point will the Dog be allowed to run loose without the direct supervision of the Handler. Dog should never be out of sight of the Handler if off lead.

344.11 BOARDING

- (a) Dogs will only be boarded at kennels authorized by the DHS. Reservations must be made as far in advance as possible.
- (b) The Dog Handler must notify the DHS supervisor in writing.

344.12 PERSONS INJURED BY DOG

- (a) If a Dog injures a person through contact, whether accidental or not, the Handler will ensure that EMS is called and that the individual is offered medical attention.
- (b) If the person refuses treatment, the Handler is still required to call EMS and have a report written indicating the refusal of treatment.
- (c) The Handler shall prepare and submit an Incident Report to the DHS, in accordance with UMBPD policies.
- (d) The DHS or designee will be responsible for notifying the Maryland Health Department of the incident.

344.13 VEHICLES

- (a) Vehicles assigned to Dog Handlers are designated specifically for the purposes of transporting the Dog.
- (b) The vehicle may be fitted with a cage or restraint and will be outfitted as standard patrol units per UMBPD policy.
- (c) The vehicle will be fitted with a cage and/or restraint for transporting the dog, separating the dog from the handler.
- (d) The vehicle should be kept clean at all times. The Dog inserts should be disinfected once every two weeks and vacuumed weekly.

UMB Comfort K-9 Handler Program

- (e) Failure to remain in good standing for driving licensure will result in reassigning the Dog to a different handler and turning in the vehicle to the Department.

344.14 AUTHORIZED ANIMAL HOSPITALS & VETERINARY CARE

The Dog will be provided appropriate veterinary care when needed and annual health maintenance by the Handler. The Handler and DHS will discuss assignment of veterinary care prior to accepting position. UMBPD will cover the reasonable and necessary vet costs supported by receipts, up to \$2,500 a year and \$10,000 over the life of the dog, for all retired police canines.

A 24-hour emergency veterinary center operated by licensed veterinary technicians will be approved by the DHS.

344.15 COLLECTION OF DEPLOYMENT DATA

Individuals may request the services of the UMB K-9 Handler Program via the department's website. The Handler will collect all data associated with the deployment of the Dog, which could be used to support the effectiveness of the Program.