I. Purpose

A facility canine is a specifically trained service dog assigned to a full-time handler to "work" daily within the police department. Having a facility canine with the Wellness Unit will encourage participation in psychological therapeutic treatments, which decreases anxiety, emotional distress, calms agitation, and generally lift spirits. Facility canines have proven to lessens depression, reduces feelings of isolation, encourages communication, provides comfort, increases socialization, and reduces feelings of loneliness.

Scientific studies have shown the physical health benefits of engaging with a facility canine include, lower blood pressure, slowing of heart rate, reduction of stress hormones, accumulation of good hormones, and diminishing of overall physical pain.

II. Organization

A. Wellness facility canine handlers shall be comprised of those personnel assigned by the Chief of Police or their designee.

B. Wellness facility canine operations are under the command of the Wellness Unit. Control and direct supervision of wellness facility canine operations are delegated to supervision within the chain of command of the Wellness Unit and is under the Assistant Chief of Logistics.

III. Personnel

A. The Wellness facility canine handler has the sole responsibility for daily stewardship and training of their canine. The handler must always function as the animal's advocate and will be expected to house the canine at their personal residence. Wellness facility canines do not have to be housed in a secure department-approved kennel. It is at the handler's discretion to ensure the wellness canine is housed in a secure and safe environment.

B. All full-time facility canine handlers will attend initial placement training and mandatory monthly training by the Department's selected vendor that is Assistance Dogs International (ADI) accredited. ADI is to the highest standards in the assistance dog industry. Training for the life of the service dog is completely covered in the original training fee through Next Steps Service Dogs, San Diego.

Timecards and compensation

A. All handlers assigned, and caring for a wellness facility dog, are entitled to receive canine maintenance compensation at the rate of 2.0 hours per week. This compensation is for the maintenance and continued training of the issued canine.

1. Canine maintenance compensation will begin when the new handler receives his/her dog.

2. On the electronic timecard, the handler shall document 4 hours of overtime per pay period by posting 2.0 hours each week using the code, "K9 Care Pay OT", in the "Att./abs.type" column. This compensation may be taken as 2.0 hours of comp and/or pay per week. The 2.0 hours per week shall not be divided.

3. If a handler does not have a dog, the canine maintenance Compensation will be temporarily discontinued, then reinstated if another dog is received.

4. Canine maintenance compensation (while the handler cares for his/her assigned dog) will continue during the time a handler is on Industrial Leave unless the dog is no longer in their care.

5. If a secondary or back up handler is caring for the facility dog while the primary handler is on away or on vacation, the secondary handler will be entitled to the same overtime listed in this section.

B. Police Service Dog canine trainers and canine handlers are defined in the Department's Canine Unit Operations Manual Sections 2.12 and 2.13. These trainers and handlers of the canine unit are subject to specialty pay as defined in SDPOA MOU Article 63, Sections C. and D.

However, a facility wellness canine handler is not included in the Canine Unit Operation's Manual and is not part of the Department's Canine Unit. Therefore, facility wellness handlers are not eligible for canine specialty pay per SDPOA MOU Article 63.

IV. Animal Health and Welfare

A. The San Diego Police Department is committed to the health and welfare of all animals under our care and as such, will ensure that all animals receive the proper nutrition, grooming and medical care as necessary.

B. It is the responsibility of each officer assigned a wellness canine to ensure that their canine stays up to date on all vaccines and medical

appointments. Wellness canines are covered under the Department's Canine Unit's authorized vendors for canine food and veterinary care. Handlers are to use these approved vendors for routine veterinary care.

1. The contract veterinarian to be utilized by all canine handlers is:

Main Street Small Animal Hospital
2773 Main Street
San Diego, CA 92113
Phone: (619) 232-7401

2. The contract veterinarian will perform annual physicals, any non-emergency care, and minor dental services. If more extensive dental work is required, the contract veterinarian will refer the dog to the contract dentist.

C. In the event of an afterhours emergency where medical care for the canine is necessary and cannot wait until normal veterinarian hours of operation, the following 24-hour clinic should normally be utilized:

Emergency Animal Clinic of San Diego
7675 Mission Valley Road
San Diego, CA 92108
Phone: (619) 299-2400

D. Handlers will be responsible for all canine care outside of normal working hours unless boarded at an approved location determined by the Chief of Police or their designee.

E. The Chief of Police or designee will make final approval on all outside vendors associated with the care of SDPD wellness canines.

F. In the event of an afterhours emergency, handlers will notify their chain of command as soon as practicable.

V. Training

The use of therapy or facility service dogs in law enforcement is a relatively new concept but is considered best practices for public safety wellness units. There are currently no California POST standards for law enforcement facility canines. However, the Wellness Unit will only use vendors with ADI accreditation to ensure we are using the industry's highest standards for assistance dogs. The below guidelines are to be followed to ensure the SDPD maintains a professional program.

A. Maintain training records and all documentation associated with the SDPD wellness canine program.

C. Coordinate an ongoing training schedule for the program with both approved ADI accredited trainers and individual training with solely the dog and handler.

C. Ensure to the best of their ability that each handler/canine team maintain the proficiency necessary to receive and maintain a nationally registered therapy canine certification.

1. Handler/Canine Teams

A. The key to maintaining a professional program is maintaining a professional level of competency. In the case of the SDPD Wellness Canine program, it is imperative that the handler and their canine partner train regularly as a team.

B. It will be the individual responsibility of each handler to self-monitor their progress with their canine as a team to ensure they maintain proficiency set forth by a nationally accredited Assistance Dogs International.

C. It is recognized that as with humans, each canine is unique in their own way. Some canines or handlers may require more training and instruction than others.

2. Maintenance Training

A. In addition to certification from a nationally recognized therapy canine association, wellness canine teams will conduct documented training together at a minimum of eight hours per month.

3. Pre-Certification Training

A. It is recognized that part of a successful training program includes working the handler/canine together in public settings prior to certification through an ADI accredited program. Each individual handler/canine team will be assessed by an ADI accredited trainer, on a case by case basis, to best meet their needs for successful development into the Department.

VI. Canine Acquisition, Selection and Disposition

A. Supervision and handlers within the wellness facility program will make every attempt to select the best possible wellness facility canine candidates to meet the needs of the SDPD. Facility dogs require several months of special training. The canine must be highly social and enjoy working with a variety of people.

B. If necessary and when available, supervision and handlers in the program will consult the advice of recognized specialists in the field of canines i.e. veterinarians, breeders, accredited canine trainers, etc. to make informed decisions on facility canine candidates.

C. The Chief of Police or designee reserves the right to acquire facility canines for the program through available and existing funding sources or through donations from community members and partners via the San Diego Police Foundation.

D. Recommendations to retire a therapy canine for cause will be made through the chain of command. After consultation with the veterinarian, and accredited canine trainers, the Chief of Police or their designee will make the recommendation as to whether the facility canine may be retired. The average service life of a facility dog is approximately 8.5 years according to canine training experts. However, each canine is different.

E. If retirement is recommended, the handler will be given the first opportunity of adoption like the Department's Canine Unit. If the handler refuses adoption it will be the responsibility of the program supervisor to find a suitable home within the community.

F. If a handler vacates their position within the Wellness Unit, voluntarily or non-voluntarily, the handler will have to relinquish control over the facility canine if the canine is not eligible for retirement. If the canine is eligible for retirement, the handler will be given first option to adopt the canine. If the handler refuses adoption, it will be the responsibility of the program supervisor to reassign the canine to a new handler or find a suitable home within the community if the canine is retired.

G. When it becomes necessary to retire a wellness facility canine, the department may transfer ownership of the canine to the last handler, provided the handler wishes to keep the canine. Based on industry standards and recommendations the wellness facility dog will be subject to retire at 8.5 years of age.

VII. Equipment, Supplies and Services

A. All equipment supplies and services necessary for the care of a wellness canine will be supplied through the SDPD Canine Unit and their approved vendors.

B. It is recognized that all canines require the same basic needs such as nutrition, grooming and medical care, however, it is also recognized that each dog is individual and may require specific items for their success.

Each handler/canine team will be accessed and equipped on a case by case basis to give them the best chance of success and provide the best service to the department.

C. The handler assigned to the Wellness Unit will be assigned a department vehicle from the Wellness Unit and can transport the facility dog in any of the Wellness Unit's vehicles.

VIII. Deployment and Use of a Wellness Canine Team

A. Daily Duties

1. It is generally expected that once a handler/canine team successfully attains certification through a nationally recognized ADI training program that the canine and handler are one team. The facility canine will accompany the handler as they go about their daily duties in the workplace.

2. It is expected that if the handler has prior knowledge where the presence of a canine would aggravate a situation, such as, meeting someone with a fear of dogs, dog allergies, particular cultural beliefs or etc., the handler make prior arrangements to leave their canine safely secured while tending to daily business.

B. Authorized Uses

1. Daily duties in the workplace
2. Public events
3. Community outreach and engagement
4. Major emotional incidents
5. School demonstrations
6. Grief loss and trauma
7. Natural disaster incidents
8. Crisis intervention
9. Any use not covered in this procedure as deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police or their designee.

C. Deployment Outside of San Diego County

1. Deployments or requests for SDPD wellness canine teams outside of San Diego County require specific approval of the Chief of Police or their designee.

D. Callout Procedure

1. Any request for the wellness canine team after normal operating hours will be made through the SDPD Watch Commander Office or Wellness Hotline.

2. The Watch Commander will provide the contact information for the on-call Wellness Unit employee.

3. The on-duty Wellness Unit employee will then make the determination of whether to contact a handler/canine for deployment. Consideration will be given to the urgency and immediate need and availability of the handler/canine at the time.

E. Deployment Documentation

1. After the therapeutic deployment of a canine and upon clearing the deployment, the handler shall request a MPS event number from the communications center. Daily routine duties and community events do not count for the purposes of documentation. All non-therapeutic use will be kept on a calendar accessible by program supervision and all handlers.

2. A form approved by program supervision will be used by each handler/canine team to document deployments and will include at minimum the following information:

   Date/time
   Canine team
   Agency or person making request
   Type of incident/deployment
   MPS Event number
   Report number (if applicable)

F. Incident Management and Reporting

1. Bite or Injury Resulting from Wellness Canine

a. Immediately secure the canine in a safe area or department vehicle if practicable.

b. Request EMS and administer first aid if applicable.

c. Notify supervisor as soon as feasible. Supervisor will respond to the scene to conduct a supervisor's investigation.

d. Document the injuries and scene. Supervisor should also confer with an on-duty canine supervisor to ensure all necessary information is obtained.

e. Obtain witness statements from affected person and witnesses if possible.

f. The handler will write detailed report and submit through the chain of command along with all pertinent paperwork, evidence and pictures associated with the incident.

XI. Unattended Wellness Canine

A. Generally, wellness canines should not be left unattended for an extended period of time. When not under the immediate control of the respective handler, the dog is to be secured in an approved kennel, or inside a properly equipped canine vehicle.

B. When outside of the canine vehicle, and not in an approved kennel, the dog should be secured to a solid, fixed object. The handler should take steps to ensure the Wellness Facility canine will not injure itself or any person. If secured in this manner, the handler must always remain in visual contact with the dog.

If the handler will be going on an extended leave away from home or on vacation, the primary handler is to have a trained secondary handler of the Department care for the dog. If a secondary handler is not available, a SDPD canine handler can care for the dog during their absence.

XII. Vehicles

A. The Wellness canine handler assigned will be issued a take-home unmarked vehicle for transportation of the canine. to and from work, training, and selected special events. No modifications to the vehicle will be made without expressed authorization from the Unit Chief.

Appendix

Appendix A- Therapy Canine Deployment Tracking form

San Diego Police Department
Wellness Canine Deployment Tracking

Date/Time	K9 Team	Requester	Deployment Type	Location	Event#	Report#