

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
Canine Unit**

COURSE TITLE: Decoy / Agitator Training

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Introduction to canine decoy work. Lecture and practical application will be utilized to teach the proper nomenclature of frequently used Canine training techniques. This course will cover an introduction to civil agitation, muzzle work, bite sleeves and full bite suits. The basics of how to read dogs and work them into prey / defense drives.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY: Lecture/Practical Application

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT:

1. Bite Suits (# dependent on class size)
2. Bite Sleeve
3. Tug with long line
4. Muzzles

TIME ALLOTMENT: 10 hours

DATE PREPARED: FEBRUARY 25, 2017

I. Introduction

A. Lesson: Introduce students to the equipment used by the Canine Unit during weekly training. Instruct students on the proper use of the equipment for various scenarios. Teach students how to properly take bite from Police Service Dogs (PSD). Teach students how to act as a decoy / agitator during canine training.

B. Objectives: The objectives to be met by this course are:

1. The student will learn the proper techniques for high/low finds.
2. The student will learn about civil agitation and proper use.

3. The student will learn how to engage a PSD in a muzzle fight.
4. The student will learn how to wear a bite suit and how to take bites from PSD.

II: Lecture (Brief Overview)

Decoys must always remember their ultimate goal is assisting in the building of the dog's proficiency levels and aside from the safety of themselves and other personnel involved in dog training this should always be at the forefront of training.

A. Equipment

- a. Bite sleeve
- b. Bite suit
- c. Muzzle
- d. Tug with long line
- e. Agitation stick

B. Training Techniques

- a. Civil agitation
- b. High / low finds
- c. Muzzle fights
- d. Bite sleeve use
- e. Bite suit use (location variety, slipped bites)

The ability to “catch” a police dog or protection dog in a bite suit or sleeve properly requires more than the ability to properly put the equipment on and run away from the dog. Being an effective decoy requires considerable practice with technique and understanding of basic drives. Far too often we see police dogs that do not meet their full potential because they are working with unskilled decoys. These decoys do not have the proper experience, techniques and have not received the proper k9 decoy training necessary to be effective when working with protection dogs and police dogs. For a decoy,

non-verbal canine communication is the most important skill required to be an effective decoy.

Targeting is one of the first aspects of proper K9 decoy training that we want to focus on. Targeting refers to where the dog will bite. Unfortunately, many improperly trained decoys simply allow the dog to bite anywhere on the suit or sleeve. This causes the dog to bite the center of the back of the suit and in other places where it is not feasible for the dog to bite a person in real-life. By teaching the dog where to bite, high inside and outside arms, legs and forearms, the dog will learn to become more comfortable in his apprehension work. When we begin to work on more complex skills training, the dog will be more sure in his bite work because he more comfortable about where to bite.

Grip is another important aspect of proper K9 decoy training. When we refer to “grip” we are referring to how the dog bites the equipment. We will typically be able to obtain a better grip with a sleeve as opposed to a suit. When trying to resolve grip issues, we will generally resort to using a sleeve to remedy them. We want a dog with a full grip that is not “mouthy” and does not easily transfer from place to place on the equipment. When we encounter a dog that has a short grip and bites with the front teeth only, it is generally because of two reasons. The short grip is usually cause by lack of proper k9 decoy training or because it is “nervy” and does not have the confidence to obtain and hold a full grip.

Channeling is also important for the k9 decoy to comprehend and be cognizant of while working with protection dogs and the police k9. “Channeling” is the decoys ability to understand and be able to transfer or channel the dog between drives. Channeling allows us to work the dog in both prey and defense in order to establish a well-rounded dog that is both social and civil. Working in prey drive allows the dog to have fun with the bite work and work in a more relaxed state. Working in defense is obviously more stressful for the dog, but allows him to gain confidence in his work that will allow him to remain in the fight in real-life situations. Channeling dogs properly through drives is an aspect of k9 decoy training that requires the most practice and understanding and also affords the most results

Presenting a high bite

- With dog in pursuit, wave sleeve high (shoulder level)
- As dog leaps for bite bring sleeve to chest
- This instills confidence and fight drive

Working the high bite

- Work sleeve while standing upright
- This forces dog into harder/fuller bite
- While working the dog, pull up on sleeve ensuring dog maintains bite
- Dog trained with high bite will not nip at clothing

Pull down in the bite

Civil agitation

- a. decoy hides in closed room
- b. decoy will exhale deeply out of the bottom of door
- c. decoy will provide no stimulus to dog unless requested by trainer
- d. if dog begins to leave door, decoy will exhale again
- e. upon prescribed barks, handler will approach and take control of dog
- f. handler will command decoy to show themselves
- e. decoy will open door and present to dog, upon aggression decoy will cower back into room