

Dog Encounters: Keeping Officers Safe

The goal of this training program is to enhance officer safety during encounters with dogs. We hope to deepen law enforcement's understanding of dog behaviors and to provide additional tools and techniques to use when use of force becomes necessary during an encounter with a dog. Viewers will ultimately better understand dogs, their behaviors, and be better prepared for a successful outcome during encounters with dogs.

This facilitation guide is intended to assist in the delivery of the video material in an interactive and thought-provoking manner. It provides suggestions to help facilitate most sections of the video; however it is not a comprehensive guide for every aspect of the video. The videos do not necessarily depict a correct or incorrect way to handle a situation. The goal is for the students to engage in discussion of the topic and how it relates to them and to their agency. The guide may be used by facilitators of all experience levels to help the students get the most out of the material.

This guide contains the following sections: 1) **Video Viewing Options and Features**, 2) a **Brief Overview of the Scenarios** with key learning points, 3) an **Expanded Content Guide**, and 4) a **Student Study Guide Answer Key**.

The **Video Viewing Options and Features** section describes how the video is formatted and organized for use by facilitators or individual trainees.

The **Brief Overview of the Scenarios** describes each scenario and lists the key learning points for each section. It can assist a facilitator in quickly getting up to speed with the material.

The **Expanded Content Guide** is designed for use in a traditional training session where more time is available to explore the subject in depth. The expanded guide contains the same information as the brief scenario overview, plus provides suggested questions to facilitate most sections of the video, sample learning activities for small groups, and additional learning points that are often found in the interview comments.

A **Student Study Guide Answer Key**, which is a completed version of the Student Study Guide, is included at the end of this document. To receive credit, individual students review their completed Student Study Guide with the designated training manager or supervisor.

The facilitator should view and become familiar with all the material and key learning points in this course before use with students. This video is intended as a guide for discussion. Scenarios do not necessarily depict correct responses, and may not include a response at all. The goal is to create a venue for discussion and student interaction. The conclusion of the discussion should focus on the law and your specific agency policies.

This video is designed to give the facilitator different viewing options. The video may be watched in its entirety in a single session or broken up into shorter segments. Each video segment is approximately 15 minutes long, making it ideal for facilitation in a briefing or roll call setting.



Video Viewing Options and Features

The video will open with two different viewing options: **Facilitated Group Course** or **Informational/Individual Viewing**.

Facilitated Group Course

The Facilitated Group Course option should be selected when the video is being used in a classroom or briefing setting and an instructor or supervisor is present to facilitate the course. The material may be delivered in a single session or broken up over several days, such as delivery during briefing settings. The material is divided into tabbed sections that the facilitator may play in whatever order they feel best meets the training need. Once the material has been covered in its entirety, the supervisor or training manager (as designated by the department) may submit a completed training roster via EDI to POST for CPT credit for trainees who have completed the training. Supervisors and/or training managers should contact POST's Training Delivery and Compliance Bureau at (916) 227-7748 for questions about completing and submitting rosters for video viewing.

Informational/Individual Viewing

The Informational/Individual Viewing option should be selected when an officer is viewing the video alone or without an instructor or supervisor present to facilitate the delivery of the material. This option should not be used in a group training session. This option is intended for officers who work in a remote location or for a smaller agency that cannot readily access group training, or for an officer who is simply interested in viewing the video for informational purposes. The viewer will be guided through the video without facilitator interaction.

At the discretion of the department designated training manager or supervisor, individual viewers may receive training credit for viewing this video. To receive credit, individual students must be provided with the student study guide that is attached as a PDF file on the DVD-ROM disc. The student watches the video and completes the study guide as they follow along. They then submit their completed study guide to the designated training manager or supervisor, who discusses the video and the student's responses with them. Once the training manager or supervisor is satisfied that the student has demonstrated an understanding of the concepts of the video, the supervisor or training manager may submit a completed training roster via EDI to POST for CPT credit. Supervisors and/or training managers should contact POST's Training Delivery and Compliance Bureau at (916) 227-7748 for questions about completing and submitting rosters for video viewing. A completed version of the student study guide (Student Study Guide Answer Key) is included at the end of this document.

Navigating the Video

On-screen tabs appear across the bottom of each section of the video and allow the facilitator to select in what order the students will view the information. If in doubt about which tab to select, the information will flow logically if the tabs are selected in order from left to right. Once a facilitator is familiar with the content, they may find it more comfortable to deliver the material in an order of their own choosing.

Scenario Tabs

Scenario tabs appear at the start of each section and indicate a video scenario that is used for that section.

Task Tabs

Task tabs appear after scenarios or discussion tabs and are simply on-screen questions or statements available to use for group discussion.

Discussion Tabs

Discussion tabs appear after each scenario. They show a sample facilitation of the scenario in a briefing setting. They are optional. If the facilitator feels comfortable delivering the key learning points of the material, they may do so on their own. If they are not comfortable with the learning points or their own facilitation skills, they may either view the sample facilitation in advance to help become familiar with the material, or show the sample facilitation to the class to help spur further discussion.

Interview Tabs

Interview tabs appear after task questions. These are interviews with the Subject Matter Experts who provide additional discussion on the material. This commentary contains more information than what is delivered in the scenarios.

Menu Tab

Selecting the menu tab at the bottom right of the screen will take the viewer from the specific section they are in and return them to the main menu of the video where all sections are listed.



Brief Overview of the Scenarios

Scenario 1 Dog Behaviors

This segment depicts patrol officers responding to a welfare check at a residence where the person has not been seen for some time. After getting no response at the front door, an officer enters the backyard after noting signs that there is a dog on the premises. A large dog suddenly appears from inside the house. The scene ends just as the dog begins barking loudly and continually at the officer.

Key learning points:

- Quick assessment
 - Three seconds
 - Sometimes you have less than this
 - Take the time (when possible) to assess the dog's behavior
 - What defensive tools might be available during a surprise encounter (other than those on a duty belt)?
- Your behavior affects the dog's behavior
 - Avoid backing the dog or yourself into a corner
 - Avoid staring at the dog
 - Blade your stance from the dog
 - Reduces your profile
 - Reduces tension for the dog
 - Appears less confrontational to the dog
 - Don't flail arms
 - Attempt simple commands
 - Sit
 - Down
- Behavior and emotion are closely tied
- Myths:
 - A barking dog is not necessarily a biting dog
 - An approaching dog is not necessarily attacking
 - Wagging tail doesn't always mean it is a friendly dog
 - Breed stereotypes
- Basics of dog body language
 - TEETH – Tension, Ears, Eyes, Teeth, Head
 - Tension - Overall body tension
 - Moving forward - moving backward
 - Tight - no movement
 - Moving from side to side
 - Body wiggling
 - Ears
 - Forward or back
 - Very alert or relaxed
 - Go back suddenly
 - Perked up and tight or moving from side to side
 - Eyes
 - Open wide
 - Relaxed
 - Very tight
 - Teeth
 - Can you see them?
 - Open mouth is a relaxed dog
 - Closed mouth can be a tense dog
 - Head
 - Relaxed
 - Moving around looking around
 - Tight not moving, completely focused



- Moving forward versus backward
 - Look at stiffness of body
 - If stiff when moving toward you, can be aggressive
 - Relaxed body generally means less aggressive
- Ears perked up
- Tail wagging or not
 - May indicate aggression
 - May indicate relaxed posture
- Potential indicators that a dog will bite
 - Growling - baring teeth
 - Very tense body
 - Very few dogs want to bite
- When a dog turns its head to the side, it may be indicating that it wants space from you
- A dog's body language parallels that of a human's body language
- Not recommended:
 - Don't run (you become prey)
 - Don't try to dominate (command presence)
 - Don't stare
 - Don't turn your back (losing situational awareness)
 - Don't try to pet or lean down, or offer your hand
 - Avoid leaning over a dog (you are higher)
- Dogs are opportunistic

Scenario 2

Indicators and Encounters

This segment begins with officers arriving at a residence where a man and woman are apparently involved in a domestic dispute inside the home. During the argument, dogs suddenly appear and advance on the officers, creating a surprise encounter. The scenario demonstrates and highlights the officers' handling of the dog encounter as well as the domestic dispute.

Key learning points:

- Biggest instance where officers shoot dogs: unrestrained dogs running around
 - Have a plan; always be prepared
 - There is little difference between this and being prepared for human resistance
- Ask dispatch if dogs are present at the scene
- On-scene visual cues
 - Dog bowl
 - Dog feces
 - Dirt trail/worn path by fence
 - Chain/rope/tether around tree
 - Dog toys
 - Dog house
 - Bedding
 - Animal crates
 - Bumper stickers on cars in driveways
- Scene assessment
 - Slow down when possible
 - Add the dog component to your regular scene assessment
 - Is this an open area?
 - What's on the property?
 - Decide what tools you should bring with you
 - Look down to see where the dog might come from
 - Look for items you can use to keep dogs at a distance
 - Look for areas of escape or retreat if a dog or threat suddenly appear



- Avoidance through situational awareness
 - Continual assessment
 - As you proceed, wherever you are, keep looking for cues
 - Listen for noise
 - Be aware of possible escape routes if confronted by a dog
 - Be aware of tools to use if confronted by a dog
- Call the Reporting Party to come out, if appropriate
- Types of encounters (aimed at less-experienced officers)
 - Responding to stray dog calls
 - Responding to vicious dog calls
 - Dogs used as weapons
 - Surprise/sudden
- When/if officers react out of fear and surprise
 - Civil liability
 - Make decisions on facts presented, not fear
- Unexpected Encounters
 - Indoors and outdoors
 - Responsible for your own safety AND the safety of the public
 - Getting back in your car keeps you safe
 - Must also ensure the public is safe
 - Multiple dogs
 - One cage - two dogs
 - If you see one dog, be prepared for others
 - They may be protective of each other
 - Try to focus on the lead dog, sometimes the more threatening or confrontational

Scenario 3

Tactical Approach

In this scenario, officers are conducting a high-risk car stop. After ordering the driver out of the car, a dog jumps out and begins to roam the scene. Officers maintain vigilance in their handling of the vehicle and occupants while communicating and creating a plan to secure the dog.

Key learning points:

- Officer Safety
 - Deal with event
 - Car stop - pay attention to the car
 - Suspects present - pay attention to the suspects
 - Preservation of life issue?
 - Emergency needing immediate action?
 - Do you need to enter now or wait for Animal Control?
 - Don't avoid rooms with dogs and move farther into a house when clearing
 - Cops are trained to deal with people, not dogs
 - The dog is a distraction that can turn into tunnel vision
- Tactical approach: Defusing and preventing conflict
 - Have the person secure their dog totally out of the picture
 - Don't assume that a dog on a leash is under control
 - Don't make it worse - if you have time, take time
 - Use containment and isolation, fences, rooms, items
 - Communicate your movements with fellow officers
 - Don't pet the dog (as a general rule)
 - Tossing food or toys as a distraction
 - If they pay attention to the food or toy, demonstrates more relaxed posture
 - May be an issue for multiple dogs
 - Toss it behind the dog to give the dog space
 - Door darter; put your foot on/in the door



- Coordination with Animal Control if dogs are known prior to planned events
 - Get Animal Control to pre-planned events when a dog's presence is suspected
 - Communication both ways once on scene
- Avoid the confrontation
 - Don't walk in thinking there is going to be one
 - Shake the fence/rattle the gate
- De-escalation
 - Body language, posture, bladed stance, gaze, don't show teeth/smile
 - Become more neutral
 - Watch but don't look in the eye
 - Don't loom over them
 - Bladed Stance
 - Dog will run out to a certain point (space) then stop
 - If you communicate a non-threat, the dog may relax
 - Baby voice
 - Calm voice
 - Higher pitched
 - Don't reach out for the dog, keep hands at your side

Scenario 4

Use of Force Options

This segment begins with officers responding to a citizen complaint of a homeless camp. Once on scene, they are surprised by an apparently aggressive dog. Their planning and tactics allowed them to safely and effectively apply minimal force to the dog, which led to a successful outcome for the incident.

Key learning points:

- Ensure that you know and comply with your department policy in any use of force encounter
- Look around you, be aware of the tools you have in the moment
- Dogs don't want to bite you, they want to bite something; offer the dog another option
- Tools to make yourself safer
 - Voice control, voice inflection
 - Try simple commands; dogs know these commands and may respond
 - Stop
 - Stay
 - Go back inside
 - Lay down
 - Etc.
 - Short, quick, with appropriate body language
 - Bean bag weapons, less lethal
 - Dog will often run away
 - Baton
 - Offer it to the dog's mouth
 - Use it to distract the dog
 - Jacket or even a bottle of water
 - Catch pole or snare
 - Officer must be trained in their use
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Loud noise
 - Burst of something visual
 - Fog confuses the dog
 - No cross contamination as pepper spray does
 - Pepper spray
 - Sofa cushion
 - Barbecue grill
 - Horn



- Taser is not a capture tool
 - Hard to hit, but can be used as a direct strike
 - Different reaction than humans
- Get dog in back of patrol car for a non-threatening dog
- Use of force options
 - Officer safety and public safety are paramount
 - Take into consideration your surroundings
 - Use of force escalation or continuum should be very similar to that of human encounters
 - If you can't take a safe shot, know that you have other options
 - No matter what, there are times when you may have to shoot a dog
- Use of deadly force against a dog
 - Shoot to stop the threat
 - Be very careful with backdrop
 - Dogs run laterally more so than humans and backdrop can change instantly
 - Use of force escalation or continuum should be very similar to that of human encounters
 - If you can't take a safe shot, know that you have other options
 - No matter what, there are times when you may have to shoot a dog
 - Be aware of others in the immediate surroundings who could be affected/hit
 - Known cases of officers killed and injured by other officers shooting at a dog
 - Citizens have been killed and injured by officers shooting at a dog

Scenario 5

Aftermath and Recovering from Incidents

This segment depicts officers responding to a 911 call of a group of vicious dogs running loose in the area. When officers arrive in front of a home, several dogs run from a backyard toward the officers. The officers work to secure the dogs and are then assisted by an Animal Control officer who arrives on the scene.

Key learning points:

- Possible public reactions
 - Public perception of dog(s) may be different than that of arriving officers
 - Public may have preconceived ideas of dog breed
 - Officers may have preconceived ideas of dog breed
 - Dog's actions may be incorrectly deemed as vicious
 - Loud deep barking
 - Rapid movement
 - Neither of these are indications of aggression, but both could be indicators
 - Public may believe dogs are friendly and when law enforcement arrives, dogs are obviously aggressive
 - Social media may have caused a skewed perception of dog encounters
- When possible and circumstances dictate, call Animal Control
 - Understand their role and tools
 - Catch pole may cause dog to react aggressively once the pole is applied
 - Natural reaction
 - Communication with Animal Control officer will ensure that the situation is normal and under control
- Make a reasonable attempt to contact the owner
 - The dog owner is likely the best means to control the dog
- Aftermath of a dog incident
 - If significant force is used against a dog, how you deal with the aftermath becomes critical
 - You should have a plan in place to provide care for the dog, just as you would for a human
 - You may be obligated to provide some level of care for the dog
 - Civil codes 1834 and 1846 might apply
 - 1834 and 1846 - Duty to provide care and medical care
 - May be applicable to officers in a use of force situation against a dog or human
 - If the owner or custodian is not present
 - Call Animal Control or other resource for veterinary care
 - Know and follow your department policy



- Have a plan for the aftermath
 - If deadly force against a dog occurs
 - Do you have a veterinarian available?
 - Do you have an agreement with this veterinarian for taking care of a dog injured by officers?
 - Deadly force is always highly scrutinized
 - Ensure that all of the facts and reasons for the deadly force are well-articulated
- There has been a rise in lawsuits
 - America has become a nation that embraces pets
 - They are part of our culture
 - They are considered family
 - Owner or custodian will likely be very upset at any use of force against their dog
 - Community reactions where dogs have been shot
 - Social media pages dedicated to the animal
 - Candlelight vigils have been held
 - Overwhelmingly, citizens are animal lovers
 - When we have negative encounters it impacts law enforcement
 - This is an opportunity to reach out to the community and open lines of communication regarding dog encounters
 - Consider the surroundings, the level of injury, the availability of medical care, and witness reaction before considering euthanasia for the dog
 - Know your department policy on euthanasia for dogs
 - 73% of shootings end up killing the dog
 - Additional rounds fired after the first shots have a greater probability of negative public perception
 - If you use deadly force but miss and the dog runs away, this may have achieved the goal
 - Running vicious dogs could still be a threat
 - There will likely be community reactions
 - Social media reactions
 - The financial cost of lawsuits in dog encounters can be enormous
 - Officers can be personally accountable to lawsuits
 - Be in compliance with your department policy for deadly force encounters with dogs
 - In order to do so, you must understand this policy before any encounter
 - Document the reasons and facts surrounding the incident
 - Document how you were within department policy and law
 - Document why your actions were reasonable
 - Officer safety is first priority
 - This includes being safe on the streets, in the courts, and in social media
- Penal Codes for dog encounters where dogs may be used as a weapon
 - Penal Code 399.5 – Substantial injury by a mischievous animal
 - Penal Code 240, 242 or 245 – Assault, battery and assault with a deadly weapon
 - If you seize the animal, under what authority?
 - Penal code 597.1 is a possibility
 - Owner permits animal to be in street, etc, without proper care and attention
 - Misdemeanor
 - Has notifications that apply



Expanded Content Guide

Scenario 1 Dog Behaviors

This segment depicts patrol officers responding to a welfare check at a residence where the person has not been seen for some time. After getting no response at the front door, an officer enters the backyard after noting signs that there is a dog on the premises. A large dog suddenly appears from inside the house. The scene ends just as the dog begins barking loudly and continually at the officer.

Key learning points:

- Quick assessment
 - Three seconds
 - Sometimes you have less than this
 - Take the time (when possible) to assess the dog's behavior
 - What defensive tools might be available during a surprise encounter (other than those on a duty belt)?
- Your behavior affects the dog's behavior
 - Avoid backing the dog or yourself into a corner
 - Avoid staring at the dog
 - Blade your stance from the dog
 - Reduces your profile
 - Reduces tension for the dog
 - Appears less confrontational to the dog
 - Don't flail arms
 - Attempt simple commands
 - Sit
 - Down
- Behavior and emotion are closely tied
- Myths:
 - A barking dog is not necessarily a biting dog
 - An approaching dog is not necessarily attacking
 - Wagging tail doesn't always mean it is a friendly dog
 - Breed stereotypes
- Basics of dog body language
 - TEETH – Tension, Ears, Eyes, Teeth, Head
 - Tension - Overall body tension
 - Moving forward - moving backward
 - Tight - no movement
 - Moving from side to side
 - Body wiggling
 - Ears
 - Forward or back
 - Very alert or relaxed
 - Go back suddenly
 - Perked up and tight or moving from side to side
 - Eyes
 - Open wide
 - Relaxed
 - Very tight
 - Teeth
 - Can you see them
 - Open mouth is a relaxed dog
 - Closed mouth can be a tense dog
 - Head
 - Relaxed
 - Moving around looking around
 - Tight not moving, completely focused



- Moving forward versus backward
 - Look at stiffness of body
 - If stiff when moving toward you, can be aggressive
 - Relaxed body generally means less aggressive
- Ears perked up
- Tail wagging or not
 - May indicate aggression
 - May indicate relaxed posture
- Potential indicators that a dog will bite
 - Growling - baring teeth
 - Very tense body
 - Very few dogs want to bite
- When a dog turns its head to the side - it may be indicating that it wants space from you
- Parallel a human and dog reaction
- Not recommended:
 - Don't run (you become prey)
 - Don't try to dominate (command presence)
 - Don't stare
 - Don't turn your back (losing situational awareness)
 - Don't try to pet or lean down, or offer your hand
 - Avoid leaning over a dog (you are higher)
- Dogs are opportunistic

Additional Learning Points:

- Dogs will communicate
- Dogs very rarely want to bite
- They will not lie
- Licking, chewing, and sniffing are behaviors dogs use to self-soothe
- Dogs escalate force
 - Recognize the escalation
 - Sometimes they, too, will go immediately to highest level

Suggested facilitation questions and common responses:

- Describe in detail the acronym “TEETH” and how it relates to a dog’s body language.
 - TEETH – Tension, Ears, Eyes, Teeth, Head
 - Tension - Overall body tension
 - Moving forward - moving backward
 - Tight - no movement
 - Moving from side to side
 - Body wiggling
 - Ears
 - Forward or back
 - Very alert or relaxed
 - Go back suddenly
 - Perked up and tight or moving from side to side
 - Eyes
 - Open wide
 - Relaxed
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 - Teeth
 - Can you see them?
 - Open mouth is a relaxed dog
 - Closed mouth can be a tense dog
 - Head
 - Relaxed
 - Moving around, looking around
 - Tight, not moving, completely focused



- What are some common myths about dog behavior?
 - A barking dog is not necessarily a biting dog
 - An approaching dog is not necessarily attacking
 - Wagging tail doesn't always mean it is a friendly dog
 - Breed stereotypes

Suggested learning activity:

Divide the class into small groups of three to six per group. The following scenarios may be used for three groups and can be slightly altered and then assigned to larger classes with additional groups:

1. Ask one group to write down several ideas of what they believe would be indications in a dog's body language of NON-aggressive behavior.
2. Another group can be assigned to create a list of types of dog behavior that MAY indicate aggressive behavior.
3. Assign another group the task of listing and describing potential myths about dog behaviors.

Scenario 2

Indicators and Encounters

This segment begins with officers arriving at a residence where a man and woman are apparently involved in a domestic dispute inside the home. During the argument, dogs suddenly appear and advance on the officers creating a surprise encounter. The scenario demonstrates and highlights the officers' handling of the dog encounter as well as the domestic dispute.

Key learning points:

- Biggest instance where officers shoot dogs: unrestrained dogs running around
 - Have a plan: always be prepared
 - There is little difference between this and being prepared for human resistance
- Ask dispatch if dogs are present at the scene
- On-scene visual cues
 - Dog bowl
 - Dog feces
 - Dirt trail/worn path by fence
 - Chain/rope/tether around tree
 - Dog toys
 - Dog house
 - Bedding
 - Animal crates
 - Bumper stickers on cars in driveways
- Scene assessment
 - Slow down when possible
 - Add the dog component to your regular scene assessment
 - Is this an open area?
 - What's on the property?
 - Decide what tools you should bring with you
 - Look down to see where the dog might come from
 - Look for items you can use to keep dogs at a distance
 - Look for areas of escape or retreat if a dog or threat suddenly appear
- Avoidance through situational awareness
 - Continual assessment
 - As you proceed, wherever you are, keep looking for cues
 - Listen for noise
 - Be aware of possible escape routes if confronted by a dog
 - Be aware of tools to use if confronted by a dog
- Call the Reporting Party to come out, if appropriate



- Types of encounters (aimed at less-experienced officers)
 - Responding to stray dog calls
 - Responding to vicious dog calls
 - Dogs used as weapons
 - Surprise/sudden
- When/if officers react out of fear and surprise
 - Civil liability
 - Make decisions on facts presented, not fear
- Unexpected Encounters
 - Indoors and outdoors
 - Responsible for your own safety AND the safety of the public
 - Getting back in car keeps you safe
 - Must also ensure the public is safe
 - Multiple dogs
 - One cage-two dogs
 - If you see one dog, be prepared for others
 - They may protective of each other
 - Try to focus on the lead dog, sometimes the more threatening or confrontational

Additional learning points:

- Dogs used as weapons
 - Rare
 - Very different
 - Often not a chance encounter
 - Officer safety is the same as responding to a threat with a weapon
- Dog-on-dog fight
 - Can try to startle the dogs
 - Car horn, siren, etc.
 - Don't reach in trying to break it up
 - Potential threat to public safety - kids trying to intervene
- Unresponsive owner protected by dog
 - Very sensitive issue
 - Dog is trying to do its job
 - Person is unable to supervise the dog

Suggested facilitation questions and common responses:

What are some important things to consider for a scene assessment with respect to dog encounters?

- Slow down when possible
- Add the dog component to your regular scene assessment
- Is this an open area?
- What's on the property?
- Decide what tools you should bring with you
- Look down to see where the dog might come from
- Look for items you can use to keep dogs at a distance
- Look for areas of escape or retreat should a dog or threat suddenly appear

When approaching a home with no dogs in sight, what are some of the visual cues that might give you clues as to the presence of a dog or dogs?

- Dog bowl
- Dog feces
- Dirt trail/worn path by fence
- Chain/rope/tether around tree
- Dog toys
- Dog house
- Bedding
- Animal crates
- Bumper stickers on cars in driveways



What are some of the methods and considerations for officers when on the scene of a dog-on-dog fight?

- Can try to startle the dogs
- Car horn, siren, etc.
- Don't reach in trying to break it up
- Potential threat to public safety - kids trying to intervene

Suggested learning activity:

Divide the class into small groups of three to six per group. The following scenarios may be used for three groups and can be slightly altered and then assigned to larger classes with additional groups:

1. Ask one group to identify visual cues at a residence that might prepare officers for the presence of a dog or dogs.
2. Another group can be assigned to create a list of what is involved in a scene assessment on a call for service that might prepare officers for a sudden dog encounter.
3. Assign another group the task of identifying the potential negative consequences involved in a surprise dog encounter.

Scenario 3

Tactical Approach

In this scenario, officers are conducting a high-risk car stop. After ordering the driver out of the car, a dog jumps out and begins to roam the scene. Officers maintain vigilance in their handling of the vehicle and occupants while communicating and creating a plan to secure the dog.

Key learning points:

- Officer Safety
 - Deal with event
 - Car stop - pay attention to the car
 - Suspects present - pay attention to the suspects
 - Preservation of life issue?
 - Emergency needing immediate action?
 - Do you need to enter now or wait for Animal Control?
 - Don't avoid rooms with dogs and move farther into a house when clearing
 - Cops are trained to deal with people, not dogs
 - The dog is a distraction that can turn into tunnel vision
- Tactical approach: Defusing and preventing conflict
 - Have the person secure their dog totally out of the picture
 - Don't assume that a dog on a leash is under control
 - Don't make it worse - if you have time, take time
 - Use containment and isolation, fences, rooms, items
 - Communicate your movements with fellow officers
 - Don't pet the dog (as a general rule)
 - Tossing food or toys as a distraction
 - If they pay attention to the food or toy, demonstrates more relaxed posture
 - May be an issue for multiple dogs
 - Toss it behind the dog to give the dog space
 - Door darter; put your foot on the door
- Coordination with Animal Control if dogs are known prior to planned events
 - Get Animal Control to pre-planned events when a dog's presence is suspected
 - Communication both ways once on scene
- Avoid the confrontation
 - Don't walk in thinking there is going to be one
 - Shake the fence/rattle the gate



- De-escalation
 - Body language, posture, bladed stance, gaze, don't show teeth/smile
 - Become more neutral
 - Watch, but don't look in the eye
 - Don't loom over them
 - Bladed Stance
 - Dog will run out to a certain point (space) then stop
 - If you communicate a non-threat, the dog may relax
 - Baby voice
 - Calm voice
 - Higher pitched
 - Don't reach out for the dog, keep hands at your side

Additional learning points:

- Dog's body language
 - Potentially non-aggressive
 - Tail wagging
 - Loose, not tense
 - Looking around
 - Moving around
 - Panting
 - Potentially aggressive
 - Ears back
 - Tail back or tucked under
 - Head down
 - Mouth closed until ready to bite
- Pre-planned events
 - Coordinate ahead of time
 - Have an officer available to handle a dog encounter
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Better yet, a catch pole – If officer is trained in it's use
- Mental rehearsal
 - Modify default behavior, need practice
 - Prepares you for any situation
 - Can be used for dog encounter
 - "What-if?"

Suggested facilitation questions and common responses:

- In this scenario, what were some indicators (based on the dog's body language) that might demonstrate to the viewer that this dog was non-aggressive?
 - Tail wagging
 - Loose, not tense
 - Looking around
 - Moving around
 - Panting
 - Apparently willingly allowed a leash to be put on and willingly got into the patrol vehicle
- During a high-risk car stop such as the one depicted in this scenario, what officer safety considerations should always be observed?
 - Deal with event
 - Car stop - pay attention to the car
 - Suspects present - pay attention to the suspects
 - Preservation of life issue?
 - Emergency needing immediate action?
 - Do you need to enter now (act now) or wait for Animal Control?
 - Cops are trained to deal with people, not dogs
 - The dog is a distraction that can turn into tunnel vision



Scenario 4

Use of Force Options

This segment begins with officers responding to a citizen complaint of a homeless camp. Once on scene, they are surprised by an apparently aggressive dog. Their planning and tactics allowed them to safely and effectively apply minimal force to the dog, which led to a successful outcome for the incident.

Key learning points:

- Ensure that you know and comply with your department policy in any use of force encounter
- Look around you, be aware of the tools you have in the moment
- Dogs don't want to bite you, they want to bite something; offer the dog another option
- Tools to make yourself safer
 - Voice control, voice inflection
 - Try simple commands; dogs know these commands and may respond
 - Stop
 - Stay
 - Go back inside
 - Lay down
 - Etc.
 - Short, quick, with appropriate body language
 - Bean bag weapons, less lethal
 - Dog will often run away
 - Baton
 - Offer it to the dog's mouth
 - Use it to distract the dog
 - Jacket or even a bottle of water
 - Catch pole or snare
 - Officer must be trained in their use
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Loud noise
 - Burst of something visual
 - Fog confuses the dog
 - No cross-contamination as pepper spray does
 - Pepper spray
 - Sofa cushion
 - Barbecue grill
 - Horn
 - Taser is not a capture tool
 - Hard to hit, but can be used as a direct strike
 - Different reaction than humans
 - Get dog in back of patrol car for a non-threatening dog
- Use of force options
 - Officer safety and public safety are paramount
 - Take into consideration your surroundings
 - Use of force escalation or continuum should be very similar to that of human encounters
 - If you can't take a safe shot, know that you have other options
 - No matter what, there are times when you may have to shoot a dog
- Use of deadly force against a dog
 - Shoot to stop the threat
 - Be very careful with backdrop
 - Dogs run laterally more so than humans and backdrop can change instantly
 - Use of force escalation or continuum should be very similar to that of human encounters
 - If you can't take a safe shot, know that you have other options
 - No matter what, there are times when you may have to shoot a dog
 - Be aware of others in the immediate surroundings who could be affected/hit
 - Known cases of officers killed and injured by other officers shooting at a dog
 - Citizens have been killed and injured by officers shooting at a dog



Additional learning points:

- What is the mission?
 - Can you extricate yourself?
 - Come back another time
 - Dealing with the surprise approach
- Known cases of officers killed and injured by other officers shooting at a dog
- Citizens have been killed and injured by officers shooting at a dog

Suggested facilitation questions and common responses:

When surprised by an apparently aggressive dog, what tools might be available to you?

- Voice control, voice inflection
 - Try simple commands; dogs know these commands and may respond
 - Stop
 - Stay
 - Go back inside
 - Lay down
 - Etc.
 - Short, quick, with appropriate body language
- Bean bag weapons, less lethal
 - Dog will often run away
- Baton
 - Offer it to the dog's mouth
 - Use it to distract the dog
- Jacket or even a bottle of water
- Catch pole or snare
 - Officer must be trained in their use
- Fire extinguisher
 - Loud noise
 - Burst of something visual
 - Fog confuses the dog
 - No cross-contamination as pepper spray does
- Pepper spray
- Sofa cushion
- Barbecue grill
- Horn
- Taser is not a capture tool
 - Hard to hit, but can be used as a direct strike
 - Different reaction than humans
- Get dog in back of patrol car for a non-threatening dog

What are some officer safety considerations when discharging a firearm at an aggressive dog?

- Shoot to stop the threat
- Be very careful with backdrop
- Dogs run laterally more so than humans and backdrop can change instantly
- Use of force escalation or continuum should be very similar to that of human encounters
- If you can't take a safe shot, know that you have other options
- No matter what, there are times when you may have to shoot a dog
- Be aware of others in the immediate surroundings who could be affected/hit
- Known cases of officers killed and injured by other officers shooting at a dog
- Citizens have been killed and injured by officers shooting at a dog

Suggested learning activity:

Divide the class into small groups of three to six per group. The following scenarios may be used for three groups and can be slightly altered and then assigned to larger classes with additional groups:

1. Ask one group to provide a summary overview of their department policy as it relates to use of force against dogs.
2. Another group can be assigned to identify and describe tools available to law enforcement for use of force situations with dogs.
3. Assign another group the task of describing important considerations when using deadly force against a dog.



Scenario 5

Aftermath and Recovering from Incidents

This segment depicts officers responding to a 911 call of a group of vicious dogs running loose in the area. When officers arrive in front of a home, several dogs run from a backyard toward the officers. The officers work to secure the dogs and are then assisted by an Animal Control officer who arrives on the scene.

Key learning points:

- Possible public reactions
 - Public perception of dog(s) may be different than that of arriving officers
 - Public may have preconceived ideas of dog breed
 - Officers may have preconceived ideas of dog breed
 - Dogs actions may be incorrectly deemed as vicious
 - Loud deep barking
 - Rapid movement
 - Neither of these are indications of aggression, but both could be indicators
 - Public may believe dogs are friendly and when law enforcement arrives, dogs are obviously aggressive
 - Social media may have caused a skewed perception of dog encounters
- When possible and circumstances dictate, call Animal Control
 - Understand their role and tools
 - Catch pole may cause dog to react aggressively once the pole is applied
 - Natural reaction
 - Communication with Animal Control officer will ensure that the situation is normal and under control
- Make a reasonable attempt to contact the owner
 - The dog owner is likely the best means to control the dog
- Aftermath of a dog incident
 - If significant force is used against a dog, how you deal with the aftermath becomes critical
 - You should have a plan in place to provide care for the dog, just as you would for a human
 - You may be obligated to provide some level of care for the dog
 - Civil codes 1834 and 1846 might apply
 - 1834 and 1846 - Duty to provide care and medical care
 - May be applicable to officers in a use of force situation against a dog or human
 - If the owner or custodian is not present
 - Call Animal Control or other resource for veterinary care
 - Know and follow your department policy
- Have a plan for the aftermath
 - If deadly force against a dog occurs
 - Do you have a veterinarian available?
 - Do you have an agreement with this veterinarian for taking care of a dog injured by officers?
 - Deadly force is always highly scrutinized
 - Ensure that all of the facts and reasons for the deadly force are well-articulated
- There has been a rise in lawsuits
 - America has become a nation that embraces pets
 - They are part of our culture
 - They are considered family
 - Owner or custodian will likely be very upset at any use of force against their dog
 - Community reactions where dogs have been shot
 - Social media pages dedicated to the animal
 - Candlelight vigils have been held
 - Overwhelmingly, citizens are animal lovers
 - When we have negative encounters it impacts law enforcement
 - This is an opportunity to reach out to the community and open lines of communication regarding dog encounters



- Consider the surroundings, the level of injury, the availability of medical care, and witness reaction before considering euthanasia for the dog
 - Know your department policy on euthanasia for dogs
- 73% of shootings end up killing the dog
- Additional rounds fired after the first shots have a greater probability of negative public perception
- If you use deadly force but miss and the dog runs away, this may have achieved the goal
 - Running vicious dogs could still be a threat
- There will likely be community reactions
 - Social media reactions
 - The financial cost of lawsuits in dog encounters can be enormous
 - Officers can be personally accountable to lawsuits
- Be in compliance with your department policy for deadly force encounters with dogs
 - In order to do so, you must understand this policy before any encounter
 - Document the reasons and facts surrounding the incident
 - Document how you were within department policy and law
 - Document why your actions were reasonable
- Officer safety is first priority
 - This includes being safe on the streets, in the courts, and in social media
- Penal Codes for dog encounters where dogs may be used as a weapon
 - Penal Code 399.5 – Substantial injury by a mischievous animal
 - Penal Code 240, 242 or 245 – Assault, battery and assault with a deadly weapon
 - If you seize the animal, under what authority?
 - Penal code 597.1 is a possibility
 - Owner permits animal to be in street, etc, without proper care and attention
 - Misdemeanor
 - Has notifications that apply

Additional learning points:

- If an officer is deemed to have injured or killed a dog outside of department policy or procedure, ramifications can be severe
 - Departmental investigations and discipline
 - Potential law violations
 - Civil lawsuits
 - Potential for punitive damages against the officer
 - The department may elect not to pay, leaving the officer responsible for monetary award
- If a dog causes substantial death or injury to a person
 - 399 and 399.5 - remember these sections
 - History of aggressive conduct in the past
 - The owner or custodian knew or should have known
 - Subsequently allowed dog to be at large or failed to take proper care
- Information from dispatch can help prepare officers for a dog encounter
- Ask the dispatcher if there are any dogs in the home, just as you might ask if they have weapons
- Dogs are very much perceived as family members
- If taking a report of a vicious dog and/or dog bite - treat this as any other report
- Equally important
- Could be the foundation to later substantiate a vicious dog taken from the owner
- Thousands of dog encounters each year, nearly all are within department policy
- Still, we can likely reduce the numbers of dog shootings with training
- Have a plan for dog encounters
- Train and equip to that plan



Suggested facilitation questions and common responses:

Why has there been a rise in lawsuits?

- America has become a nation that embraces pets
- They are part of our culture
- They are considered family
- Owner or custodian will likely be very upset at any use of force against their dog
- Community reactions where dogs have been shot
- Overwhelmingly, citizens are animal lovers
- Consider the surroundings, the level of injury, the availability of medical care, and witness reaction before considering euthanasia for the dog
- 73% of shootings end up killing the dog
- Additional rounds fired after the first shots have a greater probability of negative public perception
- If you use deadly force but miss and the dog runs away, this may have achieved the goal
- There will likely be community reactions
- Be in compliance with your department policy for deadly force encounters with dogs
- Officer safety is first priority

If you are involved in a significant use of force against a dog, what are some things to consider that might mitigate a potential lawsuit?

- If significant force is used against a dog, how you deal with the aftermath becomes critical
- You should have a plan in place to provide care for the dog, just as you would for a human
- You may be obligated to provide some level of care for the dog
- If the owner or custodian is not present
- Call Animal Control or other resource for veterinary care
- Know and follow your department policy

Suggested learning activity:

Divide the class into small groups of three to six per group. The following scenarios may be used for three groups and can be slightly altered and then assigned to larger classes with additional groups:

1. Ask one group to list some of the reasons for the rise in lawsuits against officers who have used force against a dog.
2. Another group can be assigned to describe some steps or considerations immediately following the use of significant force against a dog that might mitigate a lawsuit.
3. Assign another group the task of identifying and describing penal code sections that might apply to an encounter with an aggressive dog.

Conclusion

This facilitation guide provides information needed to assist the instructor in delivering an interactive and goal-oriented training session. After completing this course, students should have additional tools and considerations for how to better handle an encounter with a dog. Students should be able to have a better understanding of a dog's body language, how to consider and then use tools to fend off an aggressive animal, and how best to keep themselves safer on the streets, in the courts, and in social media.



Student Study Guide – Answer Key

A blank copy of the Student Study Guide is attached as a separate document for individual viewers wishing to work with the agency designated trainer or supervisor for POST CPT credit. This is not a formal testing tool. Although sample answers are listed below, there are sometimes additional correct answers a student may provide. Those answers should be evaluated by the trainer. The following answers match the video content and are listed for general guidance.

During a dog encounter, if you recognize that the breed of dog is a Pit Bull, what immediate assumptions can you make? A

- A. **None - the breed of dog is a stereotype and each dog will be different**
- B. This breed is considered to be in the top 20 for aggression and officers should be concerned, but not alarmed.
- C. The Pit Bull breed is considered one of the most aggressive dogs and officers should assume this dog will be aggressive
- D. Based on the history and reputation of this breed, officers should be immediately concerned for their safety and attempt to extricate themselves from the situation.

The acronym “TEETH” is a tool for describing the behavior of dogs. Which of the following is most accurate for describing the first “T” - Tension? F

- A. Look at the overall body tension
- B. Is the dog wiggly or stiff?
- C. Is the dog lying down?
- D. Is the dog moving or standing still?
- E. All of the above
- F. **A and B only**

According to the training video information, the largest numbers of dog shootings occur with which of the following? C

- A. Pit Bulls
- B. Larger dog breeds - above 50 pounds
- C. **Dogs that officers encounter out of surprise**
- D. Small dogs that attack officers’ lower extremities

In the scenario where the male and female are inside the residence arguing, which of the following can be seen on the walkway as the officers approach the front door? E

- A. Dog toys on the walkway
- B. An animal cage with a large dog inside
- C. A pet water bowl on the walkway
- D. All of the above
- E. **A and C only**



In the high-risk car stop scenario, an unrestrained dog comes out of the suspect vehicle. Which of the following best describes what happens to the dog? A

A. An officer puts a restraining device on the dog's neck and leads the dog to climb into the back of a police car

B. The owner is allowed to put the dog back inside the suspect vehicle and the door is closed, keeping the dog inside

C. The dog runs away and is no longer seen in the video

D. The dog lays down off to the side and does not interfere with the officers or the suspect

In the scenario where officers approach a homeless camp, they are confronted by an apparently aggressive dog. Officers spray the dog with a fire extinguisher. List at least three reasons described by the subject matter experts in this video that support this use of the fire extinguisher.

1. **The extinguisher gives a loud noise**

2. **It gives a burst of something visible that may confuse the dog**

3. **It's likely to interrupt the attack and cause the dog to run elsewhere**

4. **It is non-toxic**

5. **No cross-contamination as pepper spray might have**

Which of the following reasons most accurately describes why a Taser is an effective tool against a vicious or aggressive dog? E

A. It is considered a "capture" tool and will immediately render a dog unconscious

B. A "spark" test from a Taser (without even firing the darts) will sometimes scare off a dog

C. Although you should turn the Taser sideways in order to fire at a horizontal target, if the dog is struck by the darts, it will likely be effective

D. All of the above

E. **B and C only**

If a dog is running loose and appears to be aggressive or vicious, the best person to control that dog would be the owner.

Answer: **True**

In the scenario where officers are dispatched on multiple vicious dogs loose in the area, when they arrive on scene, several dogs come from a gated yard area and run toward the officers. The passenger officer stands behind his car door, staying close to the car and apparently using the door as cover. Which of the following best describes how the subject matter experts critiqued this method? C

A. This was a poor tactic and reduced the officer's ability to escape

B. This was a poor tactic and did nothing to help cover the partner officer

C. **This was a good tactic as the door did provide cover**

D. This was a poor tactic because the officer had to turn his back on his partner

