

San Diego Police Department K-9 Unit FAQs

Q. How long have K-9s been utilized in law enforcement?

A. K-9s have been utilized in law enforcement dating as far back as the Middle Ages, with the first formal training of police dogs beginning in 1899 in Belgium. Police dogs were first used in the United States in 1911 by the New York Police Department and have been considered integral members of the law enforcement community.

Q. Do San Diego Police Department officers receive benefits?

A. Benefits for San Diego Police Department uniformed officers currently include a Flexible Benefits Plan (health, dental, vision), retirement program (3% at age 55), and 401k/Deferred Compensation Plans are available. <https://www.sandiego.gov/join-san-diego-police-department/benefits>

Q. Who is responsible for the SDPD's K-9 at the dog's retirement?

A. The San Diego Police Department's Canine Unit Operation Manual (<https://bit.ly/3wDmqdE>, section 4.14) specifies retirement procedures, but current policy has the ongoing medical care and expenses for the retired K-9s borne by the adopting handler.

Q. What is the San Diego Police Canine Association?

A. The San Diego Police Canine Association is a 501c3 non-profit organization whose mission is to offset the costs of the retired police dog. www.sdk9.org

Q. What are some examples of costs offset by the San Diego Police Canine Association for the retired K-9?

A. Surgeries, dental care, medication, end of life expenses, etc.

Q. How many K-9s are currently serving in SDPD?

A. There are 36 active SDPD K-9s. While serving, they are City employees.

Q. How many retired SDPD K-9s are there?

A. There are 25 retired SDPD K-9s.

Q. How long do K-9s serve in the San Diego Police Department?

A. The average service is six to seven years of active duty service.

Q. How many times have SDPD's K-9s been utilized this calendar year?

A. SDPD's K-9s have been deployed close to 1,000 times this calendar year, with a minuscule amount of times the K-9 has bitten a suspect. Subject matter experts have noted that the sheer presence of a police dog or hearing the bark of a police dog has a psychological effect on humans making the apprehension of a suspect easier.

Q. What is considered a K-9 deployment?

A. A deployment is when the K-9 exits the SDPD vehicle.

Q. Are the SDPD K-9s male dogs or female dogs?

A. The vast majority of the K-9s are male, however, SDPD has had female dogs, too.

Q. Are the SDPD Handlers male or female?

A. SDPD is proud to have both male and female officers as K-9 handlers. To be a handler, the officer must complete 320 hours of training with their K-9 before being assigned in the field.

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