



Police Dog Services

Quick Facts

- A dog can search a car in approximately three minutes.
- Dogs can work up to four hours with rest intervals.
- Currently, there are 112 RCMP dog teams across Canada.
- The estimated cost to train a member and dog team is \$60,000.
- Healthy police service dogs cost less than \$1,000 annually to maintain.
- On average, a police service dog retires at the age of seven.

Overview

From 1908 to 1935 members occasionally used privately owned dogs to assist them in their investigations. The RCMP dog section was formed in 1935 with the acquisition of three German shepherds: Black Lux, Dale of Cawsalta and Sultan. In 1937, Commissioner MacBrien, satisfied with the value of police dogs, ordered an RCMP training school for dogs and handlers to be established at Calgary. In 1940, the RCMP won its first case involving dog search evidence.

Police Dog Service Training Centre

The RCMP Police Dog Service Training Centre was established at Innisfail, Alberta in 1965. The training staff comprises one officer in charge, one staff sergeant program manager, one staff sergeant senior trainer, five sergeant trainers, one acquisition sergeant, two corporal pretrainers and a support staff of six public service employees.

Dogs

The RCMP uses purebred German shepherds as well as Belgian shepherds (Malinois) in perfect physical condition. The RCMP considers these breeds to be the best choice for police work as they are adaptable, versatile, strong, courageous and able to work under extreme climatic conditions. Male dogs are usually chosen. A dog entering the RCMP training program has a 17 percent chance of succeeding due to the high standards required.

The dog starts its police training when it is from 12 to 18 months old. Basic training is approximately 17 weeks, but training never really ends as daily practice is required to maintain a high level of physical and mental fitness. Dogs and handlers are validated to the Doghandler Course Training Standard Field Level capability annually.



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Dog Handlers

Dog handlers are regular members who volunteer for this particular duty. Candidates must go through a staffing selection process, which involves meeting certain criteria. Although expertise is acquired through training and experience, a dog handler should have a tolerance towards animals and be capable of appreciating the known dog instincts. There are currently over 400 names on the waiting list for police services dog training.

Duties

The responsibilities of police services dogs include locating lost persons; tracking criminals; searching for narcotics, explosives, illicit alcohol and stills, crime scene evidence and lost property; VIP protection; crowd control, in conjunction with tactical troop; hostage situations; avalanche search and rescue; and police/community relations.

Bravery Award

On the morning of August 31, 1989, a devastating gas explosion rocked a building in Ottawa, creating considerable structural damage. Much of the building still standing was unusable and in danger of collapsing. Although most of the tenants who were in the building at the time of explosion had been safely evacuated, there were still some people trapped inside.

Rescuers worked quickly and carefully searched for trapped victims, while under the threat of a second explosion.

Constable Joseph Guy Denis Amyot, a Dog Handler at A Division (Ottawa), Ottawa Airport Detachment, was off duty when he heard the news reports of the explosion. Volunteering his services and those of police service dog Jocko, he entered the building accompanied by Captain Gerard Patry of the Ottawa Fire Department to search the debris for victims trapped beneath the rubble. Despite the dangers, they searched the most heavily damaged portion of the building for a missing boy, who was later found alive in the rubble.

In recognition of his courage and professionalism, Constable J.G.D. Amyot was awarded a *Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery*. Captain G. Patry of the Ottawa Fire Department was awarded a *Commissioner's Commendation to a Civilian* for his courage and assistance to Constable Amyot.

For more information, please visit www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca.