



21 March 2013

Joshua Grainger
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Dear Mr Grainger

I refer to your request dated 18 February 2013 in which you requested any policy document that New Zealand Police has on the use of drug detector dogs, particularly the use of drug detector dogs in public schools.

Police find attached the following excerpts from the Police manual:

- General information for Police employees about Police dogs including
 - Detector dogs
 - Deploying detector dogs.

Further I note that Police is currently in the process of developing guidelines for the use of drug detector dogs in schools. It is anticipated that these are likely to be made publicly available.

Yours sincerely

Mike Webb
Acting General Manager: Strategy, Policy and Performance
Police National Headquarters



> General information for Police employees about Police dogs

General information for Police employees about Police dogs

Publication Number:

Detector dogs

Detector dogs are dogs that are trained solely to detect target odours and do not perform any patrol dog functions. Dog teams are primarily located in major centres where they can provide support to a number of policing areas or districts.

Police currently deploy explosive, narcotic and firearm detector dogs. Some narcotic detector dogs are also trained to find firearms. Explosive detector dogs are not trained in any dual roles.

Narcotics detector dogs

Narcotics detector dog teams are used to support drug investigations by General Duties Branch and investigative policing groups. The role of these dog teams is to:

- locate narcotics that are difficult to find or would not normally be found during a standard search
- search and clear locations quickly and efficiently
- reduce the manpower required to conduct searches.

Target drugs

Dogs are trained to detect:

- class A, B and C controlled drugs
- cannabis and its derivatives
- heroin
- cocaine
- amphetamine-type substances
- precursor substances used in the clandestine manufacture of narcotics.

Dog response

Until 2007, Police narcotics dogs were trained and deployed using the "active response" method; i.e. they were trained to locate narcotics by actively retrieving them, or actively scratching at the source of the narcotic in an attempt to retrieve it.

Today, most narcotics detector dogs are trained and deployed using the "passive response method". This means that, when they detect the odour of the target narcotic, they will search for the source, and when found, will adopt a passive position (SIT or FREEZE) to indicate its location to the handler.

General searching

In general searching, dogs are deployed to free search (the dog is released to run free), or the search is controlled by searching with the dog on a lead. Typical deployment examples include:

- searching houses and vehicles during the execution of a search warrant
- free searching outside areas, where the dog can cover large areas in a short period of time.

Firearms detector dogs

Firearms detector dog teams are used to support General Duties Branch and investigative policing groups in the same way that narcotics detector dog teams are used. In some cases, narcotics detector dog teams are dual-trained to find firearms.

The role of firearms detector dog teams is to locate firearms (including components and parts), ammunition, discharged shell casings and black powder.

Firearms detector dogs are passive-response trained. When they detect the target firearm's odour, they will actively search for the source, and then adopt a passive position (SIT or FREEZE) to indicate its location to the handler. Typical deployment examples include:

- searching houses and vehicles during the execution of a search warrant
- free searching outside areas, where the dog can cover large areas in a short space of time.

Explosives detector dogs

Explosives detector dog teams are used within Police to support frontline policing activities and the Specialist Search Group (SSG).

Dogs are trained to operate in a variety of operational environments to detect a range of commercial and military explosives. Teams are deployed to:

- clear venues for planned operations
- locate unlawfully possessed explosives
- detect explosives and clear scenes at improvised explosive device (IED) incidents.

Explosives detector dogs are passive-response trained. This means that when they detect the target explosive's odour, they will search for the source and then adopt a passive position (SIT or FREEZE) to indicate its location to the handler.

Typical deployment examples include:

- clearing the safe arrival point of secondary devices at IED incidents
- clearing the scene at IED incidents
- detecting IEDs at incidents
- clearing venues for VIP operations
- searching locations during the execution of search warrants to locate explosives.

Note: Explosives detector dogs are not trained to locate firearms.

Deployment as a result of bomb threats or warnings

Before you decide whether to call an explosives detector dog to the scene that is the subject of a bomb warning, consider:

- the nature of the information received
- any time limit indicated by the caller
- the type of premises, place, or vehicle to be searched
- whether a physical search is warranted or practical.

Note: Explosives Detector Dog handlers are not explosives experts and the dogs are merely an aid in the search for explosives and explosive devices as part of specialist search response.

See "[Improvised explosive devices and bomb threats](#)" for more detail and instructions that must be complied with at all times.



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Deploying detector dogs

Clear people from areas to be searched

Detector dogs are most often deployed in places occupied by people and during the execution of search warrants. While the dogs are capable of working around people, clearing rooms and areas of people enhances their capability and removes possible distractions.

Detector dogs are often deployed when executing search warrants and there is hostility towards police. Police employees must be alert to the risk of a person trying to injure the dog, either directly, or indirectly using domestic dogs.

Secure domestic dogs

Before taking a Police dog into any place, secure the domestic dogs to prevent an attack and eliminate distractions.

Deployment outside parent districts

All request to deploy explosives or drug detector dogs outside the district in which the dogs are based must, where time permits, be made to the dog handler's district for a decision.

Deployment procedures

Follow these steps.

Step	Action
1	Contact the OC Dog Section who will manage the request process.
2	In the absence of the OC contact the emergency response manager or other manager that the dog section reports to.
3	Contact the handler for advice and guidance.
4	In an urgent situation make the request via the Communication Centre. Where the urgency of the incident demands immediate deployment without the districts prior authority, the District Commander must be advised at the first opportunity thereafter.