

# Department of Public Safety

**Keith Squires**

*Commissioner*

**Peace Officer Standards & Training**

**Travis Rees**

*Director*

Effective 1 January 2024

## Response to a K-9 Program Inquiry

Thank you for your inquiry into the Utah POST K-9 Program. Establishing a state-of-the-art program has been a major effort for the Police Academy. Accordingly, we are very proud of its success. We have been called the most constitutionally conservative K-9 training center in the USA. A survey in 2009 regarding Narco Detector Dogs revealed that the K-9 Program has been responsible for well over 24 billion dollars of illegal narcotics seizures since its inception in 1989. Many hundreds of felons have been captured and dozens of law enforcement officers' lives have been saved, due to the actions of Patrol Dogs trained at Utah POST.

Utah POST utilizes a "Reality-Based" format for K-9 training. The initial phase of every class deals with the fundamentals of training and as soon as the Handler/Dog are ready, the remainder of the class is conducted in

a real-world environment. Likewise, the Officer receives classroom instruction on important lectures and legal issues which are then applied in scenario training later in the courses. The goal is to have a balance of training/deployment technology within the constraints of Constitutionally established citizens' rights. Accordingly, we have created a training environment that resolves both concerns.

The basic course presented here is for Patrol Dogs and Handlers. The curriculum corresponds to professional- and court-accepted standards. Options are available for agencies with higher intensity/volume of Patrol Dog needs, as well as those agencies who may deploy less often. Each skill level consists of the following skills: tracking/trailing of suspects/victims, criminal evidence recovery with a passive indication that does not contaminate its evidentiary value, obedience/agility, and criminal apprehension.

Of value is the fact that we are able to teach the dogs to discriminate between a fleeing or hostile suspect and a surrendering suspect or innocent person. In other words, we teach dogs to discriminate the level of force to exhibit when encountering an individual. Two common K-9 “capture” philosophies of Patrol Dog training/deployment exist in America. These are most identified as: FIND/BITE and FIND/BARK. Either or both philosophies may be taught here (at the Handler’s option) to the same dog. The Utah Police Academy teaches DISENGAGE behavior to all varieties of Patrol Dogs. The DISENGAGE is a “shutdown” command which may be issued when an exigent circumstance arises during an apprehension.

Comprehensive training courses are offered for a variety of Detector Dogs. The training protocol is based upon high energy, yet low stress principles that imitate instinctive hunting behaviors. This protocol produces Detector Dogs that are highly efficient, have extended mental endurance, and are likely to exhibit spontaneous indications.

Narcotics Detectors, Explosive Detectors, Cadaver Detectors, and Wildlife Detector Dogs are enrolled in nearly every class.

Tactical Deployment (SWAT) Dogs are trained here as well, upon demand from requesting agencies. This training runs concurrent with a Patrol Dog class. All training is reality-based for tactical applications. One requirement of this class is that a minimum of four Utah students must be enrolled to conduct the class.

A Police Search and Rescue Dog (PSAR) course has been developed to aid in that unique function. This course is completely reality-based and has a nexus of criminal investigations in the event the search is for an abducted individual. One particular advantage to this training protocol is that a stable, clear-headed Patrol Dog, Drug Dog, etc. can be cross trained for this function. This program has been extremely valuable in the State of Utah.

The Avalanche Dog phase of this course has been adopted by multiple Utah ski resorts as beneficial to their avalanche responses.

In addition to K-9 and Handler training, POST offers advanced training for all disciplines of K-9 Instructors, Judges, and Unit Administrators. An instructor acquires specific knowledge and develops skills necessary to train K-9's and Handlers from entry level to certification. A Judge acquires knowledge and skill in the evaluation process for certification of "Street worthiness." An Administrator acquires knowledge on managing the day-to-day operations according to administrative and legal constraints. Simply stated, the K-9 is the "Tool," the Handler is the "Operator," the instructor is the "Mechanic," the Judge is the "Inspector," and the Administrator is the "Coordinator."

Utah POST is operated by legislated funds and other designated monies. No tuition fee is assessed to In-State officers of any government level. A service fee of \$2,175.00 is assessed for each Out-of-State officer

attending each training class. This fee is pro-rated when an officer attends a certain portion of a class. Refer to the detailed course descriptions in the following pages.

POST has a dormitory facility which may be reached at (801) 957-5444. Students must bring their own linens for the single size beds. Hotel/Motel accommodation is also available close to the Police Academy. K-9's can be housed at the POST kennel facility at no charge, first-come-first-served. Only five Out-of-State dogs are allowed to reside at the POST K-9 Kennel during any course. To best serve the student/agency, POST emphasizes training the Handler how to train his/her own K-9. The graduating Handler becomes autonomous upon graduation and may complete the K-9's training at home if necessary. Most K-9's can be trained within the course duration. Additionally, the Handler is trained on the procedures to conduct In-Service (maintenance) training after leaving POST. As a point of clarification regarding a K-9, POST adheres to the law enforcement consensus of recommending four hours of In-Service training per discipline per dog per week. [Florida v. Harris, 133 S.Ct. 1050 - 2013].

Certifications are effectual as follows: K-9's for 12 months; Handlers for duration of their K-9 assignment; Instructors and/or Judges for 36 months. Re-certification when the respective certificate has expired is available upon request. If an officer seeks to receive credit for prior training, merely submit documentation so POST may evaluate the possibility of waiving a portion of a training course. The minimum amount of time a student is allowed to participate in any course is 40 hours, regardless of the extent of prior training.

Sincerely,

Sgt. Art J. Lopez  
K-9 Training Supervisor  
801-209-5790 cell, artlopez@utah.gov email

**Utah Peace Officer Standards & Training**  
**K-9 Program**  
**Description of K-9 Classes**

**Patrol Dog: 22 January – 14 March 2024; 29 July 2024 – 19 September 2024**

A training course for K-9's, Handlers, Instructors, and Judges of Patrol Dogs. The curriculum is founded in Reality-Based training concepts and includes in-depth instruction for Handlers training their own Patrol Dogs, Instructors training Patrol Dogs or Handlers, and Judges training Patrol Dogs, Handlers, or Instructors and also evaluating/certifying Dogs, Handlers, and Instructors. Handlers are supervised closely as they train their own dogs, with the intent that the Handlers may be autonomous upon graduation. Instructors are supervised closely as they train Handlers and Patrol Dogs, providing considerable "student teaching" opportunities. Judges are supervised closely as they evaluate Patrol Dogs, Handlers, and Instructors throughout the course. All three skill levels are taught simultaneously via an innovative "Tiered Skill Level" training environment. Considerable time is spent in report writing and preparation for criminal/civil court testimony. Certification may be acquired in each of these skill sets via Single-Blind examinations.

The Handler may choose to train his/her Patrol Dog in either the Detaining concepts, Handler Control concepts, or may teach both skills to the same Dog. This new protocol is intended to provide a wider variety of options for Agencies and Officers in their Patrol Dog applications.

**Detector Dog: 29 April – 20 June 2024; 21 October – 12 December 2024**

A training course for Handlers, Instructors, and Judges of Detector Dogs. The curriculum is founded in street-realistic training concepts and includes in-depth instruction for Handlers training their own Detector Dogs, Instructors training Detector Dogs or Handlers, and Judges training Detector Dogs, Handlers, or Instructors and evaluating/certifying Dogs, Handlers, and Instructors. Handlers are supervised closely as they train their own dogs, with the intent that the Handlers may be autonomous upon graduation. Instructors are supervised closely as they train Handlers and their Detector Dogs, providing considerable "student teaching" opportunities. Judges are supervised closely as they evaluate Detector Dogs, Handlers, and Instructors throughout the course. All three skill levels are taught simultaneously via an innovative "Tiered Skill Level" training environment. Detector Dog categories include Narcotics, Explosives, and other categories when sufficient requests are received. Enrollment in multiple categories is by permission only. Certification may be acquired in each of these skill sets via Single-Blind examinations.

**SWAT Dog: TBA.**

*NOTE: A minimum of four Utah students need to be enrolled in this class in order for it to be held. If four Utah students are not enrolled, the class may be postponed.*

A training/certification course for SWAT Dogs, Handlers, Instructors, and Judges. The curriculum is founded in street-realistic training concepts and includes in-depth instruction for Handlers training their own SWAT Dogs, Instructors training SWAT Dogs or Handlers, and Judges training SWAT Dogs, Handlers, or Instructors and also evaluating/certifying Dogs, Handlers, and Instructors. Handlers are supervised closely as they handle their own dogs, allowing the Handlers to be autonomous upon graduation. Instructors are supervised closely as they train Handlers and their Dogs, providing considerable "student teaching" opportunities. Judges are supervised closely as they evaluate Dogs, Handlers, and Instructors throughout the course. All three skill levels are taught simultaneously via an innovative "Tiered Skill Level" training

environment. Skill set options include the following:

1. Tactical Heeling while Moving in a Team Formation.
2. Engagement Maneuvers while Moving in a Team Formation
3. Vertical/Horizontal Movement Displayed by Handler and Dog.
4. Physical Endurance Displayed by Dog.
5. Perimeter Control During Tactical Operations.
6. Tandem Apprehension of Multiple Suspects.
7. Discrimination of a Targeted Subject.
8. Disruption of a Targeted Subject.
9. Stealth Entry, Team Movement, and Clearing High-Risk Areas.
10. Forced Extraction of a Non-Compliant High-Risk Subject; and
11. Forced Capture of a Non-Compliant High-Risk Subject.

### **K-9 Unit Manager:**

**17 – 18 January 2024**

**The course is available to attended via Home-Study.**

A training course for Mid-Level Management Personnel which will include training in the supervision of various aspects of Canine/Handler Selection, Canine Medical Care, Legal Authority and Constraints, Current Case Law, Record-Keeping, Policy-Procedure-Practices, Establishing Training/Deployment Standards, Handler/Canine Certification, Quality Control, Auditing, and Use of Force Review Processes. The course is now available via CD and includes photos, video, and even the Written Examination associated with K-9 Unit Manager knowledge and training.

To enroll in this course, email the K-9 Program Supervisor at [artlopez@utah.gov](mailto:artlopez@utah.gov) and include your mailing address.

**Utah Peace Officer Standards & Training**  
**K-9 Program**  
**Training Course Information**

Participation in any of the following K-9 training courses requires that the student is a bona fide government officer. There is no tuition for participation, except that a service fee of \$2,175.00 is required for Out-of-State students who attend a full 8-week course. An on-site cafeteria is available at the POST complex. An on-site kennel facility is provided for student dogs at no charge, first-come-first-served. All dogs must be vaccinated for rabies, distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza, parvovirus, coronavirus, kennel cough, should be receiving heartworm preventative, and have a parasite examination prior to enrollment. Dogs with stable temperaments that tolerate strangers and children are favored in this program. Dogs with overly aggressive tendencies are discouraged.

**Patrol Dog Courses**

Please bring the following with you to class: (1)duty gear including uniform; (2)full-body bitesuit if available; (3)agitation muzzle if available; (4)undercover sleeves if available; (5)50 - .22 or .38 caliber blanks with handgun; (6)other apprehension equipment if available; (7)obedience training equipment if available; (8)tracking leash if available; (9)seasonal clothing for rugged training and sturdy footwear; (10)towels and toiletries; (11)dog food; (12)signed waiver of liability.

**Detector Dog Courses**

Please bring the following with you to class: (1)duty gear including uniform; (2)substances to be trained on if available; (3)airtight substance storage containers and also training aids if available; (4)fifty bills of uncirculated currency which has been handled only by bank personnel and then sealed in an airtight container; (5)seasonal clothing for rugged training and sturdy footwear; (6)towels and toiletries; (7)dog food; (8)signed waiver of liability.

**SWAT Dog Courses**

Call/email for specific information related to this class. Contact Art Lopez (801) 209-5790.

**Utah Peace Officer Standards & Training  
K-9 Program  
Accommodations**

**POST Dormitory**

The POST dormitory is often available for housing during a K-9 Program class. Normally, there is no charge for residing in the dormitory. Telephone 801-256-2300 and ask for the dormitory reservations personnel to make reservations.

**Area Hotels/Motels**

The Hotels/Motels listed below (alphabetical order) are very close to the Utah Police Academy K- 9 complex and have been used by students attending training courses here.

1. Comfort Inn, 2229 West City Center Court, West Valley City, UT 84119  
Telephone 877-424-6423
2. Country Inn & Suites, 3422 South Decker Lake Drive, West Valley City, UT 84119  
Telephone 800-456-4000
3. Crystal Inn, 2254 West City Center, West Valley City, UT 84119  
Telephone 888-977-9400
4. Extended Stay America, 2310 West City Center Court, West Valley City, UT 84119  
Telephone 800-398-7829
5. Hampton Inn - Murray, 606 West 4500 South, Murray, UT 84123  
Telephone 800-426-7866
6. Quality Inn, 4465 South Century Drive, Murray, UT 84201  
Telephone 800-228-5151
7. Rodeway Inn and Suites, 3540 South 2200 West, West Valley City, UT 84119  
Telephone 800-228-2000
8. Sleep Inn, 3440 South 2200 West, West Valley City, UT 84119  
Telephone 800-627-5337
9. Hampton Inn, 277 West Sego Lilly Drive, Sandy, UT 84070  
Telephone

**Utah Peace Officer Standards & Training  
K-9 Program  
Application for Course Enrollment**

Name		Birth Date	
Department		Today's Date	
Full Department Address			
Work Phone	Home Phone	Cell Phone	
Other Phone	Email		
Supervisor's Name/Rank		Supervisor Phone	
Emergency Contact		Emergency Phone	
Name/Breed of Dog		Whelp Date (if known, or estimate)	
Prior Training/Certification of Officer			
Prior Training/Certification of Dog			
Circle Course Attending   Patrol Dog   Narco Dog   Explo Dog   SWAT Dog PSAR Dog   Cadaver Dog   Tracking/Trailing Dog			
Circle Skill Level Attending   Handler   Instructor   Judge   Administrator   Other			
Reserve Kennel Space   Yes   No			

**Utah Peace Officer Standards & Training  
K-9 Program  
Waiver of Liability**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, hereby hold harmless and waive any claim for damages against Peace Officer Standards and Training for any injury I may directly or indirectly sustain as a result of an accident that occurs without any legal fault on the part of any of the persons or entities just identified, in the course of my participation in any part or phase of the training, instruction, evaluation, or competition of K-9s in the Peace Officer Standards and Training K-9 Program.

Applicant

Date

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The above was SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

My Commission Expires \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Residing at

**Utah Peace Officer Standards & Training  
K-9 Program  
Health Record**

A K-9's participation in any of the Utah POST K-9 training courses requires that the K-9 participating is up to date on the following immunizations. Fill in the dates, as they are listed below, to verify that all inoculations are current.

Immunization/Preventative	Date Received	Date Due	Veterinarian
Rabies			
Distemper			
Hepatitis			
Leptospirosis (optional)			
Parainfluenza			
Parvovirus			
Bordatella			
Coronavirus			
Heartworm			
Roundworm			
Hookworm			
Whipworm			
Tapeworm			

I hereby affirm that the Immunization and Preventative information listed above is accurate and that all Immunizations and Preventatives are current and in effect.

Veterinarian Signature

Date

**Aerial view of the  
K-9 Facility and  
its proximity to  
I-215 & 4700 South**

**4501 S 2700 West  
(Constitution Blvd)  
West Valley City**



**Closer view of the  
K-9 Facility on the  
Calvin Rampton  
Complex**



**X marks the spot  
of the K-9 Kennel**

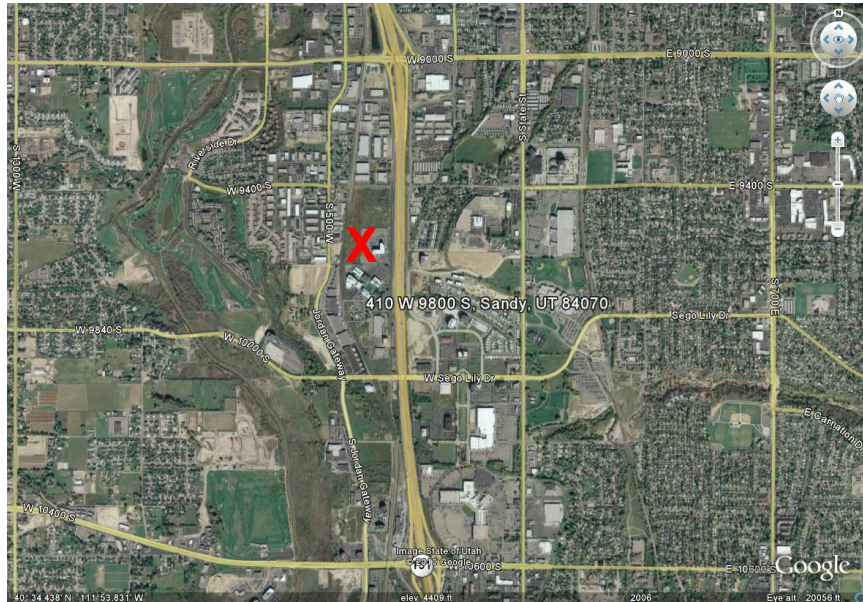


**Notice the K-9 Units  
parked near the  
K-9 Kennel**

**Photo of POST  
K-9 Kennel  
Facility**

**High altitude  
image of the  
POST dormitory**

**The GPS is:  
40° 34.499 North  
111° 54.194 West**



**Low altitude  
image of the  
POST dormitory**

**“X” marks the  
spot**

