



**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONER'S
SPECIAL MEETING
BRISTOL PUBLIC LIBRARY, MEETING ROOM 1
5 HIGH STREET, BRISTOL, CT 06010
MONDAY, JULY 11, 2022 AT 5:30 PM**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**

- 2. MOTION TO PROMOTE THE FOLLOWING FIREFIGHTERS TO THE POSITION OF LEIUTENANT: ADAM HAYES, BRIAN PLOURDE, JOHN BISKUPSKI AND DEREK FREIMUTH.**

- 3. MOTION TO APPROVE THE SOP REGARDING THE STATION SUPPORT DOG PROGRAM AND FORWARD TO CITY COUNCIL.**

- 4. ADJOURN**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bristolct-gov.zoom.us/j/6376788682?pwd=WGh1UjdwWlFCVFVHRHNzVjRHYVVtQT09>

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BRISTOL FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Effective Date:	Number: P2P2	Revision:
Title: Station Support Dog (SSD)		
Approved By:	Reevaluation Date: 5/28/2025	# of Pages 4

I. PURPOSE:

To provide guidance in the handling, interacting and activation of the Station Support dog program. The Station Support dog's purpose is to provide comfort to members and the public experiencing traumatic events.

II. SCOPE:

This procedure shall apply to all Bristol Fire Department (BFD) personnel.

III. GENERAL: The Department program will utilize one primary handler and up to 4 secondary handlers. Participating in this program as a handler is strictly voluntary, including responding to incidents. The K-9 will be housed at whatever station the handler is assigned that day. The K-9 would only be on-duty when one of the handlers is working. We would strive to give the K-9 a high quality of life. To that, the dog would have plenty of downtime so it would go home with the primary handler or one of the backup handlers on occasional nights, weekends, and holidays.

IV. PROCEDURE:

A. Caring For the K-9

1. In accordance with the K9s for Warriors agreement and program, the BFD shall identify a primary and a back-up PFD handlers. All dog care shall be performed on-duty unless an unavoidable medical emergency occurs.
2. Veterinary care shall be handled by a licensed veterinarian. The SSD shall be kept up to date on all annual shots and shall receive monthly heartworm preventative treatment and flea/tick medications, which shall be administered by the primary or back up SSD trained handler.
3. Feedings shall be provided twice per day.
 - a. The SSD shall receive half the amount of food appropriate for his weight in the morning and the second half appropriate for his weight in the evening.
 - b. Approved treats shall be kept to a minimum to avoid unnecessary weight gain and related health issues. No table food is to be given to the dog at any time. Only treats authorized by the SSD's handler
4. Grooming of the SSD shall be done in accordance with veterinary recommendations.
 - a. The SSD shall, at a minimum, receive monthly baths.

- b. Nail trimming shall be completed as needed.
 - c. If allergy concerns manifest, the SSD shall be wiped down with dander wipes daily.
- 5. The SSD will be permitted to have chew toys. Chew toys with stuffing and/or squeakers shall not be permitted within any Bristol Fire Department building (BFD)
- 6. The SSD shall be permitted to “take a break” (urinate/defecate) in the grassy areas surrounding BFD property. All solid waste must be collected and properly disposed of. The SSD must be properly leashed when walking outside the BFD.
- 7. Abuse, neglect, or taunting of a Therapy K9 will result in disciplinary action.
- 8. The SSD is authorized to be transported in any BFD vehicle

B. Equipment and supplies shall be provided as follows:

- 1. The SSD shall wear a vest reflecting he is an emotional support service animal while “working”.
- 2. The SSD shall also be issued an identification card confirming he is a member of BFD.

C. Scheduling

- 1. The SSD will be authorized to visit all Bristol Fire Station, unless the officer responsible for the respective unit declines to participate in the SSD program.
- 2. The SSD’s overnight, weekend, and holiday care shall be handled by the primary and back-ups SSD handlers. Multiple handlers that have been identified and can be called to assist as needed, but the responsibility for care after normal business hours shall be coordinated between the primary and back-up SSD handlers.
- 3. No handler is required to come back if requested, If a handler who is in possession of the SSD is unable to respond to a call back, reasonable accommodations can be made to use another handler if possible.

D. Training

- 1. The SSD has been trained by K9s for Warriors to act in a service dog capacity. The SSD will be transitioned to become an emotional support dog, the SSD’s training shall be maintained. The primary handlers of the SSD shall reinforce commands and training goals.
- 2. K9s for Warriors will provide training to the primary SSD handlers at the time the SSD is donated to BFD.
- 3. Trained SSD handlers will refresh their training by viewing the training videos made available by K9s for Warriors.

4. Newly identified SSD handlers can be trained by individuals who have received training from K9s for Warriors.
5. All Handlers and Fire Department members shall adhere to the following list of Commands when interacting with the K-9. This list is to serve as a bases of basic communication with the SSD and by no means a complete list of commands
 - Commands
 - Go Make friends- used to allow the dog to work a room
 - Go to your spot - To get the SSD to go directly to their designated safe spot
 - Sit• Lay down
 -

E. Use and activation

The SSD can be utilized to interact with the public, if approved by a supervisor.

1. During events, the SSD shall be leashed at all times and shall be under the control of a trained SSD handler.
2. If within the BFD, the SSD can be utilized to comfort adult victims
3. Within the BFD, the SSD can be utilized to comfort juvenile victims with parental consent.
4. The SSD shall not be used in any way to interact with suspects of criminal investigations.

5. Activation

- Activation of the k-9 shall be similar to and in most cases in conjunction with the activation of the Peer Support team.
- Immediate activation: The Chief or Deputy Chief on duty can call for the dog to the scene or the station following a traumatic event. The K-9, if already on duty, would be transported in a fire engine or staff car that the handler is assigned to. If the K-9 is off duty the handler and K-9 could be called in, to respond to the station.
- Delayed activation: The customary and more common response following a traumatic event are for the Peer Support team to visit a station or stations the next shift following the event. They would make arrangements to bring the K-9 with them on the visit. Also, an Officer on duty can call and request a visit if they deemed it beneficial to their crew.
 - Request can also be made to participate in public relation events i.e. School or nursing homes, parades or other public activities determined by the Chief
- Outside activation: From time to time the Peer Support team has been activated by a request made through our Chief's office. These requests have been made by other City departments as well as mutual aid partners. When a request such as this is made an effort would be made to add the K-9 and handler to the activation.

F. Opting out

1. All members shall have the choice to Opt-out out of interacting with the SSD. These members may choose to, based on allergies or other personal reasons.
2. Those members who wish to not share a space at the same time or interact with the SSD shall make this request clear to their supervisor.

V. Handler Selection

1. The handlers could be of any rank
2. The handlers need not be part of the Peer Support Team, but preference will be given to team members looking to participate as handlers.
3. The handlers will be chosen and serve at the discretion to the Chief

VI. Misbehavior:

In the unlikely event of an incident, such as an injury or bite involving the SSD, the following shall occur:

1. The SSD shall immediately be secured in a safe location away from the injured person.
2. Emergency medical care shall be provided, if required The SSD handler's supervisor or another on-scene supervisor shall be notified as soon as practical.
3. The injury and scene shall be photographed by a supervisor.
4. The SSD handler shall complete an animal bite report within the reporting system and shall ensure witness statements are obtained and documented.
5. If an employee was injured, a supervisor shall follow the BFD documentation procedure.
6. The responding supervisor shall ensure the Chiefs office is notified and the SSD's primary and secondary handlers are aware.
7. The SSD shall not be permitted back into a workspace until the chain of command has reviewed the incident and a decision can be made regarding the SSD's return to work.

VI. Therapy K9 Retirement:

After approximately 8 years of service consideration should be given to retirement of the SSD. Primary ownership of the SSD will be given to the handler to which it was assigned. If the handler is unable to take ownership of the SSD then it will pass to another handler or member of the Department that wishes to adopt the SSD.

DRAFT