

## Service Animals

### 311.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for department personnel to identify service dogs, to understand the laws that protect service dogs and to take appropriate steps when encountering service dogs in emergency situations. It is the policy of the Fountain Valley Police Department to treat crimes against service dogs and the disabled as a criminal activity to be fully investigated.

### 311.2 DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions are provided (Penal Code §365.5 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990).

**Disabled Person:** is an individual who meets at least one of the following tests:

- (a) He or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities;
- (b) He or she has a record of such an impairment; or
- (c) He or she is regarded as having such an impairment.

**Service Animal:** is any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability including, but not limited to, rescue work, pulling a wheelchair or fetching dropped items.

**Guide Dog:** means any guide dog or seeing-eye dog which was trained by a person licensed under Chapter 9.5 of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code to provide assistance to the blind or visually impaired.

**Signal Dog:** means any dog trained to alert a deaf person, or a person whose hearing is impaired, to intruders or sounds.

### 311.3 TRAINING

The Fountain Valley PD Personnel and Training Sergeant shall be responsible for the training of all department personnel who may come in contact with service dogs. This training shall take place annually and is to include the following;

- (a) Identification of Service Animals.
- (b) Approaching Service Animals.
- (c) Federal and State Laws including but not limited to: Penal Code §§ 365.5, 365.6, 600.2 and 600.5, Vehicle Code § 21963, California Civil Code §§ 54.1, 54.3 and 54.3(a), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

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### **311.4 OFFICER RESPONSE**

**Crime Reports:** Officers shall investigate all calls where a disabled person with a service animal has been refused access or accommodation in places that serve the public, because of the service animal. Officers shall investigate all calls where a service animal has been intentionally interfered with by obstructing or intimidating the service dog user or his or her handler. Officers shall investigate all calls where a service animal has been attacked by another animal. These calls shall be documented in the form of a report and assigned a Fountain Valley case number.

**Emergency Response:** When responding to emergency situations, service dogs shall be allowed to stay as close as possible to their handlers, as long as they are not in the way of emergency personnel. If the service dog must be separated from their owner, officers are to use a leash, not the harness, and the harness shall be removed from the dog. Use of the harness communicates to the dog that he is still in service. If available, a police service dog handler shall be assigned to manage the service animal until he can be placed with responsible persons. At no time will the service animal be given any form of "people food."

**Service Animal Placement:** An officer will make all reasonable attempts to determine if the handler has left instructions for placement of the service dog. If no instructions are located, the officer will attempt to place the animal with a family member, veterinarian or friend. If the service dog must be transported to the station, the dog shall be placed in a police service dog kennel. Water shall be provided for the service dog. The service dog will only be turned over to Animal Control after all attempts to place the animal are exhausted.

Although the large majority of service animals are primarily dogs, the guidelines shall be applied to any service animal who has been specifically trained to assist an individual with a disability.