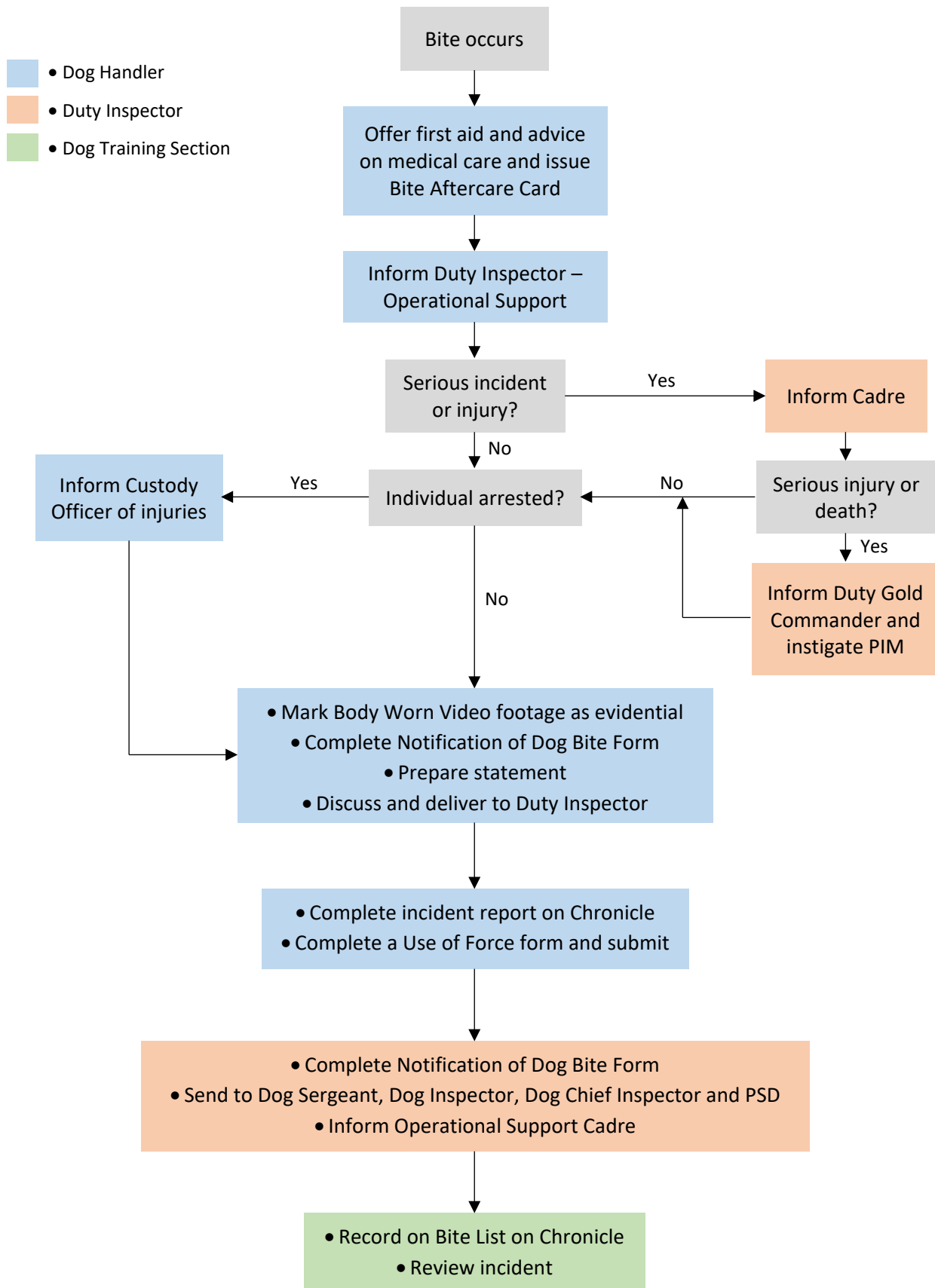


Police Dog Bites

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Flowchart



Policy Statement

Summary

West Yorkshire Police have a robust process in place to provide reassurance to the public when there has been a case of a police dog bite, whether this involves a police officer, suspect or bystander.

The policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Dog Handler and Supervisors from Operational Support and Professional Standards Department (PSD) to ensure the incident is recorded correctly and the appropriate aftercare is given, as well as investigating the circumstances. The process should ensure effective management and review of all incidents, identifying risks and opportunities for improvement and learning.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the ACPO Police Dogs Manual of Guidance 2011.

Scope

This policy applies to all police officers and police staff, particularly those involved in handling police dogs, on or off duty.

Principles

General

- Police dogs provide essential support to frontline officers and police staff, which is critical to the continued effectiveness of policing. They are deployed in a variety of roles including:
 - Patrol activity as part of general policing;
 - Protection of the public, public reassurance, prevention and detection of crime;
 - Support of public order policing;
 - As a less than lethal option when supporting armed officers managing firearms incidents;
 - Person and property search; and
 - Specialist search (explosives, drugs, cash and firearms).
- Each police dog handler and their dog must be approved and ensure their licence is recredited annually.
- The duty Operational Support Supervisor must review all dog bite incidents at the time they occur and are reported, and complete the notification form for forward to the Professional Standard Directorate (PSD).
- In the event of a serious injury the duty Operational Support Cadre must be notified.
- The Notification of Dog Bite form must be completed accurately for every dog bite incident and submitted to PSD prior to the end of duty.
- PSD will review all dog bite incidents where injury has been caused and, where appropriate, refer to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

- The use of bodycams in deployments is expected.
 - If there has been a death or serious injury in relation to a dog bite, once contacted, the Duty Gold Commander will consider urgent notification to the IOPC.
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Responsibilities

Dog Handlers

- Responsibilities** Dog handlers are responsible for:
- Ensuring their training is current and they are licensed;
 - Ensuring their first aid training is up to date;
 - Ensuring they are utilising bodycams and storing evidential footage;
 - Offering first aid and giving advice on receiving the appropriate medical care to the individual that has been bitten – this may mean ensuring that the individual has been taken to hospital;
 - Issuing a Bite Aftercare Card to the injured individual;
 - Informing the duty Inspector, or in their absence a Sergeant at Operational Support, of the full circumstances of the dog bite and the details, including current location of the individual bitten;
 - Following arrest, informing the Custody Officer that the subject has injuries caused by the deployment of a police dog;
 - Ensuring, prior to the end of duty, that the Notification of Dog Bite form is completed with the Duty Supervisor and, where appropriate, a statement written to allow the investigation to proceed;
 - Marking the body worn video footage as evidential;
 - In the event that body worn footage is not available to view and it is required prior to submission of the paperwork, implementing the following:
 - Notifying the duty Inspector and Dog Support Unit Inspector in writing that there is a delay in completing the paperwork;
 - Seeking guidance from on call Federation if required; and
 - Updating OIC/District regarding the status of required paperwork;
 - Submitting Notification of Dog Bite form to Dog Sergeant, Dog Support Unit Inspector and Dog Support Unit Chief Inspector;
 - Completing an incident report on the Chronicle system; and
 - Completing a Use of Force form.
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Post Incident Management

- If an individual is involved in an incident which is going to result in a Post Incident Management (PIM) investigation, the individual **must not** view any of the footage recorded either via the device or via Video Manager after download.

- This is to protect integrity during the process, as the individual will be asked to record their honestly held belief at the point that force was used or another critical decision was made.
 - During the process, the individual will be allowed to view any recorded footage with their legal advisor prior to providing their detailed account (Statement).
 - A post incident procedure would be triggered in one of two instances:
 - The discharge of a firearms or baton gun by a police officer (not Taser); or
 - The death or life changing injury of an individual following police contact.
 - Examples of such instances include:
 - An individual chasing a suspect who jumps from a bridge during the chase and dies or suffers a serious head injury.
 - During a police vehicle pursuit, the suspect's car crashes or collides with a pedestrian, resulting in death or serious injury.
 - If the individual is unclear if the incident filmed is going to be subject to a PIM investigation, the individual must contact their Duty Inspector who will refer them to the on duty Cadre for a decision.
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Duty Inspector – Operational Support

- Responsibilities** The duty Inspector is responsible for:
- Categorising whether the bite involved a police officer, suspect or member of the public;
 - Completing the Notification of Dog Bite Form and its referral to the Dog Support Unit Sergeant, Dog Support Unit Inspector, Dog Support Unit Chief Inspector and PSD;
 - Considering the circumstances of the dog bite, and if appropriate:
 - Securing any scene and CCTV etc.;
 - Securing any details of witnesses; and
 - Adding the details to the Notification of Dog Bite form, including body cam footage reference number;
 - Submitting the completed Notification of Dog Bite form to the PSD General Enquiries Mailbox, Dog Sergeant and Dog Support Unit Inspector;
 - Ensuring that the Operational Support Cadre is notified about an incident where there is a police dog bite; and
 - Considering whether the incident is a Critical Incident or warrants a community impact assessment.

Where there is a delay in the submission of all paperwork required by the Dog Handler, they must be removed from deploying their dog operationally and details forwarded to the Dog Inspector.

Operational Support Cadre

- Responsibilities** The Operational Support Cadre is responsible for:
- Reviewing the dog bite incident when notified, and ensuring all post incident processes are adhered to;
 - Considering instigation of the Post Incident Procedure;
 - Contacting the duty Gold Commander if death or serious injury has occurred due to the dog bite; and
 - Updating the Cadre Log with the details of the dog bite.
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Unintentional Dog Bites

- On Duty and Off Duty Protocol**
- When there has been an on duty unintentional dog bite, it is crucial that the above responsibilities are adhered to.
 - The Dog Support Unit Sergeant and Dog Support Unit Inspector must review the circumstances and determine whether the team should be withdrawn from operational duties, and identify any further training requirements.
 - The protocol for off duty unintentional dog bites is as above, and the Notification of Dog Bite form and incident report on the Chronicle system must be completed as soon as practicable.
 - **Note:** This also includes any bite causing injury to living property such as a domestic pet/cat.
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Dog Bite Reviews

- Principles**
- Each bite must be recorded on the Bite List on Chronicle.
 - Each bite must be reviewed by the training department to ensure that the department continues to operate at the highest standards.
 - Learning points must be identified, which may change existing practices, identify safety issues and support ongoing training.
 - If a sufficient review is unable to take place for whatever reason, the handlers/dogs will be temporarily withdrawn from operational duties.
 - The later review will be undertaken by the Dog Support Unit Sergeant, Dog Support Unit Inspector or Dog Support Unit Chief Inspector.
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Additional Information

Compliance

This policy complies with the following legislation, policy and guidance:

- Data Protection Act 2018
 - Critical Incidents policy
 - Post Incident Procedure – Death or Serious Injury Following Police Contact Matters policy
 - ACPO Police Dogs Manual of Guidance 2011
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