

Duties and Responsibilities

K-9 handlers are assigned to patrol and utilize a Police Service Dog on the street, as part of their normal duty. They assist officers in locating dangerous criminals and help patrol in locating hidden narcotics in vehicles or buildings. Each handler is specially trained in patrol and tactical deployments with their assigned dogs. Handlers take calls for service similar to their patrol team members, but they operate primarily for K-9 related calls.

The focus of a Police K-9 team is to increase levels of officer safety. PSDs can be used in situations that, in the past, have been deemed “too dangerous” for human officers. As an example, during a building search, dogs can clear a building in a quarter of the time, using less human officers, and do it safer and more efficiently due to the fact that the dogs are using their noses and not their eyes. This eliminates the possibility of missing a hidden suspect simply because the officer did not see them. When trained to do so, the dogs are able to track suspects that have fled the area. The dogs are able to track humans by detecting ground disturbances. They can lead human officers to the suspects that traditionally have run off and cannot be found. The PSD can also assist officers in locating evidence, which has been discarded, that could lead to the successful prosecution of the suspect(s).

Criminals are always trying to find better ways to hide and transport illegal narcotics. Dogs assist officers in locating narcotics by using their keen sense of smell. A PSD’s nose is said to be a thousand times greater than that of humans. This ability enables officers to find narcotics with minimal damage to a vehicle or building.

Homeland Security partnership

Officers Brown and Thompson are cross designated as Title 19 Special Agents with Homeland Security Investigations (formally ICE). This allows them to assist the federal agents in narcotics and suspect deployments. This partnership also benefits the department through asset forfeitures and federal assistance when needed. Castle Rock Police Department has the only two K-9 teams with this designation in the State of Colorado.