CANINE USE BY SECURITY AT FLORIDA STATE HOSPITAL

1. **Purpose:** This procedure is to establish guidelines for use of trained canines at Florida State Hospital. The purpose of this policy specifically provides guidelines for initiating the use of the canine tracking dog to search for missing, eloped, and escaped residents, as well as reciprocal efforts in certain situations involving local Department of Corrections and local law enforcement officials. Also included within this policy are guidelines for the use of the certified drug tracking canine throughout the facility in efforts to deter the introduction of contraband within the facility.

2. **Scope:** This procedure applies to all requests for the utilization of canine resources within the facility.

3. **Training Requirements:** All employees will be trained on this operating procedure upon hire at Florida State Hospital during worksite education and by their supervisor each time the operating procedure is revised.

4. **References:**
   a. Florida Statute, Chapter 394, “Florida Mental Health Act.”
   c. Florida Statute, Chapter 916, “Mentally Deficient and Mentally Ill Defendants.”
   d. Children and Families Operating Procedure 70-12, “Contraband Control”
   e. Florida State Hospital Operating Procedure 95-04, “Contraband Control.”

5. **General statement:** As a mental health provider, Florida State Hospital has the responsibility for providing the most conducive environment for our residents and to encourage them to successfully manage their illness and return as productive members to the community. Many of the residents have extensive histories of use of contraband substances, either as a coping mechanism for prior existing mental health issues, or through habitual recreational uses. The continued use of these substances is contraindicated to the therapeutic programs and the approved use of psychotropic medications. The use of the drug tracking canine would provide
another avenue to deter the accessibility of drugs within the facility. Additionally, the use of the tracking canine for the purposes of missing and escaped residents would provide expedient resources for the safe and quick return of residents who intentionally or non-intentionally leave the facility.

6. **Policy:** It is the mission of Florida State Hospital to protect the vulnerable population served, as well as the responsibility of the department to utilize all available resources to accomplish this. It is the goal of the facility to better serve the population, including residents, visitors, employees, and members of the surrounding communities by utilizing trained canines in the areas of search and safety as well as drug interdiction.

7. **Use of the Trained/Certified Drug Detection Canine:**

   a. **Searches of Resident Accessible Areas:** The canine would routinely patrol the living areas of the residents throughout the Hospital grounds as a deterrent. Additionally the canine would be specifically called upon to search designated resident accessible areas, based on positive drug testing of residents, medically supported suspicions of drug use by residents, and reasonable suspicions. Reasonable suspicions may consist of repeated sources of reliable information identifying a particular resident as a source of contraband substances to other residents or the finding of drugs during other type searches. Canine searches would be authorized by Assistant Hospital Administrator's or assigned designee(s).

   b. **Searches of Employee Only Accessible Areas:** To deter the introduction of contraband substances to the Hospital, the canine would periodically be used to patrol all parking lots and buildings. Upon the request of the applicable Assistant Hospital Administrator or assigned designee, the canine would walk through employee only accessible areas.

   c. **Searches of Employee Owned Property:** Upon the finding by the canine of suspected substances within privately owned vehicles, local law enforcement will be immediately contacted to determine the need for further searches and, if applicable, criminal prosecution. All positive findings of privately owned vehicles will be reported to the applicable Unit Director/Department Head and to the appropriate Administrative personnel. A report of Unusual Incident will be completed by the Security officer in charge of the area at the time of the search and submitted within 24 hours or by 8:00 a.m. the next working day, following a weekend/holiday to the Chief of Security’s office for distribution to the involved unit/department and administration.

8. **Use of the Trained Tracking Canine:**

   a. **Utilization of the Tracking Canine for Eloped Residents:** When there is reasonable knowledge among staff who are familiar with the missing resident that there is an immediate and serious threat to the resident or other persons, the request for use of the canine will be granted. The reasons for the concern will be clearly documented within the resident’s chart, providing specific information such as identifying medical conditions which put the resident at risk, recent psychiatric events which reflect the need for immediate action, etc. The advanced age of a missing resident will be sufficient reason for the Chief of Security or his designee to immediately deploy the tracking canine upon notification.

   b. **Utilization of the Tracking Canine for Escaped Residents:** When a resident committed under Florida Statute 916 is missing and presumed escaped, the Unit will immediately notify the Security Control Room at Central Forensic. Security will dispatch the canine to begin an immediate search for the individual. It is the Unit’s responsibility to obtain and relate accurate information concerning the missing resident’s clothing and direction of travel per Florida State
Hospital Operating Procedure 155-4. When the resident escapes from the sight of staff, that staff person will notify the Security Control room and then immediately return to the area where the resident was last seen if not observing or containing other resident(s), to attempt to prevent further contamination of the area until Security staff and the tracking canine arrive. While the Hospital plans to utilize the local tracking canine, this does not preclude the further use of Department of Corrections canine(s) during escapes of residents committed under Florida Statute 916.

c. Utilization of the Hospital tracking canine for local law enforcement and Department of Corrections: In as much that Florida State Hospital periodically calls upon the services of the Department of Corrections canines in tracking missing or escaped persons, any tracking canine associated with the Florida State Hospital will be authorized to assist Department of Corrections personnel when requested. All such requests will be initially accepted through the Chief of Security or his designee and when such a request is honored, the Hospital Administrator or designee will be promptly notified of the granted request. The Hospital tracking canine will primarily be utilized in the community when the missing person presents no threat of violence and is being sought for purposes of their health and well being. The Hospital tracking canine/staff will not be utilized when there is a clear and present threat to the safety of the officer handling the animal or the animal itself.

(Signed original on file in Central Health Information Services)

DIANE R. JAMES
Hospital Administrator