



# MEDICAL CONTROL DIRECTIVE 2021-11

**DATE:** June 29, 2021

**TO:** Pinellas County EMS Agencies  
Pinellas County Emergency Communications  
Pinellas County Certified EMTs and Paramedics  
Pinellas County Certified Advanced Practice Paramedics, Nurses  
Pinellas County Online Medical Control Physicians  
Pinellas County Ambulance Billing and Financial Services  
ED Nurse Managers

**FROM:** Dr. Angus Jameson, EMS Medical Director 

**RE:** Chapter 2021-119 - Treatment and Transport of Police Canines (K-9)

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2021

**Chapter 2021-119:**

- Authorizes licensed EMS agencies to transport injured police canines
- Authorizes a paramedic or an emergency medical technician to provide emergency medical care to injured police canines
- “Police Canines” means any canine that is owned, or the service of which is employed, by a state or local law enforcement agency, a correctional agency, a fire department, a special fire district, or the State Fire Marshal for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection of criminal activity, flammable materials, or missing persons; the enforcement of laws; the investigation of fires; or the apprehension of offenders.
- A licensee with a valid permit for the transport vehicle may transport a police canine injured in the line of duty to a veterinary clinic or similar facility if there is no individual requiring medical attention or transport at that time.

## Treatment & Transport:

- For crew safety, ensure the canine officer is accompanied by a handler and muzzled regardless of initial level of consciousness.
- Paramedics and EMTs are authorized to institute Basic Life Support (BLS) modalities and transport via Rescue Unit or Ambulance.
  - BLS Modalities may include:
    - Mask/snout ventilation at standard rates (Utilize canine oxygen mask kit when available)
    - Administration of supplemental oxygen
    - CPR (performed with the canine on its side and hands placed over the widest part of the chest/where the front leg elbow sits with leg flexed)
    - Hemorrhage control including tourniquets and wound packing
    - Chest seal application
- Tactical EMS Paramedics may utilize the Tactical Medical Operations Manual protocols.
- Ask the handler for the canine officer or other appropriate law enforcement official which animal hospital they want the canine transported to.
  - Request an agency representative contact the animal hospital to authorize treatment.
- Have dispatch contact the animal hospital to ensure they are open/able to accept the canine officer.
- If the canine officer does not have a specified veterinarian or animal hospital utilize the following options (not listed in any particular order):
  - Tampa Bay Veterinary Specialist & Emergency Care Center - 24 Hour  
1501A South Belcher Road - Largo  
727-535-3500
  - BluePearl Pet Hospital - 24 Hour  
4701 Ulmerton Road Suite 400 - Clearwater  
727-572-0132
  - St. Petersburg Animal Hospital & Urgent Care - hours vary  
3165 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North - St Petersburg  
727-323-1311

## CHAPTER 2021-119

### Senate Bill No. 388

An act relating to injured police canines; creating s. 401.254, F.S.; defining the term “police canine”; authorizing licensed life support services to transport injured police canines under certain circumstances; authorizing a paramedic or an emergency medical technician to provide emergency medical care to injured police canines under certain circumstances; providing for immunity from criminal and civil liability under certain circumstances; amending s. 474.203, F.S.; providing applicability; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 401.254, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

401.254 Treatment of injured police canines.—

(1) As used in this section, the term “police canine” means any canine that is owned, or the service of which is employed, by a state or local law enforcement agency, a correctional agency, a fire department, a special fire district, or the State Fire Marshal for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection of criminal activity, flammable materials, or missing persons; the enforcement of laws; the investigation of fires; or the apprehension of offenders.

(2) A licensee with a valid permit for the transport vehicle may transport a police canine injured in the line of duty to a veterinary clinic or similar facility if there is no individual requiring medical attention or transport at that time.

(3) Notwithstanding s. 474.213, a paramedic or an emergency medical technician may provide emergency medical care to a police canine injured in the line of duty while at the scene of the emergency or while the police canine is being transported to a veterinary clinic or similar facility. A paramedic or an emergency medical technician who acts in good faith to provide emergency medical care to an injured police canine is immune from criminal or civil liability.

Section 2. Subsection (10) is added to section 474.203, Florida Statutes, to read:

474.203 Exemptions.—This chapter does not apply to:

(10) A paramedic or an emergency medical technician providing emergency medical care to a police canine injured in the line of duty as authorized under s. 401.254.

For the purposes of chapters 465 and 893, persons exempt pursuant to subsection (1), subsection (2), or subsection (4) are deemed to be duly licensed practitioners authorized by the laws of this state to prescribe drugs or medicinal supplies.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.

Approved by the Governor June 18, 2021.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 18, 2021.