



Fact Sheet



Public Affairs Division - Washington DC

Contact: Public Affairs Division
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February 2015
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The Special Response Team (SRT) K-9 Program

The Special Response Team (SRT) K-9 Program uses hand-picked K-9s and handlers trained in areas which support the SRT mission to reduce violent crime and protect the public. The SRT K-9 teams are trained and certified in the following six areas:

- Obedience
- Building Search
- Area Search
- Tracking
- Evidence Search
- Aggression Control
- One tactical K-9 (Ike) is also trained and certified in explosives detection

There are eight SRT-trained tactical K-9 teams throughout the country with ATF special agents/SRT operators acting as the handlers. The SRT program trains its K-9s in-house, and uses a national association, with no ties to ATF as the certifying body. The certifying entity is the North American Police Work Dogs Association (NAPWDA).

The primary goal of the SRT tactical K-9 program is to provide each SRT with an additional tool (the K-9) to locate and/or apprehend hidden or fleeing felons and suspects.

Since 2000, the ATF SRT program has trained a total of 17 K-9 teams (six of which are retired, one passed away in 2004, and one K-9 killed in the line of duty in December 2012). These dogs and their SRT-trained handlers are assigned to teams based in the following core cities:

- Detroit
- Sterling, Va.
- Miami
- Dallas
- Los Angeles

In 2000, the first full-time K-9 team successfully completed an eight-week training program, which culminated in a certification of the first SRT K-9, Boomer, as a “patrol” dog. Throughout the history of the program, it evolved with the formal institution of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), a formal training lesson plan, and a formal maintenance training program for the remainder of the K-9s working life. The

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Brunswick, Ga. was established as the primary training site.

Training at FLETC offers thousands of acres of secured tracking areas, more than 40 buildings with varied floor plans for building search training, an explosives range for neutrality to NFDD and gunfire training, a counterterrorism training center utilized for both tracking and building searches (including small crawl spaces and attics), and secure indoor and outdoor obedience training locations. The SRT K-9 teams also routinely train with FBI's Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) K-9 teams in Quantico, Va. and military K-9 teams throughout the country.

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