

**K-9 POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

2021 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Daniel W. Thatcher**

House Sponsor: Candice B. Pierucci

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill amends the liability provisions for dog bites relating to law enforcement activities and requires the annual certification of law enforcement canines and handlers.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- ▶ amends the liability provision for dog bites relating to law enforcement activities to require certification of dogs and handlers, a written policy on the use of dogs, and compliance with the policy; and

- ▶ enacts the Law Enforcement Canine Team Certification Act, to require certification and training of dogs and handlers.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**18-1-1**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2019, Chapter 92

ENACTS:

**53-6-401**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53-6-402**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53-6-403**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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30 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

31 Section 1. Section **18-1-1** is amended to read:

32 **18-1-1. Liability and damages for dog injury -- Dogs used in law enforcement.**

33 (1) (a) Except as provided in Subsection (2), a person who owns or keeps a dog is  
34 liable for an injury caused by the dog, regardless of whether:

- 35 (i) the dog is vicious or mischievous; or
- 36 (ii) the owner knows the dog is vicious or mischievous.

37 (b) Damages for an injury described in Subsection (1)(a) shall be determined in  
38 accordance with Section [78B-5-818](#).

39 (2) Neither the state nor any county, city, metro township, or town in the state nor any  
40 peace officer employed by the state, a county, a city, a metro township, or a town shall be liable  
41 in damages for an injury caused by a dog, if:

42 (a) the dog [~~has been trained~~] and the dog's law enforcement handler are trained to  
43 assist in law enforcement[;] and are certified according to the standards adopted in Title 53,  
44 Chapter 6, Part 4, Law Enforcement Canine Team Certification Act;

45 (b) the governmental agency has adopted a written policy on the necessary and  
46 appropriate use of dogs in official law enforcement duties;

47 (c) the actions of the dog's handler do not violate the agency's written policy; and

48 ~~[(b)]~~ (d) the injury occurs while the dog is reasonably and carefully being used in the  
49 apprehension, arrest, or location of a suspected offender or in maintaining or controlling the  
50 public order.

51 Section 2. Section **53-6-401** is enacted to read:

52 **Part 4. Law Enforcement Canine Team Certification Act**

53 **53-6-401. Definitions.**

54 As used in this part:

55 (1) "Council" means the Peace Officer Standards and Training Council created in  
56 Section [53-6-106](#).

57 (2) "Qualifying canine certifying entity" means an entity that certifies law enforcement

58 canines and law enforcement canine handlers in accordance with the standards developed under  
59 Section 53-6-403.

60 Section 3. Section 53-6-402 is enacted to read:

61 **53-6-402. Law enforcement canine and handler certification.**

62 (1) Each law enforcement canine in the state shall be initially certified and annually  
63 recertified by a qualifying canine certifying entity.

64 (2) Each law enforcement canine handler in the state shall be initially certified and  
65 annually recertified by a qualifying canine certifying entity.

66 Section 4. Section 53-6-403 is enacted to read:

67 **53-6-403. Canine and handler certification standards and criteria--Rules.**

68 In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, the  
69 council shall establish and maintain required standards for the training, certification, and  
70 recertification of:

71 (1) law enforcement canines; and

72 (2) law enforcement canine handlers.