

# K-9 Frequently Asked Questions



## Why was the K-9 Unit placed back in service and then subsequently pulled?

On Feb. 17, 2023, the Gainesville Police Department sent a news release stating that Chief Lonnie Scott was returning the K-9 Unit to regular duty effective immediately. Upon review, City Manager Cynthia W. Curry determined this action was premature. On Friday, March 3, Ms. Curry temporarily removed the unit from service to provide the time needed to restore the two-member team to full strength and according to plan.

## Has the K-9 Unit been disbanded?

No, the K-9 Unit has not been disbanded, but GPD is limiting its deployment. Gainesville Police Chief Lonnie Scott says, “We are limiting use of our K-9 officers until we are more comfortable with our supervision and training. We also want to present our revised operating procedures to the public and give neighbors a chance to understand any changes planned for the unit.”

## Why is the K-9 Unit under further review?

The unit is under review as GPD works to evaluate and update the program. While the unit was on hiatus, leadership changed. To ensure supervisors with proper credentials are always in place, Chief Scott is developing a supervisory training protocol. Getting the program back up to its traditional level of staffing also is a priority.

## What is the recent information that caused the City Manager to make this decision?

With information that the K-9 Unit in its current form has only two handlers, the City Manager and Chief Scott agreed it needed more time to return to optimum levels of staffing and oversight.

## What will be done to make sure the K-9 Unit is ready to go back on duty?

The Gainesville Police Department will develop a formal training protocol for K-9 Unit supervisors and a selection process. Chief Scott has these changes underway.

## When will the K-9 Unit be put back into service?

The return to service is scheduled on or about Oct. 1, 2023.

## What is the K-9 Unit doing now?

The dogs still accompany their handlers on calls, but in most cases will not be deployed. They can be deployed only upon direct orders from Chief Scott.

## How will Gainesville be protected and who will be called when the service of a K-9 Unit is needed?

The Gainesville Police Department will rely on all sworn officers to protect the city. The K-9 Unit has not been disbanded. During this temporary suspension, Chief Scott can deploy the two trained canines as needed.

## How will the community be engaged as GPD works to put the full K-9 Unit back in service?

As the Gainesville Police Department refines its policies and training procedures, the community will have an opportunity to follow the progress and weigh in at City Commission meetings, meetings of the Public Safety Committee and through the work of the Police Advisory Council.

## Why has there been so much back and forth on this issue?

Public safety comes first, and the Gainesville Police Department is fortunate to have excellent officers and leaders. With this refreshed timeline, they will solidify the framework needed for a fully trained and resourced K-9 Unit.



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**Gainesville**