



**EMS Information Bulletin 2018-25**

**DATE:** December 27, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Law Enforcement K-9 Continuing Education Courses

**TO:** EMS Providers  
EMS Educational Institutes  
EMS Agencies

**FROM:** Dylan Ferguson, Director  
Bureau of Emergency Medical Services  
PA Department of Health  
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A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a hand-drawn oval. The signature appears to be "Dylan Ferguson".

Due to recent increases in educational opportunities for emergency medical treatment of working (Law Enforcement/Search and Rescue, etc.) dogs, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services recognizes the need to address whether these programs qualify for continuing education.

K-9 teams undoubtedly play a vital role in our emergency response capabilities across the nation every day, however, the department does not regulate the provisions of veterinary medicine. The provisions and practice of veterinary medicine are the responsibility of the Pennsylvania State Board of Veterinary Medicine. Furthermore, neither the National Scope of Practice nor the Pennsylvania EMS Scope of Practice recognize any provisions of care for animals. Therefore, the department does not endorse or permit such practices, as it is not covered under any activity that we regulate.

With that said, there are some components and learning objectives regarding this topic that may have educational value. Continuing education applications for Pennsylvania certified EMS providers interested in courses related to the emergency medical treatment of working dogs will be reviewed and considered for credits. The course hours will only be considered for **“OTHER”** hours; **NO** clinical patient care hours will be applied. Any course submitted for EMS continuing education will be prepared by or in consultation with a licensed veterinarian or a recognized professional veterinary subject matter expert. The applicant is solely responsible for obtaining proof of authenticity and professional recognition of the course content.

Any EMS provider or EMS agency who engages in providing medical care to a working dog does so at their own risk and should be cautious. It is recommended that an agency who can engage in these activities establish a working relationship with their local emergency veterinary service provider and consult with legal counsel.

Any questions should be directed to your Regional Council.