

**Security & Law
Enforcement****Canine & Explosives
Program****Security & Law Enforcement****Canine & Explosives Program**

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Program History & Description**How did the FAA/TSA Program get started?**

On March 9, 1972, a Trans World Airlines jet bound for Los Angeles took off from JFK International Airport in New York. Moments into the flight, the airline received an anonymous phone call warning there was a bomb on the flight. The aircraft returned to JFK where passengers were evacuated and a bomb-sniffing dog named Brandy was brought aboard to search. Brandy found the explosive device just 12 minutes before it was set to detonate.

That same day, then-President Nixon directed the Secretary of Transportation to use innovative means to combat the problems plaguing civil aviation. The result was the creation of a unique federal project - the FAA Explosives Detection Canine Team Program - designed to place certified teams at strategic locations throughout the nation so that any aircraft receiving a bomb threat could quickly divert to an airport with a canine team.

What does the TSA Canine Program have to offer?

- Provides single purpose (explosives detection) TSA- procured canines
- Trains canines and handlers to TSA-certification standards
- Provides Explosives Storage Magazines
- Provides TSA Canine Explosive Training Aids
- Provides annual on-site TSA-certification
- Provides partial reimbursement for approved canine team expenses, not to exceed reimbursement ceiling
- Provides research and development funding to enhance canine efficiencies
- Provides logistical support and coordination

**How many airports participate in the TSA Canine Program?**

The FAA Explosives Detection Canine Team Program started with 40 canine teams at 20 airports in 1973. Prior to the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of 1997, there were 87 teams located at 27 airports. The Program grew significantly in 1998 as a result of recommendations made by the White Commission on Aviation Safety and Security and the Aviation Security Advisory Committee - Baseline Working Group. Today, the TSA program is operating in most of the nations larger airports. Our goal is to have each of the largest airports in the country participating in the program by the year 2003.

Why are TSA-certified explosives detection canine teams beneficial in the airport environment?

The TSA explosive detection canine teams operate in the airport environment day-to-day. They are acclimated to the unique characteristics of the airport and are well versed in searching many types of aircraft. Handlers are also made aware of the effects of explosives contamination while training and the impact this may have at screening checkpoints and throughout the airport. The explosives detection canine teams combine excellent mobility with reliable detection rates. Their use today has evolved to include searching during bomb threats associated with aircraft, airport terminals, vehicles, luggage, and cargo, as well as serving as general deterrents to would-be terrorists or criminals. The canine team is still the most reliable tool to search an aircraft for an explosive device. The TSA Program is a partnership with participating airports. In addition, the TSA pays to purchase and train the canine, provide in-depth training for the handler, and partially reimburse the participating agency for the costs of the teams. These costs include handler salaries, care for the canines, and pre-designated logistical items such as vehicles.

Where are Canine handlers trained?

Canine handlers are not employed by the federal government. They are employees of the city, county, state or airport law enforcement authority, designated to protect the airport. Handlers are trained at the TSA Explosives Detection Canine Handler Course co-located at the Department of Defense Military Working Dog School, Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas. Handlers spend eleven weeks at the TSA course developing handler skills; learning explosives handling, safety and transportation requirements, and explosives contamination issues within the airport environment; administrative requirements and TSA Canine Web based applications. Once a team graduates from the TSA course they undergo an "initial" certification at their assigned airport. Once certified the team will then undergo an annual three to four day evaluation to maintain their TSA-certification. Each team must successfully complete the annual certification requirement.

What does a department/airport do as a participant of TSA Canine Program?

- Maintain a minimum of three TSA-certified canine teams for incident response 24 hours/7 days
- Conduct proficiency training weekly
- Utilize TSA-certified canine teams at least 80% of the time in the airport environment
- Provide proper kennel facilities
- Provide proper transportation
- Ensure proper veterinary care
- Ensure proper documentation in Canine Web Site
- Ensure availability for annual TSA-certification

How can my department/airport apply to join TSA Canine Program?

Departments or airports interested in participating in the program may submit a letter of interest (on the official departmental letterhead) to the following address:

Director, National Explosives Detection Canine Program
Headquarters Transportation Security Administration

601 South 12th Street (TSA-7)
Arlington, VA 22202-4220

At this time the TSA Canine Program is only processing requests from CAT X and CAT I Airports.