COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Patrol Canine Presence and Engagement
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The Department utilizes canine teams as a critical safety resource to support staff during situations that require enhanced detection, control, or emergency response. These highly trained dogs assist in identifying threats that could jeopardize the well-being of both staff and incarcerated individuals.

Canines are used as a response tool, not an instrument of intimidation. Their role is to enhance safety by providing specialized capabilities that humans alone cannot replicate, particularly during incidents where rapid threat assessment is essential.

By integrating canine units into our broader safety framework, the Department strengthens its ability to manage high risk situations with precision and professionalism, ensuring a safer environment for everyone within our facilities.

In August 2026, there were 54 incidents in which canines were present. None of those 54 incidents resulted in canine use of force.