



K9: Paws on Patrol – Making An Impact at MDOC

JACKSON – Whether searching a housing unit, checking vehicles at a facility entrance, or tracking an individual, Mississippi Department of Corrections K-9 teams play an important role in maintaining safety and security.

Specially trained K-9s and their handlers work alongside correctional officers, Emergency Response Teams, and investigators to locate contraband and assist with other security operations. The K-9 teams conduct routine and targeted searches of housing units, cells, common areas, visitation areas, vehicles, work sites, parking lots, and facility grounds. They also assist with screening employees and visitors entering facilities.

Not every MDOC K-9 has the same assignment. Detection dogs are trained to locate the odors of narcotics and cellular phones, while bloodhounds are trained to track individuals. The department's teams include German shepherds, Belgian Malinois, bloodhounds, and other working breeds selected and trained for specialized assignments.

K-9s are used to locate prohibited items concealed in cells, clothing, bedding, walls, vehicles, common areas, and other difficult-to-search locations. Their sense of smell allows them to detect odors that officers cannot, helping search teams locate hidden contraband more quickly and thoroughly.

"Our K-9 teams are one of the most valuable tools we have," Commissioner Burl Cain said. "Their ability to detect contraband quickly not only supports our officers, but also helps protect everyone who lives and works inside our facilities."

The partnership between a handler and K-9 requires months of training and constant reinforcement. Teams routinely train in obedience, scent detection, tracking, building searches, and area searches to ensure they are prepared to respond whenever needed. That training continues throughout the dog's career to keep both the handler and K-9 operating as a single team.

From the front gate to the housing units, MDOC K-9 teams remain an important part of the department's efforts to prevent contraband, support security staff, and maintain safer correctional facilities across Mississippi.

