



OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Canine Unit

The Canine Unit

The Canine Unit supports the CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal’s Arson and Bomb Unit’s (ABU) mission to investigate the origin, cause, and circumstances of fires and explosions on State of California property. In addition they are available to assist local jurisdictions that do not have investigative resources to determine if fires or explosions are criminal in nature.

The ABU Canine Unit is an essential tool for our state law enforcement officers, in addition to local, State, and federal public safety partners across California.



Mocha

Ignitable Liquid Detection Canine

Team History

One hundred years ago on May 23, 1923, Assembly Bill 409 was signed by Governor Friend William Richardson to establish the Office of State Fire Marshal.



In 1984, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), in conjunction with the Connecticut State Police, developed a test program to establish the feasibility of using canines for Ignitable Liquid (IGL) detection. The study proved positive outcomes and based upon the information obtained, the CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal decided to adopt a similar program. Two (2) black

Labrador Retrievers named Sam and Bugs, were obtained in May 1990, under the direction of State Fire Marshal James F. McMullen (1985-1992). These canines were assigned to Arson and Bomb Investigators and remained in-service until retiring in 2001.



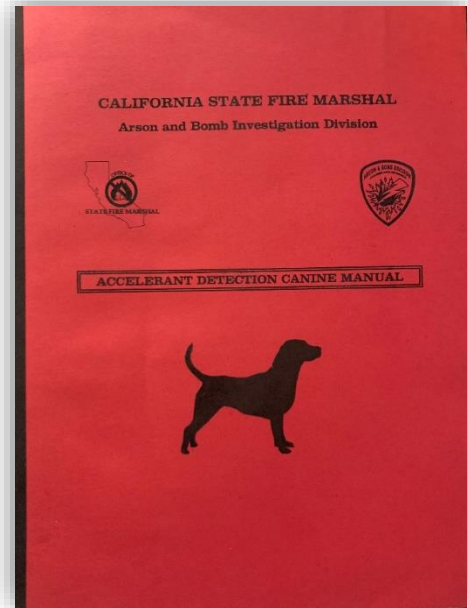
Flash

Explosives / Firearms Canine



In July 2023, marking the 100th Anniversary of the OSFM, the Canine Unit was re-introduced to the ABU, following extensive training and certifications by both newly assigned canines and handlers.

Under the direction of State Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant, the program was re-introduced and expanded to include not only Ignitable Liquid (IGL) Detection Canines, but Explosives / Firearms Detection Canines. Further expanding the capabilities and meeting the needs of the ABU, including the local, State, and federal public safety agencies they assist throughout California.



(Original 1996 Policy/Procedure Manual)

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