



Ohio Revised Code

Section 2921.321 Assaulting or harassing police dog or horse or service dog.

Effective: April 6, 2023

Legislation: House Bill 281

(A) No person shall knowingly cause, or attempt to cause, physical harm to a police dog or horse in either of the following circumstances:

(1) The police dog or horse is assisting a law enforcement officer in the performance of the officer's official duties at the time the physical harm is caused or attempted.

(2) The police dog or horse is not assisting a law enforcement officer in the performance of the officer's official duties at the time the physical harm is caused or attempted, but the offender has actual knowledge that the dog or horse is a police dog or horse.

(B) No person shall recklessly do any of the following:

(1) Taunt, torment, or strike a police dog or horse;

(2) Throw an object or substance at a police dog or horse;

(3) Interfere with or obstruct a police dog or horse, or interfere with or obstruct a law enforcement officer who is being assisted by a police dog or horse, in a manner that does any of the following:

(a) Inhibits or restricts the law enforcement officer's control of the police dog or horse;

(b) Deprives the law enforcement officer of control of the police dog or horse;

(c) Releases the police dog or horse from its area of control;

(d) Enters the area of control of the police dog or horse without the consent of the law enforcement officer, including placing food or any other object or substance into that area;



(e) Inhibits or restricts the ability of the police dog or horse to assist a law enforcement officer.

(4) Engage in any conduct that is likely to cause serious physical injury or death to a police dog or horse;

(5) If the person is the owner, keeper, or harbinger of a dog, fail to reasonably restrain the dog from taunting, tormenting, chasing, approaching in a menacing fashion or apparent attitude of attack, or attempting to bite or otherwise endanger a police dog or horse that at the time of the conduct, the police dog or horse is assisting a law enforcement officer in the performance of the officer's duties or that the person knows is a police dog or horse.

(C) No person shall knowingly cause, or attempt to cause, physical harm to an assistance dog in either of the following circumstances:

(1) The dog, at the time the physical harm is caused or attempted, is assisting or serving a person who is blind, deaf, or hearing impaired or a person with a mobility impairment.

(2) The dog, at the time the physical harm is caused or attempted, is not assisting or serving a person who is blind, deaf, or hearing impaired or a person with a mobility impairment, but the offender has actual knowledge that the dog is an assistance dog.

(D) No person shall recklessly do any of the following:

(1) Taunt, torment, or strike an assistance dog;

(2) Throw an object or substance at an assistance dog;

(3) Interfere with or obstruct an assistance dog, or interfere with or obstruct a person who is blind, deaf, or hearing impaired or a person with a mobility impairment who is being assisted or served by an assistance dog, in a manner that does any of the following:

(a) Inhibits or restricts the assisted or served person's control of the dog;



- (b) Deprives the assisted or served person of control of the dog;
 - (c) Releases the dog from its area of control;
 - (d) Enters the area of control of the dog without the consent of the assisted or served person, including placing food or any other object or substance into that area;
 - (e) Inhibits or restricts the ability of the dog to assist the assisted or served person.
- (4) Engage in any conduct that is likely to cause serious physical injury or death to an assistance dog;
- (5) If the person is the owner, keeper, or harbinger of a dog, fail to reasonably restrain the dog from taunting, tormenting, chasing, approaching in a menacing fashion or apparent attitude of attack, or attempting to bite or otherwise endanger an assistance dog that at the time of the conduct is assisting or serving a person who is blind, deaf, or hearing impaired or a person with a mobility impairment or that the person knows is an assistance dog.
- (E)(1) Whoever violates division (A) of this section is guilty of assaulting a police dog or horse, and shall be punished as provided in divisions (E)(1)(a) and (b) of this section.
- (a) Except as otherwise provided in this division, assaulting a police dog or horse is a misdemeanor of the second degree. If the violation results in the death of the police dog or horse, assaulting a police dog or horse is a felony of the third degree and the court shall impose as a mandatory prison term one of the definite prison terms prescribed in division (A)(3)(b) of section 2929.14 of the Revised Code for a felony of the third degree. If the violation results in serious physical harm to the police dog or horse other than its death, assaulting a police dog or horse is a felony of the fourth degree. If the violation results in physical harm to the police dog or horse other than death or serious physical harm, assaulting a police dog or horse is a misdemeanor of the first degree.
- (b) In addition to any other sanction imposed for assaulting a police dog or horse, if the violation of division (A) of this section results in the death of the police dog or horse, the sentencing court shall impose as a financial sanction a mandatory fine under division (B)(10) of section 2929.18 of the Revised Code. The fine shall be paid to the law enforcement agency that was served by the police



dog or horse that was killed, and shall be used by that agency only for one or more of the following purposes:

(i) If the dog or horse was not owned by the agency, the payment to the owner of the dog or horse of the cost of the dog or horse and the cost of the training of the dog or horse to qualify it as a police dog or horse, if that cost has not previously been paid by the agency;

(ii) After payment of the costs described in division (E)(1)(b)(i) of this section, if applicable, payment of the cost of replacing the dog or horse that was killed;

(iii) After payment of the costs described in division (E)(1)(b)(i) of this section, if applicable, payment of the cost of training the replacement dog or horse to qualify it as a police dog or horse;

(iv) After payment of the costs described in division (E)(1)(b)(i) of this section, if applicable, payment of the cost of further training of the replacement dog or horse that is needed to train it to the level of training that had been achieved by the dog or horse that was killed.

(2) Whoever violates division (B) of this section is guilty of harassing a police dog or horse. Except as otherwise provided in this division, harassing a police dog or horse is a misdemeanor of the second degree. If the violation results in the death of the police dog or horse, harassing a police dog or horse is a felony of the third degree. If the violation results in serious physical harm to the police dog or horse, but does not result in its death, harassing a police dog or horse, is a felony of the fourth degree. If the violation results in physical harm to the police dog or horse, but does not result in its death or in serious physical harm to it, harassing a police dog or horse is a misdemeanor of the first degree.

(3) Whoever violates division (C) of this section is guilty of assaulting an assistance dog. Except as otherwise provided in this division, assaulting an assistance dog is a misdemeanor of the second degree. If the violation results in the death of the assistance dog, assaulting an assistance dog is a felony of the third degree. If the violation results in serious physical harm to the assistance dog other than its death, assaulting an assistance dog is a felony of the fourth degree. If the violation results in physical harm to the assistance dog other than death or serious physical harm, assaulting an assistance dog is a misdemeanor of the first degree.



(4) Whoever violates division (D) of this section is guilty of harassing an assistance dog. Except as otherwise provided in this division, harassing an assistance dog is a misdemeanor of the second degree. If the violation results in the death of the assistance dog, harassing an assistance dog is a felony of the third degree. If the violation results in serious physical harm to the assistance dog, but does not result in its death, harassing an assistance dog is a felony of the fourth degree. If the violation results in physical harm to the assistance dog, but does not result in its death or in serious physical harm to it, harassing an assistance dog is a misdemeanor of the first degree.

(5) In addition to any other sanction or penalty imposed for the offense under this section, Chapter 2929., or any other provision of the Revised Code, whoever violates division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of this section is responsible for the payment of all of the following:

(a) Any veterinary bill or bill for medication incurred as a result of the violation by the police department regarding a violation of division (A) or (B) of this section or by the person who is blind, deaf, or hearing impaired or the person with a mobility impairment assisted or served by the assistance dog regarding a violation of division (C) or (D) of this section;

(b) The cost of any damaged equipment that results from the violation;

(c) If the violation did not result in the death of the police dog or horse or the assistance dog that was the subject of the violation and if, as a result of that dog or horse being the subject of the violation, the dog or horse needs further training or retraining to be able to continue in the capacity of a police dog or horse or an assistance dog, the cost of any further training or retraining of that dog or horse by a law enforcement officer or by the person who is blind, deaf, or hearing impaired or the person with a mobility impairment assisted or served by the assistance dog;

(d) If the violation resulted in the death of the assistance dog that was the subject of the violation or resulted in serious physical harm to the police dog or horse or the assistance dog or horse that was the subject of the violation to the extent that the dog or horse needs to be replaced on either a temporary or a permanent basis, the cost of replacing that dog or horse and of any further training of a new police dog or horse or a new assistance dog by a law enforcement officer or by the person who is blind, deaf, or hearing impaired or the person with a mobility impairment assisted or served by the



assistance dog, which replacement or training is required because of the death of or the serious physical harm to the dog or horse that was the subject of the violation.

(F) This section does not apply to a licensed veterinarian whose conduct is in accordance with Chapter 4741. of the Revised Code.

(G) This section only applies to an offender who knows or should know at the time of the violation that the police dog or horse or assistance dog that is the subject of a violation under this section is a police dog or horse or an assistance dog.

(H) As used in this section:

(1) "Physical harm" means any injury, illness, or other physiological impairment, regardless of its gravity or duration.

(2) "Police dog or horse" means a dog or horse that has been trained, and may be used, to assist law enforcement officers in the performance of their official duties.

(3) "Serious physical harm" means any of the following:

(a) Any physical harm that carries a substantial risk of death;

(b) Any physical harm that causes permanent maiming or that involves some temporary, substantial maiming;

(c) Any physical harm that causes acute pain of a duration that results in substantial suffering.

(4) "Assistance dog," "blind," and "person with a mobility impairment" have the same meanings as in section 955.011 of the Revised Code.