

DHS Science and Technology Directorate Explosives Detection Canines – Protecting the Homeland

Person-borne IEDs – a Growing Threat

Events like the Boston Marathon bombing, as well as the recent attacks in Brussels, demonstrate the realistic nature the explosive threat poses to the United States, and highlight the growing threat that person-borne improvised explosive devices (PBIEDs) present to mass transit and large-crowd events.

The explosives detection canine is the best, most versatile mobile explosive detection tool available for protecting the Homeland from the explosive threat.

Our Mission is Your Safety

The mission of the Department of Homeland Security Science (DHS) and Technology Directorate (S&T) Canine Program is to provide the tools, techniques and knowledge to better understand, train and utilize the explosive detection canine teams. Our customers are the federal, state and local law enforcement end-users of the explosive detection canine teams throughout the Homeland Security Enterprise.

Person-borne IED Canine Initiative

The DHS S&T PBIED Canine Initiative was started in 2012 with a partnership between DHS S&T and University of Maryland Police Department in order to understand the strengths and limits of canines specially trained to detect PBIEDs being carried in by people, either on their person or in bags, in mass transit and large crowd event operational environments.

This program is being conducted with partners in and outside of the National Capital Region. This type of parametric study and testing has not previously been done, but is critical to scientifically determine the limits of performance. Parametric testing varies amounts, types and placements/concealments of explosives, and tests are done in different venues with varying amounts of crowd throughput, to gather statistically significant data on operational performance. Law enforcement agencies need to know this information in order to best deploy these specially trained canine teams as part of an overall, effective security layer to prevent explosive threats to mass transit and large crowd events.

Partnerships

Since 2012, the DHS S&T Canine Program has expanded the number of partnerships in the National Capital Region to conduct increased levels of regular parametric testing. This approach validates training methods and helps establish the most effective Concept of Operations and deployment schemes for this type of detection canine.

Our testing partners include:

- University of Maryland College Park
- DC Metropolitan Police Department
- Maryland State Police
- DHS Office of the Chief Security Officer – firearms and force protection



University of Maryland, College Park PBIED Canine teams working the crowd at a football game. On game days, as many as 60,000 fans attend, making safety a unique challenge for the UMD Police

“DHS S&T is very unique; it’s one-stop shopping. You can test the training that these dogs have undergone, and scientifically certify that this training works, and it’s worth the cost. This is the best technology available today, and we are so fortunate to have this technology here, being tested at the University of Maryland College Park.”

– University of Maryland Police Chief David Mitchell