



## QUICK FACTS

- The program began in 1998 with 12 teams across two cities.
- FPS now has **83** explosive detection canine teams funded across the country.
- In 2015, EDCTs conducted more than 39,771 bomb sweeps.
- The program supports special events and emergency situations.
- EDCTs train throughout the year.
- FPS prefers Labradors.
- Most canines retire around 13 years of age and are adopted by their handlers.

For more information:  
[FPS-Public.Affairs@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:FPS-Public.Affairs@hq.dhs.gov)

# Explosive Detection Canine Program

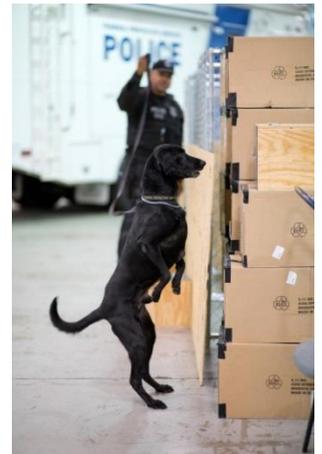
## Mission

The Federal Protective Service mission is to protect more than 9,000 federal buildings across the country, as well as employees and visitors to those buildings. Canines play an integral role in accomplishing that mission by helping detect explosives in or around federal facilities.

The FPS Explosive Detection Canine Program began in 1998 in Washington, D.C. and Boston, and has since grown from 12 teams to a fully operational, national program. FPS now has 83 authorized and fully-funded explosive detection canine teams (EDCT) across the country.

Each team consists of a canine and its handler, who is an FPS law enforcement officer. Together, the team conducts searches for a variety of explosive materials near building exteriors, parking lots, office areas, vehicles, packages, and people in and around federal facilities. In 2015, EDCTs conducted more than 39,771 bomb sweeps.

Explosive detection canine teams are the most effective countermeasure available today for preventing and detecting explosives on federal property. EDCTs also provide a strong visible and psychological deterrent against criminal and terrorist threats. Their role allows the business of government to continue with minimal or no interruption.



## Partnerships in Critical Events

The agency's explosive detection canine teams are trained to deploy across the nation and work jointly with other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in support of special events such as Republican and Democratic National Conventions, economic summits and presidential inaugurations.

The teams also serve a critical role during national emergency situations and potential threats. During emergencies, EDCTs partner with the private sector, state and local law enforcement, and other federal agencies to provide support for explosive detection, if needed.





## Training

The FPS explosive detection canine teams train continuously and extensively to maintain readiness to protect federal facilities, employees, and visitors. Canine handlers are well-trained to detect and identify explosives, recognize canine behavior, administer veterinary first aid, and understand structural and environmental factors that affect explosive odors. FPS uses a reward-based training philosophy with its canines.

Early in the training process, the canines and their handlers are paired together and are required to complete a 10-week Basic Canine Handler Course at the FPS Canine Academy, followed by a 6-week Operational Readiness Course. After successful completion of these courses, the handler and their canine partner become a certified explosive detector canine team and are strategically deployed across the nation based on current threats and risks.

Throughout the year, teams are required to maintain proficiency and recertify annually by showing they can continue to identify explosives in a variety of environments. In addition, the teams participate in training exercises throughout the year with their local, state, and federal law enforcement agency partners.

During the training process and beyond, canine handlers must bond with their canines in order to understand their behavior and body language, and canines must do the same with their canine handlers.

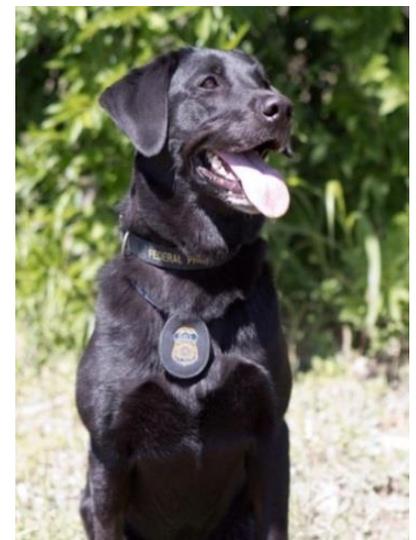
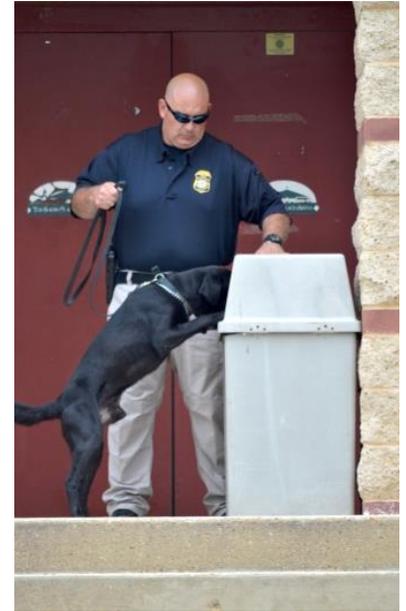
## Types of Dogs

Although FPS uses many different breeds of canines, the agency prefers Labradors because of their proven performance, easy disposition, and good interaction with the public. FPS wants to ensure the public feels safe when they see the dog, and not intimidated by them.

FPS procures canines when they are one year old, and many canines work with the agency until they retire around the age of 13. Retired canines are frequently adopted by their handlers, but on occasion, the canine may be adopted by the public.

## Contact FPS

Explosive detection canine teams are available 24 hours a day, and requests for service can be made by contacting the FPS dispatch center at 1-877-437-7411.



*The Federal Protective Service is a sub-component of the National Protection and Programs Directorate.*