

Department of Defense Military Working Dog Adoption Program
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are these dogs available for adoption?

Most of our dogs that become available for adoption at Lackland Air Force Base are relatively young dogs that have failed to meet training standards, while others (generally the field units) are older dogs that have completed their service and are being made available for adoption. Still others are being medically retired from service due to injury or sickness that will preclude them from performing the mission.

2. Is any priority given to veterans or other persons?

Title 10 US Code 2583 gives priority first to civilian Law Enforcement Agencies, then to prior handlers, and finally to the general public. In the event that a dog's age or fitness precludes it from being considered for Law Enforcement duties, then a former handler is most often selected. Better than 90% of former MWDs are adopted by their handlers at field units.

3. Can our company or business adopt a dog and use it for security work or detection work?

All dogs that are transferred to Law Enforcement Agencies are done so with a contractual agreement which stipulates that the dog belongs to the department. Only Law Enforcement Agencies are charged under statute with enforcing laws and are thus able to apply for an available dog. All dogs adopted to private parties are done so on a separate agreement that includes stipulations that the dog is not allowed to perform patrol or security work, either public or private, nor will it be allowed to perform any substance detection work, either public or private. The DoD representative responsible for placing the dog retains the choice as to the fitness of any retired dog for any home or agency.

4. Where are the dogs located?

Two programs exist. Dogs that have been/are assigned to bases around the globe are adopted (when approved for retirement/separation) from the location they are assigned. The Kennel Master at that base is the person who best knows the status of their assigned K9 Heroes. Keep in mind that quite often former handlers, with priority rights under Public Law, adopt their former comrades. Also, Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas sometimes has promising dogs available for adoption, but not always.

5. What can you tell me about the dogs?

All our Military Working Dogs are trained at Lackland Air Force Base and then sent to operational units throughout the DOD. The dogs are usually a German Shepherd, Belgian Malinois, Labrador Retriever and occasionally a mixed breed or other sporting/herding breed dog. They range in age from 1 year to 13 years of age, and include both males and females, although they are spayed or neutered before being adopted.

6. What does the program/dog cost?

There is no cost for the dog, but any Law Enforcement Agency or person approved to adopt one of our retired Military Working Dogs is completely responsible for all costs associated with transportation of the MWD from the military installation to any final destination.

7. How long can I expect to wait to be able to adopt one of your dogs?

Due to **very strong** public interest in adopting retired Military Working Dogs after their period of service to our nation, we are obliged to process and prioritize in excess of a thousand applications every year. Because so many people are “queuing up” to adopt a relatively small number of available dogs, prospective Military Working Dog adopters can expect delays up to, and often beyond 12 months before a dog is available for them. We follow the “first come, first served rule,” so that when a suitable dog becomes available we offer that dog to the party that has waited longest. If you are interested in adopting a Military Working Dog into your family, we encourage you to get your application in and we will schedule you for a dog as soon as we can. However, be prepared for a long wait due to the communities high interest in our adoption program. Once we set you up with an appointment to meet our adoptable dogs please be considerate of other eager adoptive families. If you need to cancel, please do so as early as possible so we can fill the appointment with another applicant.

8. What happens once I get an appointment to go to Lackland Air Force base, near San Antonio, TX to meet/adopt one of your dogs?

Once you have your appointment, expect to make at least two visits, normally two consecutive days. On the first day, about 1 hour is needed to review your application and then to greet the dog(s). Once you've selected a dog we'll need time to get the dog ready for adoption, and our veterinary clinic will need time to get the dog ready for departure. Your dog should be ready to depart with you the second day; however, sometimes issues arise that are outside the control to the adoption administrator and we ask for your patience and understanding.

9. Will I be able to select the sex or breed or age of dog that I prefer?

We will do our best to match our available dogs with your preferences in terms of breed, gender, color, etc., but cannot guarantee that we will have a dog that will exactly match your desires. Please remember that no matter what their type, sex or color, these retired Military Working Dogs were selected by the DoD for their stable and outgoing temperaments, they make wonderful companions, and they deserve great homes.

10. Can you give me an overview of the Adoption Process?

The MWD Adoption Process starts when you submit a completed application. Once we receive the completed application you will receive a confirmation, normally by email that it has been received. Your application will be kept on file in order of the date of receipt. If questions arise when going over your application we will usually email or telephone you for clarification. As we schedule each month's appointments we'll start with the oldest applications first. Those who decline a scheduled appointment will be removed from the list of applications. When your application is pulled you'll be contacted about possible dates available within the time frame being filled, usually a calendar month. About 30 days before your appointment you should receive a courtesy phone call or email seeking confirmation of your appointment and indicating information needed for a base pass, if it is required. If you do not reply to this courtesy e-mail or phone call, we will be forced to give your appointment to somebody else, and your application will be deleted from our waiting list. On the day of your appointment, please plan to arrive at the gate early to obtain your pass. You will need a current driver's license, proof of vehicle insurance, and current registration. Once you arrive at the kennel facility, we'll show dogs that are well suited to your interest/ability and home-life. Once you've selected a dog for adoption we'll refer the dog to the Veterinary Hospital for a departure physical, which is usually scheduled for the following day. After the physical is completed the Veterinary Staff will provide photocopies of applicable medical records for you to take to your animal health practitioner. The records and dog are usually available shortly after the noon hour on this second day.

Bring a leash, suitable collar and your driver's license. After you sign the indemnity agreement you will be allowed to depart with your new family member. This process normally takes about one hour. REMINDER: Dogs being made available for adoptions, whether to law enforcement agencies or to private citizens, are not the highest priorities for our busy Veterinary Hospital. Emergency cases, as well as dogs that are in training or preparing to deploy to the field all have a priority over adoption dogs. Your patience is very much appreciated.