

Police Learn How To Deal With Aggressive Dogs

By Andrea Lutz – October 30, 2014



BOISE -- An expert in canine encounters made a stop in Idaho to inform law enforcement officers from around the state that there are other ways to deal with aggressive dogs than pulling a trigger.

Jim Osorio came all the way from Texas to Idaho for a few really good reasons.

"I know about the incidents like Filer," he told KTVB Thursday. "And Nampa has had a couple of incidents as well."

From November 2012 to February of 2014, KTVB has reported on seven different officer-involved dog shootings in Idaho Falls, Nampa, Boise, Coeur d'Alene and Filer.

Many in the Treasure Valley community have expressed that officer-involved fatal dog shootings is something that is happening far too often.

Osorio's instruction to the 55 participating officers involved several new techniques.

"I'd rather officers try something else and I believe the public wants officers to try something else way before they go into lethal force," said Osorio.

"You have to get comfortable with dogs," said Osorio.

Even some new tools like making room on an officer tool belt for things like dog treats and toys. When it comes to using a gun on a dog, Osorio says, "I recommend that you don't even use it."

At the same time, the class was going on down the hall in Ada County dispatch, a new policy on dogs is already in place and being used by dispatchers.

"We wanted to be involved in trying to prevent some incidents that happen," said dispatch supervisor Cortney Dennis. "Are there dogs in the residence? And if so, please secure those dogs."

Those are the questions every dispatcher will ask to cut down on interactions where a dog might get aggressive with a responding officer.

"We are part of the team, we want to make sure that these situations have positive outcomes," said Dennis.

Sgt. Matthew Crawford says officers want a positive outcome too. They have a lot to lose.

"There are a lot of things that dogs can do to injure you that might take you out of your career," said Crawford. "People are taking in the information, and even people that know a lot about dogs are getting more out of it."

A major thing that was stressed today by the teacher of the canine encounters class was the public's responsibility too.

If you have a dog, Osorio says you need have that dog trained and have it socialized.