

Canines Graduate Explosives Detection School

Dogs and handlers will now go on to protect airports, transit systems.

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The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) on Nov. 30 announced the graduation of 11 members of its National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program.

The teams are assigned to airports in Houston; Boise, Idaho; Manchester, N.H.; Dallas and Los Angeles, plus mass transit systems in the New York-New Jersey area and Baltimore.

“Canines play an essential role in the explosives detection capabilities of airports and mass transit systems. The TSA-certified explosives detection canine community is an ever growing component of transportation security,” National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program director Dave Kontny said in a statement.

During training, officers were instructed in handler skills and explosives safety, and teams spent much of their time searching for explosives training aids in specialized indoor and outdoor training labs. They also practiced searching luggage and full parking lots.

The program is a component of TSA’s Federal Air Marshal Service and is a cooperative partnership with participating airports and mass transit systems. TSA provides and trains the canines, offers in-depth training for the handlers, and partially reimburses participating agencies for costs associated with the teams, such as salaries, overtime, canine food and veterinary care.