



Working Dogs

How Dogs Help



Prepare • Respond • Impact



Firefighters and dogs have been linked together in people's image of firefighters for a long time. Historically fire stations have had working dogs to assist with their jobs. The dogs, traditionally Dalmatians, have been used as companions for the horses that pulled the engines, cleared a path for the fire truck and then protected equipment while the fighters combatted the fires. More than a century of firefighting saw Dalmatians in the role of escorts, companions, and protectors. (FASNY Museum of Firefighting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0H4SKqpWLo0>)

As horse drawn trucks gave way to motor driven apparatus, the dogs weren't as necessary, but did you know that dogs still play a part in the job of firefighting?



- Dogs are used now days in firefighting to help investigate how a fire started and recovery efforts in search and rescue. We'd like to share some of the stories of the dogs currently helping first responders and then provide you with some info that could assist you in keeping your own pets safe in the event of a fire.





- Flora is a companion dog to the 911 First Responders in Salt Lake City. Alex Dale is Flora's handler. Flora is used by the 911 staff to help comfort. Dispatchers face difficult calls and situations through their shift and they sometimes need to sit with Flora a while to feel better.





Flora will sit and listen, or just be quiet with a person needing it. Flora can sit or lay on someone to give them the feeling of a comforting presence. The feeling of the weight and friendship of Flora can help ease worry for 911 Dispatchers.



- Ludacris is a Search and Rescue Border Collie that works with Firefighter Wilcox. Ludacris accompanies his trainer to classes Firefighter Wilcox teaches at a local high school as well as helps with recovery efforts in emergencies. Ludacris is trained to help people on what may be one of the worst times of their lives, but he is also a fun-loving mascot for the Salt Lake City Fire Community Outreach Division.





**Wilcox and
Ludacris
training.**

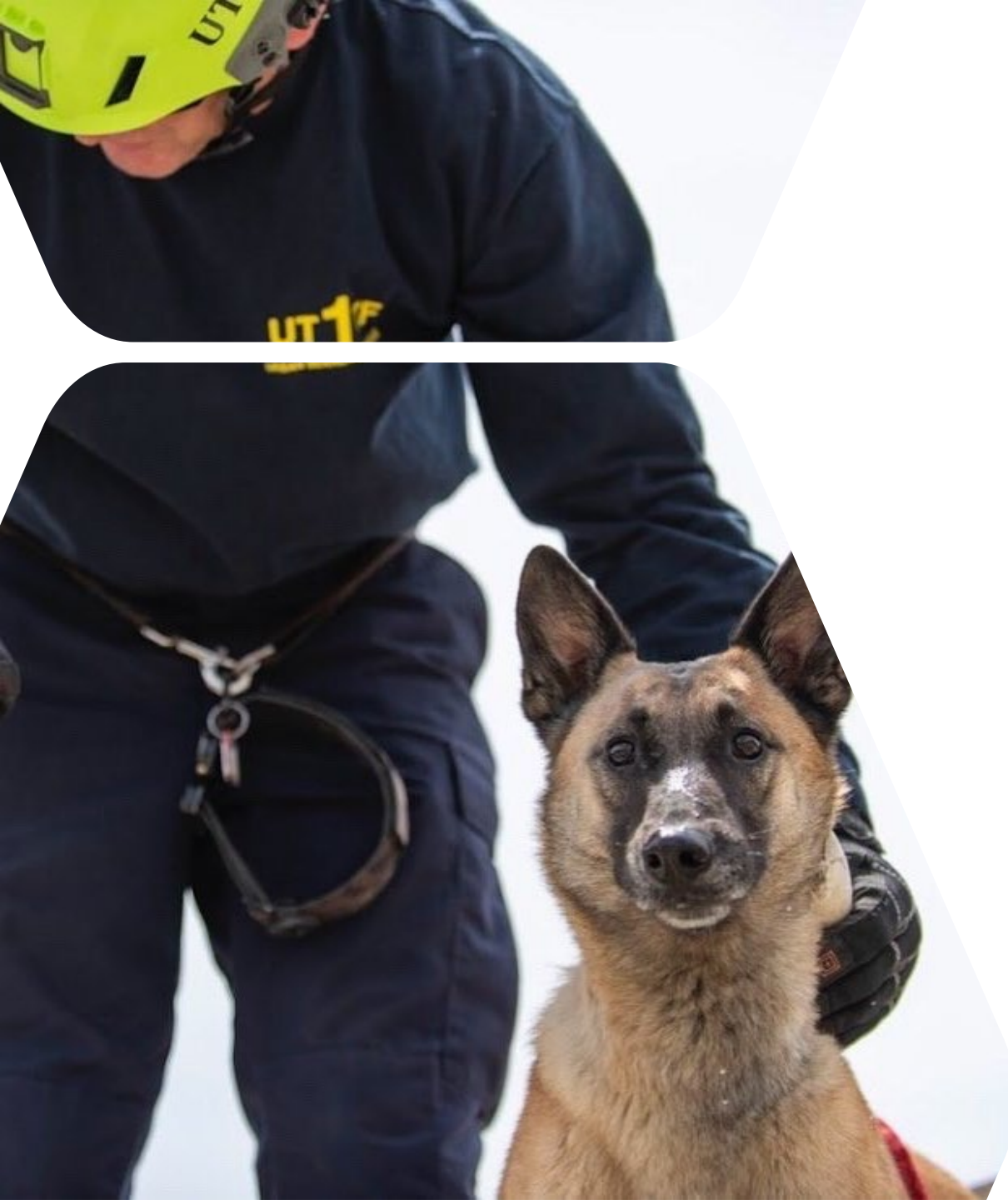


- Utah Task Force 1 (UTTF 1) is based in Salt Lake City. There are SLC Fire Department firefighters who serve on this FEMA Urban Search & Rescue Task Force. These rescuers use dogs as tools to help search and rescue. Working dogs can be pets but not all pets can be working dogs. Temperament and training are critical. Some types of dogs that currently work with UTTF 1 are Labrador, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever, Malinois, and Border Collie.



- The dogs who work with these trainers live with them and deploy as needed across the country. Natural disasters like hurricanes or earthquakes will find dogs like Grizz, Remi, Bocca, Bosco, Yeti and Ludacris instrumental in helping. The dogs are pets as well as valuable assistants in rescue and recovery operations.





- SLC Firefighter Craig Orum and his Belgian Malinois Senka are on UTTF 1.





- Firefighter Justin Batty and Yeti are also FEMA certified to assist in an emergency. These dogs are part of the 284 SARs certified teams ready to answer a call for emergency help. <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/frameworks/urban-search-rescue/canines>

- Daz is a Fire Scene Investigator with SLC Fire. She is a black Labrador who assists her trainer, Investigator Whitney, to ascertain how a fire started and if an accelerant was used.

- It is dangerous to play with matches or fireworks and can sometimes lead to injury or unwanted fires. Dogs help investigators discover if a fire was intentionally set and this can lead to charges.

- Here's why dogs are so valuable to that discovery. Dogs possess up to 300 million olfactory receptors in their noses. Humans have about six million. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/dogs-sense-of-smell/>

This gift of smell helps dogs detect things using their noses that we humans can't.



- Daz is a powerful member of the investigator team with SLC Fire helping solve cases of how fires got started. Check out the video on Daz and Investigator Whitney at the following link. See several positions firefighters hold within the department or just see Daz and Whitney by scrolling down to their profile.

- <https://youtu.be/3qdmkU3vJW4>





- Be aware that it's not safe to play with matches or other incendiary devices and that if you start a fire, intentionally or unintentionally, it can cause damage and lead to criminal charges. Daz and Investigator Whitney want you to be safe, and they also warn that starting a fire can lead to charges and fines.

- Some dogs have come to live with some SLC Firefighters because of the firefighting job. Captain Stowe was part of the crew who rescued a lost dog in the mountains above Salt Lake City. He carried the dog, who was weak from her ordeal, down the mountain and fell in love with the breed.



- The rescued dog went home to her worried and loving owner, but Captain Stowe went out and got a Vizsla just like the one he rescued. Zeke has been a well-loved addition to his family ever since.





- Many families consider their pets special members of the family, whether it's a working dog or not. Dogs give us so much: friendship, loyalty, and comfort. They remind us to exercise and eat right. Their unconditional love is precious. Recognizing this, the National Fire Protection Association has recently added tips on their site about how to keep our furry family members safe in the event of an emergency.

- <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tipsheets/PetSafetyTips.ashx>





- These are some of the working dogs that help SLC First Responders. Working dogs have many other roles they play. Check out some online sources to see the large range of ways dogs help humans. There are also other animals that help people do their jobs. Do some research and you'll find even unusual animals like dolphins, rats, monkeys, and ferrets have helped humans with tasks that are dangerous or difficult.

