

SAPS Cape Town K9 Unit Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 15-16 September 2026

Location: SAPS Cape Town K9 Unit, 2 Jan Smuts Drive, Pinelands

Introduction

In light of the inspection conducted at the SAPS Cape Town K9 Unit, the inspection was carried out over a period of two days, namely 15 and 16 September 2026.

Day 1: 15 September 2026

Upon Inspector Elani's and my arrival at the SAPS Cape Town K9 Unit, situated at 2 Jan Smuts Drive, Pinelands, we met with the Acting Commander, Captain Olivier, who granted us access to the facility. He informed us that the Unit Commander, Colonel Speelman, was currently on leave and was due to return on 5 October 2026. During the Colonel's absence, Captain Olivier was acting as commander.

We informed Captain Olivier that we had been requested by the NSPCA to conduct a proactive inspection of the facility. Captain Olivier advised us that Warrant Officer Meyer had already left for the day, and as a result, we would not be able to inspect the SAPS 84 files as they were locked in his office. We were also unable to inspect the food room, as Warrant Officer Meyer had the key.

Captain Olivier further requested that we return on Thursday rather than Wednesday, as the unit would be undergoing a national inspection by their National Office from Pretoria on Wednesday. We did not comment on this request and proceeded with the inspection.

General Facility Inspection

Upon entering the kennel unit, we observed that a double-gate security system was in place. The first gate is manually operated, while the second gate is fingerprint activated. The unit appeared secure and suitable for preventing dogs from escaping the facility.

We conducted a walkthrough of the entire facility and observed various divisions within the SAPS K9 Unit that house dogs on the premises. These included:

- Dogs belonging to the Pinelands Unit.
- Presidential Security Service dogs.

- Dogs housed from other units outside the City, namely Eastern Cape "lockdown dogs".
- "Donation dogs" received from members of the public and awaiting medical and/or selection clearance.

During the inspection, we observed that the unit makes use of bait boxes positioned throughout the facility for rodent control. We also noted that the unit uses a chlorine system to hose out and disinfect kennels. The chlorine pods in the system appeared to be adequately stocked.

We proceeded to inspect the dipping bath and observed old dip liquid remaining in the bath, containing floating debris. We brought this to the attention of Captain Kapank, who was assisting with the walkthrough, and informed him that leaving dip solution in the bath poses a significant risk and could result in severe poisoning should an animal ingest it. No comment was made in response.

We observed multiple exercise camps standing open; however, none were being utilised during the inspection or at any point throughout the duration of our visit. All dogs remained confined to their enclosures.

All kennel enclosures were inspected and appeared to be in good condition and secure. No broken fencing was observed. Water and shelter were available, and the living environment generally appeared clean, with only fresh faeces observed in the enclosures.

Welfare Inspection of Dogs

The animals listed below appeared to present either veterinary concerns, behavioural concerns, or both. When these concerns were brought to the attention of the officials present, they maintained that there was nothing wrong with the dogs and stated that the behaviours observed were normal or attributable to excitement.

Veterinary and Behavioural Concerns

1. Razor

Breed: Belgian Malinois

Sex: Male

Microchip ID: 94400000010557

The dog appears to exhibit signs of kennel stress and is underweight.

2. Drago

Breed: Belgian Shepherd
Sex: Male
Microchip ID: 94400000010557

The dog appears to exhibit kennel stress through severe spinning behaviour.

3. Ronan

Breed: Belgian Malinois
Sex: Male
Status: Donation Dog

The dog appears to exhibit kennel stress by shying away.

4. Roy

Breed: German Shepherd
Sex: Male
Status: Donation Dog

The dog appears to exhibit kennel stress by shying away and appears not to be adequately fed.

5. Rogue

Breed: Dutch Shepherd
Sex: Female
Reference: SK04/26 (Donation Dog)

The dog appears to display signs of anxiety as noted by a veterinarian on 04 June 2026. No follow-up plan, intervention, or solution was recorded.

6. Mica

Breed: Malinois Cross
Sex: Female
Reference: SK05/26

The dog appears to exhibit signs of kennel stress by shying away. No veterinary history or records were available for this dog, which is concerning.

7. Kudjo

Breed: Rottweiler
Sex: Male
Reference: SK01/26

The dog could not be assessed by the veterinarian on 07 August 2026. Radiographs of the heart, lungs, and hips are still required.

8. Ace

Breed: Belgian Malinois

Sex: Male

Reference: SK30/25

The dog was noted by the veterinarian on 06 August 2026 to display nervous behaviour.

9. Architta

Breed: Belgian Malinois Cross

Sex: Female

Microchip ID: 191035000030382

The dog requires dental treatment as noted by the veterinarian on 09 September 2026.

Furthermore, adequate veterinary treatment, including radiographic examination, is required to confirm suspicions of spondylosis initially raised by the veterinarian on 24 October 2025. This investigation is necessary to determine whether the dog remains fit for work.

10. Evan

Breed: Belgian Shepherd

Sex: Male

Reference: B8308

The dog appears to exhibit kennel stress through excessive spinning while holding a metal bowl in its mouth. This behaviour may result in dental injury or deterioration.

11. Ice

Breed: Belgian Shepherd

Sex: Female

Reference: B6966

The dog appears elderly and/or may have pressure sores, hotspots, wounds, and/or abnormal growths requiring assessment.

Additional Welfare and Safety Concerns

Upon closer inspection of the kennel enclosures, we observed that water buckets were secured using wire. However, exposed sharp sections of wire were present and have the potential to injure the dogs.

Several food bowls also displayed sharp or damaged edges, creating a further risk of injury. These concerns were brought to the attention of Captain Olivier, who acknowledged both the protruding wire and damaged bowls.

Hazardous materials were observed within the exercise camps. Barbed wire was noted in certain exercise areas, presenting a risk of injury should a dog jump high enough to make contact with it.

Additionally, old faeces were observed in several exercise camps.

SAPS K9 Vehicle Inspection

While concluding the first day's inspection, one of the SAPS K9 vehicles arrived at the facility. We took the opportunity to inspect the compartment used for transporting dogs.

During this inspection, we observed that the vehicle's roof lining was hanging loose. Upon closer examination, it appeared that the lining had been chewed and damaged. This presents a health risk, as the dog could ingest portions of the material. This concern is particularly relevant given that other SAPS K9 dogs have reportedly ingested foreign objects previously.

This concern was shown to Captain Olivier, who acknowledged it.

Day 1 was then concluded.

Day 2: 16 September 2026

SAPS personnel were under the impression that we would return on Thursday. However, we returned to the unit the following day, Wednesday, 16 September 2026.

Upon arrival, the personnel appeared surprised by our presence, as the unit was concurrently undergoing inspection by representatives from their National Department.

We informed Captain Olivier that we had returned to inspect the SAPS 84 files. I then approached a Colonel from the National Unit and advised them that we wished to sit in and inspect the SAPS 84 files. Permission was granted, and we proceeded with the inspection.

Food Room Inspection

Prior to reviewing the SAPS 84 files, I requested that Warrant Officer Meyer show me the food room.

While proceeding to the food room, I again walked past the exercise camps and observed that none of them were being utilised, with all dogs remaining confined to their kennel enclosures.

The food room appeared clean and showed no signs of rodent activity or access.

All food bags were stored correctly, elevated from the floor on wooden pallets.

The unit feeds Olympic Adult Maintenance dog food (green bag). During the inspection, approximately 60 bags of Olympic dog food were counted. Based on the available stock, the unit appeared to have sufficient food to last until the next procurement cycle, scheduled approximately 28 days later.

SAPS 84 File Inspection

We returned to the office and reviewed each dog's file individually.

During this process, we observed that several dogs had veterinary and behavioural concerns documented by Wingfield Veterinary Hospital, as reflected in the photographic evidence attached to the case file.

After completing the file inspection, we met with Captain Olivier and Captain Kapank and informed them that, because the Presidential dogs are being housed at the Pinelands Unit, the Pinelands Unit bears responsibility for ensuring that these dogs receive necessary veterinary treatment when required.

In terms of the **Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962**, the animals are considered to be in the possession, custody, control, and charge of the Pinelands Unit while housed there. Accordingly, responsibility for their welfare rests with the unit.

At this stage, I explained to both Captains the legal definition of an "owner" in terms of the Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962.

I further explained the concept of foreseeability in relation to Section 2(2). However, both Captains maintained that if a dog belonged to another unit, that respective unit should remain solely responsible for addressing any veterinary or welfare concerns, even though the dogs were housed at the Pinelands Unit.

I informed the Captains that this interpretation is inconsistent with the Act, which specifically references possession, custody, control, and charge when determining responsibility.

Exercise Programme

I requested that Captain Olivier provide the unit's exercise schedule or rotational exercise roster.

Captain Olivier advised that no such schedule existed because "Warrant Officer Meyer walks the dogs" around the block.

I informed Captain Olivier that, without documentary records, there is no means of verifying whether the dogs are being exercised consistently or even removed from their enclosures on a regular basis.

I further advised that an exercise rotation roster should be implemented and maintained to ensure accountability and proper monitoring of exercise, particularly for dogs identified by Wingfield Veterinary Hospital as displaying behavioural concerns.

Once again, the response provided was that Warrant Officer Meyer exercises and socialises the dogs adequately through walking.

Enforcement Action

Following the inspection, we proceeded to issue a written warning on site.

A four-page warning was issued, detailing all concerns observed over the two-day inspection period.

The warning comprised the following pages:

- 15184
- 15185
- 15186
- 15187

The warning was attached to the case.

A follow-up inspection is still to be conducted.