

Edmonton Fire Rescue Services welcomes "Grover" to its K9 Unit

Edmonton Fire Rescue Services (EFRS) has 17 new recruits, and one of them has four legs.

Grover, a one-year-old Bloodhound, Black Labrador and Jack Russell Terrier cross, will graduate with 16 firefighter recruits on Tuesday, May 13, 2014. He will then join Sprocket, veteran K9, as a member of the EFRS Fire Investigations K9 Unit.



Edmonton Fire Rescue Services established its K9 Unit in 1996. The Unit works with Fire Investigators to detect accelerants at fire scenes. The EFRS K9 Unit participates in 30 to 50 investigations each year.

"Our K9s are an integral part of our team and play an important role in helping to manage arson in our City," says Chief of Investigations Wayne Pawlowski. "With their help, we take samples from fire scenes that are then processed through an RCMP lab and aid us in convictions; they make our investigation process easier and more efficient."

Grover completed his training at the New York State Fire Academy Department of Homeland Security last month. The eight-week course uses a play-reward structure to train K9s in agility, canine etiquette and the detection of ignitable liquids and vapours. Grover, the youngest in his class, trained alongside his new partner, Captain Murray Steedsman, Fire Investigator.

Grover was rescued by the Schomarie Valley Animal Hospital after his first owner abandoned him.

"The New York State Fire Academy only uses rescue dogs in its K9 program. They give these dogs a second chance at life, an important job to do, and a family to live with," says Captain Steedsman. "Grover is a really good dog and a great partner. He comes to work with me, goes out on calls with me, and comes home with me at the end of every day."

Captain Fire Investigators who enroll in the K9 program make a long-term commitment to training, working with, and living with their partners. Grover is already on the job with Captain Steedsman, and will now begin actively participating in searches.

"Our K9 Unit is an important part of our Fire Rescue Services team," says Fire Chief Ken Block. "We are very excited to welcome Grover to the department and I wish him a very long and successful career."

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