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Canine team grows, enhances security at El Paso International Airport

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation and Security Administration (TSA), El Paso Police Department (EPPD), and the El Paso International Airport (EPIA) welcome two new Officer/Canine teams.

The two El Paso Police Officer/Canine joined the airport's K9 unit. The teams are trained to detect explosives in a busy transportation environment. EPPD Airport Canine Officers work primarily at the airport but can assist in explosive detection tasks citywide and help ensure the safety of major city events throughout the year.

Sgt. Raul Melendez/K9 Riki and Officer Robert Cano/K9 Nik completed the four-month handler training at the TSA's National Canine Training Center in San Antonio. They underwent roughly two and a half weeks of additional, intense training to certify the new K9 teams and increase the efficiency of the Airport K9 Unit.

Passengers departing El Paso International Airport can at any time expect to see the teams working around travelers and will notice the reconfiguration of checkpoint lines to allow for the passengers to walk past the dogs.

The dogs sniff the air currents surrounding travelers and their belongings as they pass through the airport terminal to detect anyone who may be carrying explosives. The canine handlers are trained to read their dog's change of behavior when it indicates an explosive scent has been detected. If a dog alerts its handler to the presence of explosive odor, officers will follow an established procedure to resolve the alarm.

The use of these highly-trained canines is an effective tool in detecting and deterring the introduction of explosive devices into the nation's transportation systems while also enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Airport and TSA's screening operations.

For more information please visit TSA.gov or flyelpaso.com.

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