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Newest Transit Police dog to focus on employee mental wellness

New Westminster – Metro Vancouver Transit Police has welcomed a PADS Accredited Facility Dog (AFD) named Norquay to its dog team. Unlike the existing seven Transit Police dogs that are trained to detect explosives and firearms, Norquay’s job is to assist with the mental health of Transit Police employees.

On December 12, 2022, Norquay, a 3-year-old Labrador Retriever Cross, and his handler successfully completed the AFD training program and began working to provide physical, social and emotional support to Transit Police officers and civilian staff. The situations faced by police officers, dispatchers and other staff can leave them at an increased risk of stress, anxiety, and emotional trauma. Norquay’s calming presence and AFD training allow employees to decompress and better defuse after an event.

Norquay was bred, raised and trained by PADS (Pacific Assistance Dog Society). Accredited Facility Dogs differ from traditional "therapy dogs" in that they are purpose bred for a strong health and temperament - including the high level of resilience that is required to work full time in a role like this.

"We're excited about this new partnership with Metro Vancouver Transit Police. Norquay was selected from amongst several incredible candidates because of his suitability for the placement. Norquay is a beautiful blend of calm, cool and collected with a dash of fun and silly; he is drawn to emotion, particularly in people who are stressed or upset. Norquay is incredibly resilient and shakes off the stress of the day really nicely; we know this will allow him to positively impact the MVTP team for many years to come." - Laura Watamanuk, PADS Executive Director

Norquay lives with his handler Judy, who works as the Assistant to the Operations Inspector, and is a part of her family. When he’s not working, he enjoys a spirited game of tug with his favourite rope or a run in the park with his PADS friends.

“Whether Norquay is snuggled up to you with his head in your lap after a stressful situation, or he’s having one of his famous naps at the feet of officers debriefing following a difficult incident, his calming presence and gentle manner help to ease the tension.”— Constable Amanda Steed

More information about the training and benefits of an AFD can be found on the PADS website: [Our Assistance Dogs \(pads.ca\)](https://pads.ca)