



## Wisconsin Police K9s Training in Marinette County

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By Kristin Byrne

About 70 K9 teams from all over our state are in Northeast Wisconsin to train.

Police shout "Drop the weapon! Drop the weapon!" and then, "Sic 'em!"

They follow commands. They're fast and fierce.

They're a force on the police department you don't want to mess with.

K9 officers and their police partners from all over Wisconsin are taking turns to train.

The Wisconsin Law Enforcement Canine Handler Association puts on the training every year.

"A lot of people don't have the opportunity back at home to have situations like this or build scenarios like this, so it's a great opportunity for everybody," training leader Lieutenant Jay Johnson of the Greenfield Police Department said.

On their schedule are eight different stations where they'll perform drills such as a drug search.

"When you saw him scratch and barking at that pink bag, that means that that's a positive indication for the odor of some type of illegal drugs," Officer Craig Kasten, Crivitz Police Department, explained.

Also a suspect search.

"The driver fled from the scene and is hiding somewhere out in the woods behind me," Deputy Brian Wenzel of the Waushara County Sheriff's Department described the scenario.

And handling an armed person during a traffic stop.

"We're giving the dogs confidence to get in the cars either through an open window or through a door," Johnson said.

There are about 70 K9 teams at this training, and the handlers tell us one of the main benefits of being here is watching other K9 teams in action.

"Sharing the information with other handlers, if somebody does something a little different we have, you know, the techniques change from year to year or different tactical things to do," Kasten said.

They're sharpening skills that come in handy out in the streets, to keep people safe and protect officers.

"If they're armed, God forbid a dog gets hurt or killed but that's the job they do," Johnson said.