

***K9 Retired Dogs are those that have served our state or country  
and have been retired due to age, injury, or illness.***

K9 Retired Dogs have a special place at VSC K9 ReC Center. We greatly honor their service and understand that sometimes the circumstances leading to and making it through retirement can be challenging. Like any extreme athlete, K9 Retired Dogs retain their high drive and love for work. They can become frustrated with the “less efficient functioning” of their bodies. Studies show that while patients may perform within “normal” parameters, it is actually the difference between their pre-morbid and current performance that contributes most to mental health, including emotional stability.

K9 Retired Dogs benefit from routine general health exams but also from more specialized exams that take into consideration the life-long stressors their bodies have encountered as well as considerations for a potential history of chemical exposure. Because of their special careers, we believe their retirement should involve an extra special high quality of life. To facilitate this, examples of routine screening we recommend include the following.

1. Non-invasive, stress-free approach and procedures
2. Mental health (e.g., cognition, affect, drive) assessment and considerations in quality of life.
3. Meticulous evaluation of biomechanics to promote early detection of not just arthritis, but changes in tendons, ligaments, muscle, myofascia, etc to slow the progression of disease and restore comfort and function
4. Routine imaging of the chest and abdomen to facilitate early detection of changes common in aging dogs and especially in some working breeds (e.g., enlarged spleen, liver or splenic nodules, dilated cardiomyopathy). Organs like the liver and spleen are highly vascular organs; compromise of them can be suddenly fatal if not caught early and treated.

Keeping K9 Retired Dogs mentally stimulated is critical to their quality of life. They have spent their entire lives problem solving and protecting, with a close emotional bond to their handler. These aspects of their lives require as careful transitioning as physical and medical changes.

***The VSC K9 ReC Center is honored to assist in every aspect  
of K9 Retired Dogs career transition – physical, mental, medical.***

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*Veterinary Specialty Center is guided by the belief that companion animals deserve state-of-the-art medical care in a kind and comforting environment. The courage of our patients, the loyalty of their human families, and the devotion of our referral veterinarians inspire our vision. It is sustained by the contributions of our compassionate, knowledgeable and dedicated staff and built upon a tradition of providing unsurpassed healthcare for animals.*

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