

the customs authorities, and from all parties involved in the customs protection process, constant interaction, joint training events, etc.

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## **THE CYNOLOGICAL CONTROL OF THE CUSTOMS SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS**

### **Кинологический контроль таможенной службы Республики Беларусь**

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Currently, dogs are divided into three main groups according to the type of their use: service dogs, hunting dogs and decorative dogs. Dog handlers are specialists in breeding and training service dogs. They study the physiology and behavior of four-legged pets, learn to use their skills for human benefit. The choice of breed, training certain commands depends primarily on the future responsibilities of the dog. For example, guide dogs: they are required to have a calm character and good obedience, as they work with blind people who fully trust their four-legged guides.

Service dogs are used in different services: search, guard, rescue, and others. They also occupy a very important place in the customs system. Dog handlers have been working at the Belarusian customs since 1925, when the courses of search dog guides were opened. But over time, they were transferred to the border guard and until 2001, the system of customs authorities did not use search dogs. Belarus was one of the last countries to use dogs in customs operations.

Cynology includes the study of the anatomy and physiology of dogs, their origin and evolution, selection and breeding, cultivation and maintenance, training and use of four-legged assistants.

The role of dog handlers is to train special dogs that must perform certain commands to help the work of customs authorities. Their main task is to search prohibited substances. Most often, dogs find tobacco and various drugs. Despite the fact that there is an opinion that you can train absolutely any dog, most dog handlers choose certain breeds. Today the canine service of the Republic of Belarus uses service dogs of the following breeds:

German shepherd. They are fully equipped with canine departments of the Minsk Central and Brest customs. The popularity of the German shepherd is explained by its physical qualities and character. The shepherd dog selflessly protects the owner and protects the property. German shepherds are excellent service dogs, especially for search, guard and guard services, and can also be successfully used to search for mines, drugs, when inspecting vehicles and in intelligence.

Labrador. The Labrador has a quick reaction, is confident in its abilities and is persistent in achieving the goal. It has a high sense of smell and a good visual memory. It is considered to be one of the most loyal dogs. Labradors used at customs are divided into three types:

those who work in the baggage compartment (search for drugs with an active form of designation),

those who work in the passenger compartment (passive inspection – search for drugs hidden on a person's body), and

so-called "agricultural" (search for prohibited seeds, plant tubers, and food products).

Staffordshire terrier. This dog is loyal, persistent and courageous. Dogs of this breed are excellent watchmen. From an early age, persistent, constant, but calm training is required. The main thing is to develop a tendency to fights and bites. They are used as guard dogs and bodyguards.

Also the customs authorities of Belarus employed dogs of these breeds: Doberman, setters, English and Russian spaniels, Jack Russell terriers, and even a dog without a breed.

The high level of training of customs service dogs makes it possible to detect even a small amount of narcotic substances. Customs dog handlers are constant-

ly involved in special events by other law enforcement agencies of the Republic. In 2019, 13 facts of illegal storage and distribution of narcotic and psychotropic substances with the involvement of the canine service of the Belarusian customs were established. As a result, the canine service of the Belarusian customs independently and in cooperation with other customs divisions revealed 53 facts of illegal movement of drugs and psychotropic substances across the customs border. As a result, 64 kg of narcotic drugs and about 326 units of drugs containing psychotropic substances were seized.

In addition to professional training, officials of canine units with service dogs regularly take part in various championships, exchange experience with other countries, confirming the high level of professional skill. In particular, in 2019, the team of dog handlers of customs authorities took part in the 14th open championship of the Republican state public Association "Belarusian sports society "Dynamo" in the service all-around of dog handlers and took first place in the special discipline "search for narcotic drugs". In 2019, the Brest customs office held a training on the exchange of experience for dog handlers of the customs authorities of the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Poland in the framework of the "Poland-Belarus-Ukraine" program 2014-2020.

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