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Police dog bites South St. Paul boy

Last update: March 18, 2009 - 8:35 PM

A St. Paul police dog jumped on and bit a 13-year-old boy Sunday night in South St. Paul.

The dog, Sarik, was with his partner, Officer Isaac Rinehart, Sunday evening near a water tower at 18th Avenue S. and Fourth Street S. when he got away from Rinehart and attacked the boy, said St. Paul police spokesman Peter Panos. Rinehart was off-duty at the time, Panos said.

"[Police dogs] don't understand on and off duty," Panos said. "Anytime he's in that police car, he's supposed to be working."

Rinehart told the boy to return home while he got Sarik back into his police car, Panos said. The St. Paul department will determine if any disciplinary action is needed after the South St. Paul Police Department finishes its investigation.

In the meantime, the department will investigate whether its procedures were followed and whether Rinehart and Sarik need to complete additional training, Panos said. He said the boy needed stitches but didn't have any further information about his injuries.

Sarik, who has been a police dog since 2007, has mistakenly bitten someone before. In December 2007, Rinehart and Sarik were answering a

weapons call at a downtown St. Paul bus stop when Sarik jumped out of Rinehart's grasp. He lunged at a man standing nearby and bit his lower leg. It was later determined that the man was neither a suspect nor victim in the weapons call.

Panos said he wasn't aware of an internal affairs investigation into that incident.


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