



Helen Police Department

Standard Operating Policies and Procedures

Chapter P-065 Canine Operations	Effective Date:	August 1, 2022	# of Pages:	15
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	Special Instructions:			

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the utilization of the Helen Police Department Canine Unit and the use of canines in field operations and regarding the procurement, storage, issuance, and security measures for all controlled substances utilized in canine training.

II. SCOPE

It shall be the policy of the Helen Police Department Canine Unit to use nationally recognized trained and controlled canines in support of law enforcement operations. Recognizing the superior scenting abilities, keen eyesight, advanced hearing capabilities, and ability to deter crime with their sheer presence, the trained canine is a valuable asset to the law enforcement community. The canine will be utilized in a position reflective of the animal's training and certification only. Such training and certification for the canine may include but are not limited to: narcotic detection; vehicle search, area search and building searches for narcotic detection. When not handling canine calls or training, officers will assist whenever possible including traffic enforcement and emergency calls for service.

The decision to apply a canine in any situation will be solely that of the Canine handler. Understanding or "reading" law enforcement canines is crucial for appropriate and successful application. Only the Canine handler, through daily contact with the canine and specialized training, can understand their unique capabilities and utilize them in the correct manner. The canine handler may refuse to apply this, or his/her canine as requested if, in his or her judgment, the application of the canine would be unsafe unlawful or inappropriate for the situation.

III. DEFINITION

- A. Canine unit: An officer handler and his assigned canine.

- B. Controlled Substance Inventory: Controlled substances such as Marijuana, Cocaine, Methamphetamine and Heroin, properly documented and securely stored, available for issuance to canine handlers as a canine training aid or waiting transfer for destruction.
- C. Canine Training Aid: A controlled substance such as Marijuana, Cocaine, Methamphetamine and Heroin, properly issued to a canine handler to be utilized in the training of drug detection canines.
- D. Researcher Licensee: An individual who is personally licensed by the Georgia Board of Pharmacy – Drugs and Narcotics Agency and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration as the individual responsible for a Drug Researcher Protocol.
- E. Licensed Drug Transfer: An authorized transfer of a controlled substance from one researcher-licensed agency to another researcher-licensed agency through the D.E.A. Form 222 Transfer process or the D.E.A. Form 1117-0007 Drug Surrender for Destruction process.
- F. Court Order Acquisition: An authorized transfer of a controlled substance from evidence to a researcher-licensed agency through a court order signed by a judge.
- G. Training Aid Issuance: An authorized transfer of a controlled substance from a researcher licensee or his/her designee to a canine handler for the purpose of canine training.
- H. Licensee Ledger: A ledger book recording all licensed drug transfers, all training aid issuances, current inventories, and the location of all controlled substances in inventory.

IV. USE OF CANINE UNIT

A. Narcotics Detection

1. When using the canine in a drug detection capacity, it is the responsibility of the handler to maintain records that document the use, training, deployment, and the proficiency of the canine unit.
2. This documentation shall be made readily available to officers who may need it for judicial process.
3. Use of drug detection canines in public schools are permitted only when approved by the Chief of Police or designee:
 - a) The school's principal or designated authority requests the use of canines.

b) The search is limited to inanimate objects in public areas and the exterior of student lockers unless reasonable suspicion exists to gain admission to lockers and related areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. Admission into the lockers or inanimate objects will be made by an official with the school administration.

4. Drug sniffing canines may be used to sniff motor vehicles when:

a) Reasonable/ articulable suspicion exists to believe the operator or passengers are in possession of illegal narcotics; or

b) During a valid vehicle stop, the canine is used to sniff the vehicle's exterior in an exploratory manner. Unless the canine indicates the presence of drug odor in the vehicle creating probable cause, the operator may not be detained longer than necessary to conclude the business associated with the initial stop.

B. Bomb Detection

The shift supervisor may request the assistance of a bomb detection canine team through Lee Arrendale State Prison. Contact can be made with these through contacting the Lee Arrendale State Prison 24 hours a day at 706-776-4750. Hall County Sheriff's Office Bomb detection canines can also be contacted through Hall County Central Dispatch 24 hours a day at 770-536-8812.

Explosive detection canines can only be called when the suspect device has not yet been located (bomb threat). Do NOT call an explosive detection canine to the scene where a suspected device has already been located. If the device has been located contact the Georgia Bureau of Investigation for a bomb technician to respond to the scene and secure / stabilize the suspect device.

C. Backup / Assisting Canine Officer

1. Backup officers will be given instructions by the canine handler for building, vehicle, and area searches. These instructions must be followed exactly.

2. One officer shall be assigned as a backup canine officer.

3. Backup canine officers will assist canine handlers with canine training, as well as other canine handlers from other agencies.

4. Backup canine officers will be called to take control of the canine when circumstances dictate the canine handler respond to situations without the canine. Examples of these include but are not limited to court appearances and exigent circumstances.

5. If a canine handler is injured, the backup canine officer will be called to take control of the canine.

D. Vehicle Stops

1. When assisting a canine unit, approaching officers must remember that the windows will be down in the unit of the handler and that the dog will be watching the handler during a traffic stop.

2. If approaching officers must approach the unit, prior contact with the handler must be made, if possible, thus allowing the dog handler command and control the canine without being distracted.

E. Police Canine Activity Log

1. All police canine activity shall be logged.

2. Items to be included will be:

- a) Daily work activity,
- b) Training and demonstrations.

3. The activity log will be kept by the handler and made available to superior officers upon request.

F. Canine Bites and Injuries

1. Whenever a canine bites an individual, whether or not in the line-of-duty, the handler shall:

- a) Summon a supervisory officer to the scene.
- b) Examine the affected area to determine the seriousness of the bite or injury.
- c) Obtain medical treatment for the person. Medical personnel should examine the affected area respective of the perceived seriousness of the bite or injury.
- d) Take a color photograph(s) of the affected area following medical treatment; and

e) Complete a Use of Force report whenever it has been alleged that a canine has bitten or otherwise injured an individual. The report must detail the circumstances surrounding the incident, the identity of the individual involved and any witnesses, the extent of the injuries if known, and measures taken in response to the incident. The original report shall be filed in accordance with the agency's use of force policy. Written witness statements should be obtained whenever possible.

V. REQUEST USE OF CANINE UNIT

A. Use Within Jurisdictional Confines

1. On Duty – Any police department member may request the use of a Canine Unit during the Canine Units normal duty hours. The canine may be used for any of the previously described duties.
2. The canine handler and the Chief of Police or designee will have the authority to deny requests for a canine unit.
3. Utilization outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Helen will require the approval of the Chief of Police or designee along with the approval of the jurisdictional supervisor in which the canine is to be utilized. A written request for mutual aid must be made in writing to the Chief of Police from the agency requesting assistance. (I.E. fax, email, etc.)
4. Canines may be approved to respond to single incidents if deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police or designee.
5. Prior to using the canine for a drug search, the investigating officer must make the determination that there is at least reasonable suspicion (based on articulable facts) that illicit drugs may be found.
6. When feasible, consent to search should be requested prior to a canine search.
7. If a vehicle is the subject of the investigative detention, a determination must be made that the detainment is legally proper and, if a search is warranted, it must be constitutionally permissible. No action shall be taken which would exceed the authorized scope of the search.
8. The use of the dog for drug detection has been an invaluable aid in the area of drug enforcement as long as it is used in certain parameters. The dog's ability to detect odor is directly related to:

- a) The availability of the odors; and
- b) The time and environment of the odor.

VI. CONDUCT IN THE PRESENCE OF CANINE

A. The following rules of conduct apply to all Helen Police Department personnel for their safety:

Do not pet the dog without permission of the canine handler.

1. Respect the handler's wishes in regard to the canine.
2. Stay away from the canine during all searches unless otherwise instructed.
3. Stand still if you think you are about to be bitten.
4. Avoid furtive or sudden movements in the presence of the canine.
5. Do not tease or agitate the canine.
6. Do not try to entice the canine to break away or disobey commands.
7. Do not use any command you have heard the handler use.
8. Do not feed the dog.
9. Do not engage in violent or simulated violent behavior with the handler in the canine's presence.
10. Do not point a weapon at the canine or the handler.
11. Do not stare intensely at the canine.
12. Do not hug the canine or lean down closely to the canine's head.

B. Canine handler injury

1. In the event of the handler being injured, the canine must be controlled and secured. The following steps shall be taken:
 - a) Never approach the canine that is protecting the officer-handler or attempt to assist the officer unless it is apparent that the

failure to respond to the officer would be detrimental to the health or safety of the officer-handler.

b) Request medical assistance for the injured officer immediately.

c) Make contact with another officer-handler or backup canine officer to remove the dog or control its actions.

VII. CANINE HANDLER RULES

A. The canine handler has the additional responsibility for the care and conduct of the dog and himself/herself.

B. The handler shall insure the dog is groomed daily and routinely checked for any signs of illness, disease, or injury.

C. The canine handler will have the ultimate responsibility in deciding as to the propriety of a search or "canine sniff". The canine handler may decide at any point that a search or "sniff" is no longer justified.

D. In the event of an emergency, the canine handler has the discretion to transport the canine to the nearest emergency animal clinic. The canine handler's immediate supervisor will be notified as soon as possible.

E. The handler shall keep the dog's living quarters clean and sanitary at all times.

F. Canines shall be kept out of restaurants, bars and public places, homes of friends or relatives, except when required by official business.

G. "Showing off" with the canine will not be permitted.

H. Dogs are not to be fed or petted by the public, except during exhibitions under the supervision of the canine handler.

I. Handler will notify the supervisor of any illness or injury to the canine.

J. Canines are not permitted to run at large.

K. Make frequent rest and exercise stops in an effort to prevent the canine from urinating or defecating inside or around the outside of a property when responding to calls for service.

L. Examine and replace, as needed all collars, choke chains, and other equipment daily to assure operational readiness.

M. Do not utilize agitation or aggressive response training except as part of an authorized training session.

N. While at the police department, the dog will not be allowed to roam the building.

O. Maintain uniforms and patrol vehicle interiors clean and free of excessive hair and odors.

P. The canine handler will keep a record of all canine alerts/indications.

Q. The following issued equipment listed is mandatory for each canine unit and should be maintained with the canine:

1. One 4-foot lead;
2. One regular collar;
3. One 6-foot lead;
4. Patrol harness;
5. One rake brush;
6. One shedder brush;
7. One canine 1st aid kit;
8. One water bowl; and
9. One muzzle.
10. Training rewards that are suitable for the specific canine.
11. Patrol vehicle heat sensor.
12. Canine food and veterinary expenses.
13. Any other equipment deemed necessary by the canine instructor.

R. The following equipment may be issued for each canine unit, at the request of the canine handler:

1. Kennel (including concrete slab and cover) at the canine handler's residence and at the Helen Police Department.

S. Canine handlers shall be compensated for their time caring for the canine. Compensation shall consist of one hour every day at the officer's hourly rate of pay or overtime rate of pay. This is to include the canine handler's assistant when on personal or sick leave and/or training.

VIII. PROHIBITED USES

A. The drug detection canine shall not be put to the following uses, except, under specific circumstances as noted. Canines will not be:

1. Used to search people to retrieve objects in their immediate possession.
2. Used for breeding purposes without the written authorization of the Chief or designee.
3. Retired or destroyed without the written authorization of the Chief or designee.
4. Used for demonstrations without the expressed authorization of the Chief or designee.
5. Provided for use by private parties or agencies.
6. Used in any area or on any premise to which the handler does not have lawful access.

VIII. TRAINING

A. Canine handlers will complete a course of Canine Handling Training prior to handling the canine.

B. Canine handlers will perform routine training with the canine and record the training in the Canine Activity Log. Canine handlers will on average complete four hours of canine training each week.

C. Canine handlers will also attend other training designated by the Chief of Police or designee.

D. Helen Police Department Canine Unit canines shall be trained to meet or exceed any National recognized Police Canine Association Standards.

IX. PROCUREMENT OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES FOR CANINE TRAINING

A. The procurement of all controlled substances for the purpose of drug detection canine training will be conducted by a drug researcher licensee in compliance with all state and federal regulations.

- B. Controlled substances may be obtained from;
 - 1. The United States Drug Enforcement Administration;
 - 2. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation;
 - 3. Another researcher-licensed agency;
 - 4. Court Order release of evidence.
- C. All licensed drug transfers and court order acquisitions will be recorded, by the researcher licensee, in the licensee ledger.

X. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE INVENTORY STORAGE

- A. All controlled substance procurements will initially be placed into controlled substance inventory storage.
- B. Controlled substance inventory storage will be the secure location outlined in the Drug Researcher Protocol and approved through inspection by the Georgia Board of Pharmacy – Drugs and Narcotics Agency and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.
- C. Access to the drug inventory storage will be limited as outlined and approved in the Drug Researcher Protocol.
- D. The drug inventory storage and the licensee ledger will be maintained current and available for the random inspections by the D.E.A. and the Ga. Drugs and Narcotics Agency.

XI. CANINE TRAINING AID ISSUANCE

- A. All canine training aids will be issued by the researcher licensee(s) from drug inventory storage to the canine handler or the canine supervisor.
- B. Canine handlers will be issued a minimal amount of controlled substance training aids for;
 - 1. Maintaining the canine's odor recognition of each controlled substance the canine is certified to find;
 - 2. Re-motivating the canine, if necessary, during extended search periods resulting in no find;
 - 3. Conducting unplanned canine training exercises.

- C. Access to larger and more varied quantities of controlled substances for the purpose of planned and structured canine training exercises will be arranged through the researcher licensee(s).
- D. All training aid issuances to canine handlers will be documented as follows:
 - 1. Each training aid issued will be tested and weighed separate from any packaging;
 - 2. Each training aid issued will be recorded in the licensee ledger, by weight, date of issue, and recipient;
 - 3. The weight of each training aid issued will be subtracted from the current drug inventory at the time of issuance to maintain an accurate balance and;
 - 4. The transfer and receipt of each training aid will be documented on an agency property and evidence ledger signed by both the canine handler receiving the training aid and the researcher licensee issuing the training aid.
- E. All canine training aids issued to a canine handler will be the responsibility of the canine handler until returned to the researcher licensee.
 - 1. Any incident resulting in the loss of a canine training aid by a canine handler will be immediately reported to the canine handler's supervisor and a report will be filed with a copy of the report provided to the researcher licensee.
 - 2. Any incident resulting in the accidental adulteration of a canine training aid such as exposure to water or other liquid, or a possible loss of a portion of the training aid such as being bitten or torn by the canine will be documented in a supplemental report by the canine handler, with a copy of the report provided to the researcher licensee, and the training aid will be immediately returned.
- F. Canine handlers are not authorized to transfer training aids out of their custody except for returns to the researcher licensee.

XII. TRAINING AID STORAGE BY CANINE HANDLERS

- A. A canine handler who is issued controlled substance training aids is responsible for maintaining proper security over the training aids at all times.
- B. A canine handler who is issued controlled substance training aids will have access to a safe, securely located within the Helen Police Department or

other government building for the storage of training aids. All controlled substance training aids should be stored in this safe whenever;

1. The canine handler is on vacation for more than one day;
 2. The canine handler is in a training class that does not include canine training for more than one day;
 3. The canine handler is temporarily assigned a non-canine related job duty lasting more than one day;
 4. The canine handler plans or anticipates family leave or medical leave lasting more than one day. In the event of unexpected leave, such as an extended illness or serious injury, arrangements should be made through the canine handler's supervisor for securing all training aids;
 5. Any other time that no canine training is planned or anticipated for several days.
- C. While a canine handler is in possession of issued canine training aids, he/she will securely store the training aids in a secured container within his/her duty vehicle.
1. The secure storage of issued controlled substance training aids should be noted as part of the canine handler's routine vehicle/equipment inspections.
- D. While a canine handler is utilizing his/her issued canine training aids in canine training, he/she is responsible for ensuring the security of his/her training aids;
1. Training aids will only be deployed in areas with controlled access;
 2. Non-law enforcement personnel will not be permitted into the training area while training aids are deployed;
 3. Training aids will not be left unattended and;
 4. Training aids will not be placed in a location that will likely result in damage to, or contamination of, the training aid.

XIII. TRAINING AID INSPECTIONS

- A. A canine handler who is issued controlled substance training aids will be expected to produce all issued training aids for inspection upon the request of:

1. Any supervisor of the canine handler;
 2. The researcher licensee and/or;
 3. An Internal Affairs investigator.
- B. The researcher licensee will provide to the canine handler's supervisor or a designated supervisor, an updated copy of the licensee training aid ledger listing all currently issued training aids. This designated supervisor will:
1. Maintain a copy of all lock combinations and/or keys used in securing and storing training aids;
 2. Ensure the security of the training aid safe and;
 3. Conduct documented, at a minimum quarterly, routine inspections of the training aids, the training aid safe, and the locking containers within the canine handler's vehicle.

XIV. TRAINING AID RETURNS

- A. The only authorized process for a canine handler to dispose of a canine training aid is to return the training aid to the researcher licensee who initially issued the training aid to the canine handler. A canine handler will be required to immediately return training aids to the researcher licensee for the following:
1. Replacement of aged training aids with fresh training aids;
 2. Any incident resulting in the adulteration or partial loss of a training aid accompanied by a copy of the report documenting the incident;
 3. Any incident resulting in the odor contamination of a training aid;
 4. The conclusion of, or an interruption in, the canine handler's assignment as an active canine handler;
 5. Any incident resulting in suspected violation of any part of this policy and;
 6. At the direction of the canine handler's supervisor or the researcher licensee.
- B. When a canine training aid is returned to the researcher licensee, the returned training aid will be tested and weighed and compared to the initial issue purity test and weight.

1. It is commonly accepted by inspectors from the Ga. Drugs and Narcotics Agency and D.E.A. that certain controlled substances will dry over time, losing a small portion of their weight.
 2. It is commonly accepted by inspectors from the Ga. Drugs and Narcotics Agency and D.E.A. that a small portion of controlled substances may be lost in the process of repeated handling and re-packaging of canine training aids.
- C. The researcher licensee will report to his/her supervisor and Internal Affairs any incident involving the following:
1. A variation in the weight of a returned training aid that is too substantial to be explained by drying out of excessive handling;
 2. A substantial variation in the physical appearance of a returned training aid;
 3. Any other reason to suspect that the returned training aid is different that the originally issued training aid.
- D. When a canine training aid is returned to the researcher licensee, the return and receipt of the training aid will be recorded on an agency's property and evidence sheet signed by both the canine handler returning the training aid and the researcher licensee receiving the training aid.
- G. The receipt of the used training aid will be documented in the licensee ledger as a return for destruction.
- H. All returned training aids awaiting destruction, will be maintained in the drug inventory storage.
- I. The only authorized process for the destruction of canine training aids is a licensed drug transfer to an agent of the Ga. Drugs and Narcotics Agency for destruction.
- J. The licensed drug transfer will be documented in the licensee ledger and the weight of the controlled substance will be subtracted from the drug inventory.

XIV. SELECTION OF CANINE HANDLERS

Officers shall volunteer for the K-9 assignment and meet the following qualification:

- A. Candidates shall have a minimum of two years law enforcement experience.

- B. The handler must show a willingness to care for and house the canine at the handler's residence and reside in a home with ample space and yard to accommodate the dog and its kennel.
- C. The handler must agree to be available for K-9 callouts.