



Helen Police Department

Standard Operating Policies and Procedures

Chapter P-055 Court Security	Effective Date:	September 1, 2022	# of Pages:	6
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	Special Instructions:			

I. PURPOSE

To establish policy for officers attending court, procedures for Municipal Court operations and security, and to outline the duties and obligations of officers assigned as bailiffs to Municipal Court.

II. COURTROOM ACCESS

- A. The Helen Police Department will provide security for the City of Helen Municipal Court. Officers assigned to security are required to visually screen persons entering the courtroom. Persons seeking entry to the City of Helen Municipal Court are deemed to have given their consent to a limited search for administrative purposes. Any person who refuses to surrender a suspicious object or container, or to submit to a search of themselves or containers in their possession, will be denied access to the City of Helen Municipal Court.
- B. Hand carried articles such as purses, wallets, umbrellas, coats, etc., may be allowed in the courtroom. Articles such as suitcases, briefcases (except those carried by attorneys), packages, boxes, bags or any item of a suspicious nature will not be allowed. The officer assigned to the courtroom door will inspect or search any item of a suspicious nature.

III. WEAPONS IN COURTROOM

- A. All persons assigned to bailiff duties are allowed to carry duty weapons and handcuffs in the courtroom.
- B. On-duty and off-duty personnel or state law enforcement personnel are allowed to wear their weapon into the courtroom.

IV. BAILIFFS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MUNICIPAL COURT

A. The Chief of Police shall be responsible for the overall operations of courtroom security. The on-duty Supervisor shall be responsible for the direct supervision and assignment of officers to serve as the bailiff for Municipal Court.

B. Communications

All Bailiffs will be required to have form of communication so they can communicate with the Communications Center in case of emergencies.

C. Security/Bailiff

1. The Bailiff's duties shall include:

- a. Screen persons requesting access to the courtroom.
- b. Announcement of the opening and closing of Municipal Court.
- c. Attend to other matters at the judge's direction.
- d. Maintain liaison with the Municipal Court Judge concerning security problems.
- e. Provide security for the court.
- f. Conduct a security inspection of the courtroom before court session.
- g. Transfer defendants to cashier.
- h. Perform other duties at the direction of the court judge.
- i. Summon officers to testify.
- j. Check any hand carried articles by the public and, if article is not needed, it shall be restricted.
- k. Restraining devices such as handcuffs and leg irons are available for use when ordered by the court.

V. COURTROOM PROTOCOL

- A. All spectators and visitors will have access to the lobby and courtroom to conduct business with the court. All other locations of the court area are limited access and all non-court and police personnel are required to be accompanied by an escort through any limited access area.
- B. The courtroom will have one path of ingress and egress for all visitors. It will be located off the lobby. Adjoining hallways and offices will be restricted to court personnel and attorneys on an as needed basis.
- C. A thorough search of the courtroom should be completed by the officer assigned. This will insure that there are no weapons, contraband, or other items that would affect the security and operation of the court.
- D. The search is to include the hallway, restrooms, and offices.
- E. If an item is found to be odd or unusual leave it alone, secure the area and contact a supervisor.
- F. Prior to the Judge taking the bench, do not allow attorneys or anyone else who is not part of staff into the court clerk's office without first clearing it with the Judge or his/her staff.
- G. Do not leave the courtroom during breaks unless the courtroom can be cleared of all people, all evidence secured, and all doors locked. If the judge takes a break and the officer needs a break, he must contact another officer for relief.
- H. An officer must keep gun retention foremost in his mind. When passing near someone, "cover" the holstered weapon with the hand as a preventive retention technique.
- I. The officer's primary responsibility is to protect the judge and to control inmates' conduct. Therefore, position yourself to carry out this responsibility.

VI. COURTROOM DEMEANOR - GENERAL

- A. An officer shall be attentive and respectful during court and administrative hearings, and when called as a witness an officer shall speak clearly, calmly and in a manner to be readily heard and understood by all parties.
- B. An officer shall testify only to the truth as he knows it and with accuracy, confining his testimony to the case being heard, the evidence properly before the Court and a reasonable response to questions asked.

- C. An employee shall not exhibit malice, bias, prejudice, animosity or favor toward any party involved in a matter before the court or administrative hearing.
- D. An officer attending or in the immediate vicinity of any court shall not exhibit in any way his displeasure, animosity or disbelief upon hearing any decision of the court or hearing officer, argument or statement of counsel, or presentation of evidence with which he does not agree.
- E. An officer attending court that displays a disregard for the decorum of Municipal Court shall be warned one time by the bailiff. If a second warning is given, a written report shall be made and forwarded to the officer's Supervisor for disciplinary action.
- F. Officers have the option of wearing civilian clothes to court when the court appearance is during the officer's off-duty time. Civilian clothes for male officers must be at a minimum dress shirt, tie and pants. Female officers shall dress in conservative and businesslike clothing (dress pants, blouse, skirt, sweater, jacket, dress, etc.).
- G. Plain clothes officers, both male and female, attending court shall dress in civilian clothes.

VII. COURT ATTENDANCE

- A. An officer required to appear in court during his tour of duty shall notify his immediate superior on the date of the court appearance. The officer shall leave his assignment in sufficient time to assure his appearance in court at the appointed time. When his court attendance is completed the officer, if still on duty, shall report back to his assignment. The Supervisor shall be notified both when the officer leaves his assignment and when he returns.
 - 1. If for any reason an officer is unable to appear in court at the required time, he shall inform the District Attorney's Office, Solicitors Office, Juvenile Court or Municipal Court Clerk as far in advance as possible. If he arrives late, through unexpected causes, he shall make explanation to the District Attorney or Solicitor in charge of the case. The officer shall not leave the court until the conclusion of the case unless given permission by either the District Attorney, Solicitor, or the Court.
 - 2. A member of the department summoned to appear as a witness for a defendant in a criminal case shall make such fact known to his Supervisor. Prior to the commencement of the trial, this fact shall also be made known to the Prosecutor assigned to the case.

3. The case file or records of the arrest will be obtained from the Records Management System. A member summoned to appear before the Grand Jury or criminal court shall have available all notes, reports and evidence of the case.
4. While attending court officers shall, at a reasonable time before the trial, make certain that all witnesses are present. If any witness fails to appear, the officer shall make known that fact to the Prosecutor.
5. An officer who is unable to attend Municipal Court shall make immediate notification to the Clerk of Court. If an officer is planning vacation or leave time or is scheduled to attend training, the Municipal Court Clerk shall be notified in writing at least 7 days in advance.
6. An officer who is unable to attend Superior Court, State Court, or Juvenile Court due to vacation, leave time, training, etc., shall make immediate notification to the District Attorney's Office, Solicitor's Office, or the Juvenile Court Clerk. It shall be the officer's responsibility to ensure he is excused from court.

B. Absences

Unexcused absences not only embarrass the department by inconveniencing the other witnesses and prosecutor, but also may cause a case to be dismissed. Unless he has been lawfully excused, the officer who fails to honor a subpoena or abide by the court calendar is liable for disciplinary action by the department. It shall be the responsibility of each officer to be familiar with his assigned court dates and to be present on such dates.

C. Disciplinary Measures:

Disciplinary actions will be in accordance with the City Personnel Manual.

VIII. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR MUNICIPAL COURT

- A. In the event an emergency situation arises in Municipal Court, the following procedures will be followed:
 - B. Hostage Situation
 - C. Fire, Bomb, Disaster, Civil Disturbance
 - D. Medical Emergency
 1. Notify Fire Department/EMS.
 2. Make other notifications as determined necessary.

3. Administer first aid as needed.

IX. REVIEW OF COURT PROCEDURES

All plans and procedures pertaining to courtroom security and emergency protocol shall be based on a documented survey conducted every three (3) years.