



Helen Police Department

Standard Operating Policies and Procedures

Chapter P-040 Search and Seizure	Effective Date:	August 22, 2022	# of Pages:	23
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	Special Instructions:			

I. PURPOSE

- A. The Helen Police Department is mandated by the Federal and State Constitution and State statutes to serve and / or execute legal process in support of the judicial function. The functioning of the courts is affected by the prompt service of court documents. Thus, the effectiveness and image of the judicial system are dependent, in part, upon the effective and timely service of court documents. Inadequate record keeping and / or inappropriate procedures regarding the service of legal processes may subject the Department to litigation and civil liability.
- B. This section addresses areas of Departmental procedure and discretion searches, seizures, condemnations, and the execution and recording of search warrants. This policy is designed to insure sufficiency of information, accuracy, timeliness, and accessibility in the delivery of search warrants. Because the law relating to search and seizure is subject to change at any time, officers will be responsible for keeping themselves current on the law.

II. SEARCH AND SEIZURE

A. Guidelines

To establish guidelines for the Helen Police Department officers in controlling search and seizure of property and persons through an overview of existing laws. It shall be the policy of the department to conduct searches of persons, places and things pursuant to established state and federal laws governing search warrants and/or warrantless searches. Law enforcement officers shall have due regard for the protection guaranteed under the provisions of the Fourth

Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The following procedures shall address search and seizure policy and shall cite major case law and/or state statutes where applicable.

B. DEFINITION

SEARCH WARRANT - A judicial command to "search the place or person particularly described in the warrant and to seize the instruments, articles, or things particularly described in the warrant" OCGA 17-5-23.

C. Search Warrants and Affidavits

1. Sworn law enforcement officers and/or authorized agent of the Helen Police Department will search a person, property, or premises pursuant to a valid search warrant.
2. Once a law enforcement officer has obtained probable cause to search a person, property, or premise, the officer should obtain a search warrant by compiling an affidavit and presenting it to the appropriate judicial officer. Upon the judicial officer signing the search warrant, it will be the responsibility of the officer to execute said warrant as soon as possible or practical. Even though search warrants should be executed as soon as possible or practical, certain situations may call for a delay in the execution of said search warrants.
3. If a delay is necessary, it will meet with the approval of the officer's supervisor and in no event will a search warrant be executed after ten (10) days from the date of issuance.

D. Procedure

1. Information regarding each item of all warrants shall include the following elements:
 - a. Nature of document
 - b. Date and time received
 - c. Source of the document
 - d. Name of the defendant
 - e. Officer assigned for service
 - f. Date assigned for service

- g. Court docket number and/or warrant number
 - h. Date process expires, if any
 - i. Date and time service performed
2. Officers attempting to serve criminal Search Warrants and arrest warrants shall prepare an incident report and record in it the address where service was attempted, date, time and name of officer attempting to serve the warrant, for whom the warrant was intended and, if necessary, the reason for non-service.
 3. Officers successfully servicing search warrants/arrest must include the following elements in their report:
 1. Date and time served
 2. Name of officers serving and method of service
 3. Defendant's name (or on whom search warrant was executed)
 4. Property/evidence seized and its disposition
 5. Location of service

III. EXECUTION OF A SEARCH WARRANT

A. Legal Requirements of Execution

1. The search warrant may be executed at any reasonable time, day or night; a reasonable time depends on the facts in each individual case (OCGA 17-5-26). A search warrant must be served within ten (10) days from date of issuance. If the warrant is served, a "duplicate copy shall be left with any person from whom any instruments, articles, or things are seized; or if no person is available, the copy shall be left in a conspicuous place on the premises from which the instruments, articles, or things were seized". Any search warrant not served within ten (10) days from the date of issuance shall be void and will be returned to the court of the judicial officer who issued the warrant (OCGA 17-5-25)" A written return of all instruments, articles, or things seized shall be made without unnecessary delay before the judicial officer named in the warrant or before any court of competent jurisdiction. An inventory of any instruments, articles, or things seized

shall be filed with the return and signed under oath by the officer executing the warrant" (OCGA 17-5-29).

2. Upon application of the search warrant, the officer shall obtain three copies. The first copy shall be left with the magistrate after the warrant is approved. The second copy shall be left pursuant to paragraph A mentioned above, and the final copy shall be returned to the Magistrate's Court upon completion of the search.

B. Force Used in the Execution of a Search Warrant

1. An officer has a right under a lawful search warrant to use all necessary and reasonable force to get into any building, dwelling or other area described in a search warrant (OCGA 17-5-27).
2. An officer is required to give oral notice to the person or persons inside, if any, of the identity of the officer and of the fact that the officer has a search warrant to search the premises (OCGA 17-5-27).
3. If the person or persons inside refuse to acknowledge an officer's notice, or if an officer cannot determine if anyone is present inside, or if it is unoccupied, an officer can then use reasonable force to gain entrance (OCGA 17-5-27).
4. Any action taken by the officer should be recorded as to each action taken prior to making a forced entry, such as: "... knocked on door, identified myself by position and advised I have a search warrant for the premises and no one responded to my call and so entrance was gained". The purpose of the record is that the officer will have to testify in court concerning the reason for his/her actions. (Jackson v. State, 129 Ga. App. 901;1973).
5. Whenever force is used in order to gain entry into a premise or place, and any amount of damage occurs, the superior officer in charge of the search shall insure that all damage is documented and photographs taken if necessary.
6. The appropriate amount of time that the officer should allow will depend on the conditions of each search.

C. Locations/ Persons to be Searched Pursuant to a Search Warrant

1. Officers shall be limited to search in areas particularly described by the search warrant.
2. Officers shall also be limited to searching only for those items

particularly described in the search warrant.

3. When officers are searching for an individual(s) utilizing a search warrant, officers should have more descriptive information than "a male", "a white female", etc., to describe an individual(s) listed on the warrant.
4. In the execution of the search warrant, the officer executing the same may reasonably detain and/or search any person in the place at the time:
 - a. To protect himself from attack; or
 - b. To prevent the disposal or concealment of any instruments, articles, or things particularly described in the search warrant (OCGA 17-5-28).

D. Personnel Executing Search Warrants

1. Supervisory Personnel

- a. Prior to the execution of a search warrant, an officer of supervisory rank should have reviewed the affidavit and warrant and the circumstances of its issuance to ensure that requirements of law are being met and that all the necessary elements are present even though the warrant may have already been signed by the appropriate authority. All search warrants and affidavits obtained by any officer should, if at all possible, be reviewed first by a supervisor prior to review and approval by a magistrate.
- b. When appropriate, the District Attorney's Office will be consulted prior to, during and after the service of search warrants for advice, recommendation, or for any other purpose the officer deems appropriate (e.g., preparation for prosecution).

E. NOTE: *All requests for wiretap warrants must be approved in advance by the Captain, the Chief of Police, and the District Attorney's Office. (The actual written application for interception of wire or oral transmissions by law enforcement officers must be executed by the District Attorney of the circuit wherein a device is to be physically placed, or by the Attorney General. OCGA 16-11-64.)*

- a. Supervisory personnel shall be present at the execution of any search warrant along with other personnel as needed. If possible, the supervisor is to be from the unit concerned; if unavailable, a Sergeant or higher-ranking officer from another Unit shall assist.

F. Assigned Officers

- a. All personnel shall conduct themselves in a professional manner by:
 - a. Restricting their actions in such a manner as is consistent with the scope of the warrant;
- b. Whenever possible, leaving property not seized in an orderly fashion (or as found) and insuring that it is not left in an unreasonable state of disorder or destroyed;
- c. Insuring all evidence seized is documented on the inventory and forwarded to the Evidence Room and/or Crime Lab.

G. **NOTE:** *Items considered to be illegal and/or contraband are not to be destroyed without either the appropriate order of the court or, in cases where prosecution is not to follow, by proper documentation.*

IV. SEARCHES WITH AND WITHOUT A WARRANT

A. Serving Search Warrants

1. Search Warrants Within the City of Helen

Whenever a law enforcement officer (Investigator) attempts to serve a search warrant at any location within the city limits of Helen, the officer will have departmental uniform officers present during the warrant execution. A departmental supervisor will also be present during the warrant execution.

2. Search Warrants Outside the City of Helen

Whenever a law enforcement officer attempts to serve a search warrant at any location outside of the City of Helen, the officer will have uniform officers from the agency responsible for law enforcement within that location present during the warrant execution. A departmental supervisor will also be present during the warrant execution.

3. Serving Criminal Arrest Warrants and Search Warrants Without Uniform Law Enforcement Officers

In certain situations, such as using the element of surprise in order to affect an arrest or a search, the execution of criminal arrest and

search warrants may be done periodically or on a routine basis, without the presence of uniform law enforcement officers. This practice will be an exception to the rule and will only be done after approval of the captain.

B. Search with a Warrant

1. The following is required of all search warrants and search warrant affidavits:

V. Issuance

The warrant must be issued by a judicial officer authorized to hold a court of inquiry (OCGA Section 17-5-21).

1. Probable Cause

The judicial officer must find probable cause that the place to be searched contains items connected with criminal activity. (Berger v. New York, 388 U.S.41) The officer must swear or affirm under oath that the facts presented for establishing probable cause are true. Probable cause is defined as "what facts and circumstances within an officer's knowledge would lead a reasonable man to believe that an offense has been committed or is being committed and/or that a particular individual has committed or is committing the offense."

2. Description

The warrant must describe with sufficient particularity the person or the place to be searched and the items to be seized (OCGA 17-5-23). If a place can be easily identified by a street number or address, then no further information shall be necessary; however, an officer may elect to give a physical description of the place to be searched.

B. NOTE: *A warrant may be issued based on an affidavit containing only hearsay where the reliability of the informant is established and the underlying factual circumstances are described.*

C. Search of a Person Incident to Arrest

1. The search incident to arrest may be conducted to:
 - a. Protect the officer from attack;
 - b. Prevent the arrested person from escaping;

- c. Discover/seize fruits of the crime for which the person has been arrested; or
 - d. Discover and seize any instruments, articles, or things that may have been used in the commission of the crime for which the person has been arrested.
2. Once the arrest has occurred, the officer may conduct a search without additional cause. For the search incident to arrest to be legal, the arrest must be legal. The search must be conducted at the time of arrest and be limited to the arrestee's person and the area "within his/her immediate control." A search of an arrested individual at the detention facility may be justified as a search incident to arrest.

3. Booking Searches

A custodial search of the arrestee's person may be justified as either an administrative search or as an inventory procedure. Once an officer has taken any property discovered during the search into his/her control, a further non-contemporaneous search is no longer incidental to the arrest.

D. Consent Search

1. Voluntariness

The law enforcement officer obtaining consent to search has the burden of proving that the defendant's consent to a warrantless search was given freely and voluntarily. A person may withdraw consent at any time and the search must cease.

2. Test

The voluntariness of a person's consent is measured by the totality of the circumstances.

3. Consent After Arrest

If the consenting party is in custody, the voluntariness of the consent is still measured by the totality of the circumstances, although courts will analyze the relevant factors more critically.

4. Third Party Consent

Consent for a warrantless search may be given by a third party who shares control of (or has common authority over) the premises or items to be searched. Areas belonging exclusively to parties not present or not giving consent shall not be searched.

5. Helen Police Officers will get a signed consent to search form for any voluntary consent to search. (i.e. vehicles, hotel rooms, residences, etc.)

E. Stop and Frisk

1. Grounds for a Stop

To lawfully stop an individual, the law enforcement officer must have specific and articulable facts which, taken together with rational inferences from those facts, reasonably warrants the intrusion rather than a subjective, unparticular suspicion or hunch.

2. Grounds for a Frisk

In *Terry v. Ohio*, 392 U.S. 1, the Supreme Court decided that an officer is authorized to stop and frisk an individual whenever the law enforcement officer has a reasonable suspicion that the subject is committing, has committed, or is about to commit a crime and the officer has real, articulate reasons to fear for his or her safety. Since the scope of the search in *Terry* is limited to weapons, such search may not be intrusive and beyond the scope of looking for weapons. However, contraband discovered in such searches is subject to seizure and may be admissible into evidence. When the officer no longer is in fear for his or her safety, the exception to warrantless search and seizure under *Terry* no longer applies.

3. Nature of A Frisk

The frisk for weapons must be only a limited intrusion through patting down a persons outer clothing. Such a protective search must be strictly limited to that which is necessary for the discovery of weapons, which might be used to harm the officer or others nearby; if the protective search goes beyond what is necessary to determine if the suspect is armed, the search is no longer valid and its fruits will be suppressed. (*Minnesota v. Dickerson*, 508 U.S. 366)

4. Search After a Frisk

Feeling an object, which might be a weapon based on its size, shape and/or feel, or which is immediately recognizable as contraband, will justify a more extensive intrusion to obtain the suspected weapon or contraband. An officer may enter pockets to dispel the alarm that a weapon is present or to seize the contraband.

F. Vehicle Searches

1. Search of a Vehicle under a Movable Vehicle Exception

The mobility of motor vehicles often constitutes exigent circumstances authorizing a warrantless search. The "automobile exception" to the warrant requirement demonstrates a willingness of courts to excuse the absence of a warrant when spontaneous searches are required of a vehicle. (*Gondor v. State*, 129 GA. App.665; 1973)

2. Standard

To conduct a warrantless search under exigent circumstances, the police officer must have probable cause to believe the vehicle contains items that may be seized. A warrant is needed to search a vehicle that the officer can legally control without fear of its' being moved. (See *U.S. v. Johns*, 469 US 478 and *California v. Acevedo*, 500 US 565)

3. Times and Place Search

If probable cause and exigent circumstances existed originally, the police may search the vehicle after towing it to the impound lot without securing a search warrant. When probable cause exists without exigent circumstances, a warrant is required. (*Caitoet al. v. State*, 130 GA. App.83; 1974)

4. Arrest of Occupants

If a person is arrested after a vehicle stop, the passenger compartment of the vehicle may be searched incident to the arrest.

G. Plain View Doctrine

Mere observation of contraband by an officer does not constitute a search within the scope of the Fourth Amendment. However, the seizure of such contraband is governed by the Forth Amendment principles, and for the evidence to be admissible under the Plain

View Doctrine:

1. The law enforcement officer must have the right to be at a location where he/she is;
2. The discovery of seized items must be inadvertent;
3. The seized items must appear on their face to be incriminating; and,
4. The items seized must be plainly visible to the law enforcement officer.

H. Crime Scene Search

1. *Mincey v Arizona* 437 U.S. 385 (1978) The Supreme Court ruled there is no crime scene exception to the search warrant requirement. This means that the general rule with regard to Crime Scene is to obtain a warrant. There are many exceptions to this rule and some of them are the following:
 - a. When the defendant does not possess a reasonable expectation of privacy in the premises, a search warrant is not necessary. (The defendant is a trespasser; no warrant is required)
2. When the search is conducted for the purpose of finding dead or injured crime victims or when rendering aid to a victim, no warrant is required.
3. When evidence is being protected or photographed during the time it takes to obtain a search warrant, no warrant is required to enter the crime scene.
4. No warrant is required to enter the crime scene in order to find the perpetrator who may still be present on the scene.
5. A crime scene search may be made without a warrant if:
 - a. It is an emergency, and there is reasonable belief that there is imminent danger to person. In an emergency crime scene search, contraband in plain view may be seized. If evidence is seen that is not contraband, it is best to get a warrant before seizing it.
 - b. A homicide victim is the sole occupant.
 - c. The scene is a public place.

d. Exigent Circumstances

e. Justification

A warrantless search is permitted when there is both probable cause and exigent circumstances. The ultimate test is whether there is such a compelling necessity for immediate action that proceeding without a warrant is justified.

6. Exigent Circumstances Defined

a. Hot pursuit, a fleeing suspect, imminent destruction of evidence, or other situations in which speed is essential to the accomplishment of lawful police action are examples of exigent circumstances.

1. "*Hot Pursuit*" Warrantless pursuits into the offender's home - In *United States v. Santana*, the Supreme Court ruled that hot pursuit justifies forcible entry into the offender's home without the need for a warrant. The court said "We thus conclude that a suspect may not defeat an arrest that has been set in motion in a public place... by the expedient of escaping into a private place." In order to justify this arrest, the three elements of hot pursuit must be satisfied: (1) the arrest process has begun; (2) the offender knows he is being placed under arrest; and, (3) the offender takes action to avoid the arrest. However, under the restrictions imposed by the Supreme Court case of *Payton v. New York*, officers may not enter an individual's home or dwelling without a warrant. Warrantless probable cause arrests, permissible in a public place, do not justify access to the sanctity of an offender's home unless the elements of hot pursuit are satisfied.

b. *Searches where public safety is endangered* - Under special circumstances where an officer hears screams, observes an immediately dangerous situation to anyone, or other exigent circumstances exist, an officer may make an emergency search of persons or premises. In *Michigan v. Tyler*, the court specified the "compelling need for official action and no time to secure a warrant". Various other courts suggested factors establishing this compelling need to include the gravity of the offense, the presence of weapons, and the likelihood of escape. The "totality of the circumstances" will be the deciding factor in each case.

VI. INVENTORY OF VEHICLES

A. Seizure of Vehicle

For an inventory of a vehicle to be valid, the police custody of the vehicle must be lawful. An inventory of a vehicle is not a search. An inventory is a departmental policy designed to insure that valuable possessions within a vehicle under police custody are accounted for. Any contraband which is found inadvertently during an inventory may be seized.

1. Justification

The inventory must be conducted only to fulfill the police care taking function of securing the contents of the vehicle.

2. Nature of Inventory

The search must be a routine part of standard police procedures for impounding vehicles, rather than a pretext for an investigatory search, and may not extend to locked luggage or other similar repositories of personal effects. It shall be standard operating procedure for Helen Police officers to inventory all impounded vehicles.

B. Vehicle Stops

1. Significance of a Stop

A "seizure" occurs whenever a vehicle is stopped, even though the purpose is generally limited and the detention quite brief; therefore, the Fourth Amendment applies.

2. Grounds for a Stop

There must be reasonable suspicion to justify an investigatory stop of an individual vehicle. Law enforcement officers do not have an unrestricted right to stop people, either pedestrians or drivers.

3. Vehicle Roadblocks

Vehicles may also be stopped at general roadblocks which serve legitimate law enforcement purposes. If the purpose of the roadblock is legitimate, (i.e., to check driver's licenses) and not randomly stop vehicles, and if evidence of other crimes is observed, the officer has the right to take reasonable investigative

steps. Vehicle roadblocks shall be prohibited unless approved by the Captain or the Chief of Police.

4. Initial Intrusion

Law enforcement officers may take reasonable action to protect themselves after a lawful stop of a motor vehicle. An officer may prefer to ask the driver of a vehicle to step out of the vehicle. Law enforcement officers may consider external factors such as weather, crowds, etc., prior to asking anyone to step out of his / her vehicle.

5. Further Intrusion

If the police officer has a reasonable belief that a person stopped is presently armed and dangerous, he may conduct a limited protective search of the vehicle and frisk of the person.

6. Vehicle Searches

If a person is arrested after his/her vehicle is stopped, areas of the vehicle accessible to him may be searched incident to the arrest. The courts have construed this area to include the passenger compartment of the vehicle. Included in the category of vehicles are vans and recreational vehicles which are used primarily for transportation and not kept in an area which indicates that the purpose of the vehicle is for use as a residence.

C. Containers and Luggage Searches

1. Standard

- a. When there is probable cause that contraband will be found somewhere inside of a vehicle, combined with exigent circumstances such that it is not possible to obtain a warrant, officers may open containers in the vehicle to seek the contraband. However, the automobile exception normally will not justify a warrantless search of specific containers. Where there is probable cause as to specific containers, the containers should be secured until a search warrant is obtained to open them.

2. Automobiles

A law enforcement officer who has legitimately stopped an automobile and who has probable cause to believe contraband is located somewhere within the car may conduct a warrantless

search of the vehicle, including compartments and containers within the vehicle whose contents are not in plain view. (U.S. v. Ross, 456 U.S. 798, 31 CrI 3051; 1982)

3. Exceptions

The Search Incident to Arrest and Plain View Doctrines may make unnecessary the need to secure a warrant to search containers. When a lawful arrest has been made, the officer may examine the contents of any container found within the arrestee's immediate area of control; i.e., the passenger compartment. (Area of immediate control)

4. Inventory

Closed containers may be opened during a personal effects inventory. (Ill. v. Lafayette, 162 U.S. 640, 33 CrI 3183; 1983)

D. Abandonment

1. Act

Abandonment is a voluntary relinquishment of control of property, i.e., disposing of, denying ownership.

2. Implications

Abandoned property is not protected by the Fourth Amendment. Officers may seize abandoned property *without* probable cause and *without* a warrant. Whether or not property has been abandoned is a question of intent, which must be shown by clear, unequivocal, and decisive evidence.

E. Curtilage

1. The Curtilage Doctrine

Curtilage is afforded the same Fourth Amendment protections, as is the home. Generally speaking, curtilage has been held to include all buildings in close proximity to a dwelling, which are continually used for carrying on domestic purposes; or such places as are necessary and convenient to a dwelling, and are habitually used for family purposes (including a patio).

2. The Open Field Doctrine

The Fourth Amendment protections do not extend to the "open fields" surrounding the curtilage and the home.

3. Legitimate Expectation of Privacy

The determination of whether Fourth Amendment protections will be extended to items seized from the curtilage or open fields focuses on whether the person challenging the search has a legitimate expectation of privacy in the place that was searched.

F. Greater Intrusion Searches

1. Exterior Intrusion

Intrusions on the body's surface (swabbing, hair samples, retrieval of evidence from the mouth, etc.) are governed by the Fourth Amendment. Such searches are permissible as long as they are conducted in a reasonable manner and are justified under the circumstances (i.e. probable cause to search).

2. Interior Intrusion

Certain intrusions into the body (i.e., stomach pumping, surgery) have been held to be in violation of the Fourth Amendment (*Rochin v. California*, 342 U.S. 165, *Winston v. Lee*, 470 U.S. 753). Hence, only under the most exigent circumstances and only pursuant to a search warrant, could such a procedure be allowed. However, other more common interior intrusions, such as blood tests, may be conducted without a warrant if the setting and procedures are reasonable, as when blood is drawn by a doctor in a hospital (*Schmerber v. California*, 384 U.S. 757). Probable cause must exist in all cases.

VII. CONDEMNATION PROCEDURES

A. Purpose

The Helen Police Department shall seek the condemnation of real and personal property whenever possible by authority of O.C.G.A. 16-13-49 relating to forfeitures and 40-6-391.2 relating to the seizure and forfeiture of motor vehicles operated by habitual violators.

B. Procedure

1. The responsibility for filing forfeitures with the proper legal authority and maintaining condemnation files shall be vested with the Supervisor

of the Criminal Investigations Division. All seizures for condemnation, which originate outside the Criminal Investigations Division, shall use the guidelines established in this procedure for proper forwarding of a condemnation request.

2. The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines that will assist those outside the Criminal Investigations Division to determine:
 - a. What can be seized.
 - b. Under what circumstances can property be seized.
 - c. Who can seize property.
 - d. Duties of supervisor.
 - e. What documentation should be completed and forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.
 - f. What, if any, preliminary investigation should be conducted by the seizing officer.
 - g. Proper storage of seized property.
3. The procedures outlined will deal primarily with the seizure of currency, weapons and motor vehicles. Questions concerning requests for seizure of other items for forfeiture, to include intangible assets, personal property, residences and real property shall be forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division on-call investigator on a case-by-case basis.

C. What can Be Seized

1. O.C.G.A. 16-13-49 allows for the seizure of anything of value. This includes, but is not limited to: Currency, bonds, stocks, weapons, motor vehicles, boats, airplanes, real property, residences and personal property of any kind.
2. O.C.G.A. 40-6-391.2 allows for the seizure of any motor vehicles.

D. Circumstances Under Which a Seizure Can Take Place

1. O.C.G.A. 16-13-49 allows for the seizure of the above listed types of property under the following conditions:

- a. Any property used to facilitate the commission of a violation of the Georgia Controlled Substance Act is subject to seizure. An example would be the motor vehicle from which drugs were sold, or electric scales used to weigh them. Note that any item, such as a motor vehicle or a residence, which is used to store drugs can be assumed to have been used to facilitate a violation. Proximity of property, i.e. currency or a firearm, to contraband can be evidence that the item was used to facilitate a violation.
 - b. All proceeds which are derived from the violation of the Georgia Controlled Substance Act are subject to seizure. An example would be the currency from the sale of an illegal drug or an item purchased with these proceeds.
2. O.C.G.A. 40-6-391.2 allows for the seizure of motor vehicles if ALL of the following circumstances are present.
 - a. Subject operating vehicle must have been arrested for a violation of O.C.G.A. 40-6-391, Driving Under The Influence, at the time of the seizure of the motor vehicle.
 - b. Subject must have a revoked drivers license.
 - c. Subject must have been declared a habitual violator based on at least three (3) past convictions for O.C.G.A. 40-6-391 (within a five-year period), Driving Under The Influence Of Alcohol Or Drugs.

E. Who Can Seize

1. Any law enforcement officer of this State or one of its political subdivisions may seize properties subject to Condemnation.
2. Property which is subject to forfeiture under O.C.G.A. 16-13-49 may be seized without process if there is probable cause to believe that the property is subject to forfeiture and said seizure takes place in close proximity to the arrest of the defendant, or absent an arrest, if the officer has possession, either actual or constructive, and probable cause exists to believe that the property is subject to forfeiture.
3. Motor vehicles seized under O.C.G.A. 40-6-391.2 should be seized at the time of arrest of the defendant. The arresting officer will make all attempts to determine the violator's driver's license status.
 - a. When the driver is arrested for D.U.I. and it is determined that he is a habitual violator the vehicle will be towed to the impound lot by the wrecker service contracted by the Helen Police Department.

- b. If the officer is unable to determine the driver's license status at the scene, but the officer suspects that the driver may be a habitual violator, then the vehicle will be towed to the Police Department by the on-call wrecker service. The tow truck will be followed to the Police Department and the keys will be picked up and entered into evidence.
 - c. Should an individual be arrested for D.U.I. and it is not determined until later that they meet the pre-existing conditions for seizure of the vehicle, then all paperwork should be completed and forwarded to the Criminal Investigation Division and the vehicle can be seized at a later date.
- F. If the vehicle was towed to the wrecker service impound lot, then notify the impound lot to place a HOLD on the vehicle.

If the vehicle has been removed by another citizen, then forward the appropriate paperwork and the Criminal Investigations Division will determine whether to seize the vehicle at a later date with a search warrant.

G. Seizure of Property

1. If circumstances, as described in E1, 2 and 3 above, indicate that probable cause exists to believe that the item is subject to forfeiture, then the officer shall seize the property. The seizing officer shall immediately notify his/her supervisor that the seizure has taken place. Upon notification the supervisor shall make a determination of the validity of the seizure using the following guidelines:
 1. Violation of O.C.G.A. 16-13-30.
 - a. Currency
 - b. Must be five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or more,
 - c. Must meet the criteria established above:
 1. Proximity to contraband,
 2. Circumstances indicate that it is proceeds from a violation of 16-13-30.
 3. Presence of contraband,

4. Defendant not employed,
5. Subject cannot explain origin of cash.

H. Vehicles

- a. If cocaine, there must be at least one gram or more, or evidence exist that a sale has taken place or was about to take place.
- b. If marijuana, there must be at least four ounces or more;
- c. No weight requirement on other controlled substances, i.e., Methamphetamine, Heroin, LSD, etc.
- d. Pharmaceutical, prescription drugs obtained through fraud or forgery.
 1. Before seizing a motor vehicle the officer must show a relationship between the seized contraband and the owner of the vehicle. If the occupant of the vehicle arrested is not the actual owner of the vehicle, then the seizing officer must show that the owner holds the property jointly, in common, or in community with the person whose conduct gave arise to it's forfeiture (16-13-49 (E)(2)). Circumstances to consider when establishing this relationship include but are not limited to:
 - a. Presence of contraband and locations within the vehicle relative to the owner.
 - b. Owner is sole occupant of the vehicle.
 - c. Other circumstances indicate that the owner should have known that the contraband was in the vehicle.
 2. Violation of O.C.G.A. 40-6-391.2
 - a. If the seizure of a motor vehicle is made pursuant to O.C.G.A. 40-6-391.2 then it must meet the requirements as set out earlier in this procedure.
 - b. The person arrested for D.U.I. must also be the owner or spouse of the owner of the vehicle.

I. Documentation Once Validity is Established

1. Upon establishing the validity of the seizure for a violation of O.C.G.A. 16-13-49 the seizing officer shall document all pertinent information on an Incident Supplemental. The supplemental should contain, at a minimum, the following information:
 - a. Date and time of the offense and seizure.
 - b. Location of the offense and seizure.
 - c. Offense charged with.
 - d. Description of the property to be seized.
 - e. Defendant's name, address and telephone number.
 - f. Type and quantity of drug seized, if any.
 - g. Name of arresting officer.
 - h. Complete name and address of everyone associated with the seizure.
 - i. Specific location of the contraband in relation to defendant and items to be seized.
- J. Upon establishing the validity of the seizure of a vehicle under O.C.G.A. 40-6- 391.2 the following documents are to be forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.
 - a. Copy of the Incident Report.
 - b. Copy of the Arrest Report.
 - c. G.C.I.C. / N.C.I.C. printout of the Tag Query.
 - d. G.C.I.C. / N.C.I.C. printout of the Title Query.
 - e. G.C.I.C. / N.C.I.C. print-out of defendant's driving history.
2. Within ten (10) days of the date of seizure the forfeiture paperwork must be received by the District Attorneys Office. A copy of signed affidavit is to be returned to the captain to be placed in the case file.

K. Storage of Seized Property

1. All property seized for condemnation shall be tagged and stored as evidence. Under the "Remarks" section on the Evidence Sheet, enter "HOLD FOR CONDEMNATION".
2. Vehicles seized for condemnation shall be impounded and held at the Police Department.

L. Preliminary Investigations Regarding Motor Vehicles

1. The seizure of motor vehicles present unique legal and practical hurdles that must be overcome in regards to ownership and equity.

a. Ownership

- b. The seizing officer must be able to establish a relationship between the contraband and the owner of the motor vehicle seized. It is therefore imperative that the seizing officer takes steps at the moment of seizure to establish ownership.

1. Ask driver and occupants who owns the vehicle.
2. Check glove box for documentation of ownership. If found seize and tag as evidence separate from the motor vehicle.
3. If subject is buying vehicle from someone get their name and address.
4. Check tag and VIN through N.C.I.C.

2. Equity

- a. When vehicles with liens are seized for forfeiture, it becomes the responsibility of the Helen Police Department to assume the lien on the motor vehicle. For this reason the seizing officer should make every effort to determine the amount of money, if any, owed on a motor vehicle so that the Criminal Investigations Division can determine whether or not to proceed for the forfeiture proceedings. The following steps should be completed at the time of the seizure:

1. Ask driver or occupants whom the owner is and how much, if any, money is owed on the vehicle. If money is owed, then include the name and address of the lien holder.
2. Check the glove compartment for documents relating to lien holders. If found seize as evidence and tag separate from the motor vehicle.

3. Check G.C.I.C. / N.C.I.C. Title Query for liens.

3. These inquiries should be made of all vehicles regardless of whether they are seized for violation of O.C.G.A. 16-13-49 or 40-6-392.1. Questions concerning circumstances not covered by this procedure shall be addressed to the on-call Criminal Investigations Division investigator.