

Florida Highway Patrol Canine Training Audit Audit Report 201415-35

October 29, 2015

Executive Summary

The primary purpose of the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) Criminal Interdiction Unit (CIU) is to patrol the interstate system and highways to detect and apprehend drug traffickers and other criminal offenders. Members of the CIU include specially trained troopers designated as felony officers, and 32 canine teams, consisting of one trained canine handler and one trained canine. Specialty trained canines are used for detecting the presence of narcotic odor, tracking suspects, apprehending criminals, and searching buildings and other areas for evidence. During the period of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015, the CIU seized over \$2,800,000 in drugs and assets; including 211 pounds of marijuana, 27 pounds of cocaine, and 75 weapons resulting in 3,730 arrests and 2,097 criminal cases.

The FHP maintains highly trained and effective CIUs throughout the state, ensures that both members and canines are trained at acceptable frequencies, and records providing such training are maintained accordingly. The purpose of this review was to evaluate the effectiveness of the FHP canine training operations and compliance with applicable laws and Department policy and procedure.

Overall, the FHP maintains effective training operations to ensure canine teams are able to perform effectively in the field and under stressful situations. During our review, we identified the following items which require management attention:

- Weekly reinforcement training was not performed or documented as required by policy;
- Scent pack training aids were not weighed and inspected monthly; and
- Scent pack training aids are not properly labeled.

FHP management generally agreed with the recommendations and has begun to implement corrective action.

Background and Introduction

The primary purpose of the FHP CIU is to patrol the interstate system and highways to detect and apprehend drug traffickers and other criminal offenders. The CIU also assists federal and local law enforcement agencies to interdict drug couriers and other criminal activity on Florida's roadways. During the period of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015, the CIU seized over \$2,800,000 in drugs and assets; including 211 pounds of marijuana, 27 pounds of cocaine, and 75 weapons resulting in 3,730 arrests and 2,097 criminal cases.

Members of the CIU include specially trained troopers designated as felony officers, and 32 canine teams, consisting of one trained canine handler and one trained canine. Specialty trained canines are used to execute a number of specific law enforcement related tasks which use the canine's speed, agility, and sense of smell. Because of their superior sense of smell, canines can detect the presence of narcotic odor and find evidence of hidden drugs that might not otherwise be found by human investigators. Canines are also used for tracking suspects, criminal apprehension, building searches, and area searches.

Organizational Structure

Three bureaus within FHP play a direct daily role in the CIU. The CIU Coordinator's Office within the Bureau of Special Services provides support functions to all CIU members; including supervision and scheduling of all major training, certification, and recertification. Supervision of day-to-day field activity of CIU members located in troops throughout the state is the responsibility of the Patrol Operations and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement bureaus. Felony officers and canine teams are under the supervision of troop CIU supervisors appointed by the Colonel. The CIU supervisors report through troop commanders who work in consultation with the CIU Coordinator.

Training and Certification

The FHP maintains highly trained and effective CIU members throughout the state, and ensures that both members and canines are trained at acceptable frequencies and records providing such training are maintained accordingly. CIU Policy 7.00.00, *Procedures*, requires canine teams to be certified in the areas of Patrol Dog and Drug Detector Dog according to the guidelines set forth by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC), FHP Training Academy, and the International Forensic Research Institute (IFRI) at Florida International University.

According to CIU Policy 7.00.00, only canine teams with current CJSTC certification, as defined in Rule 11B-27.013, Florida Administrative Code, are authorized to participate in canine deployments beyond routine contraband searches. Canine teams go through a

rigorous 480 hour patrol training course that involves both classroom and field simulation training before becoming certified. This training course is supplied by the CJSTC and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Once successfully completed, the canine team is tested in patrol proficiency by two state certified evaluators. Upon successful completion of the proficiency test, the canine team is certified and is required to recertify annually in the area of patrol which includes the following:

- Obedience;
- Criminal Apprehension;
- Building Search;
- Area Search;
- Patrol Scenarios; and
- Tracking and Trailing.

In order to participate in field narcotic detection, canine teams must go through an initial training and annual certification process separate from patrol training. The FHP partners with IFRI to certify canine teams in narcotic detection. The initial training consists of 320 hours of classroom and field simulation training such as canine academics, reward systems so the canine can learn which narcotic odors to alert to, and the use of training aids. Upon completion of the training, canine teams must pass a proficiency examination to complete the certification process. Canine teams must recertify annually by passing the proficiency examination.

An important key to a canine team's continued success is being exposed to criminal scenarios and different types of narcotics through continuing training. CIU Policy 7.00.00, states reinforcement training should be conducted weekly for eight hours in order to maintain the canine's proficiency. The canine teams participate in group training with their assigned troop. Felony officers participate in reinforcement training by being decoys for patrol exercises or hiding narcotic training aids in vehicles, buildings, or luggage during narcotic detection exercises.

Canine teams use scent pack training aids (scent pack) obtained under a Memorandum of Agreement (Agreement) with the United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to use as training aids. Each canine handler is assigned a scent pack which includes six different types of narcotics individually packaged to use during reinforcement training to ensure canines stay proficient in their detection of narcotic odor. The scent packs are required to be inspected monthly to ensure they are not compromised and replaced every two years to ensure they remain potent for training usage.

Overall, the FHP maintains effective training operations to ensure canine teams are able to perform effectively in the field and under stressful situations.

Findings and Recommendations

During our review of the FHP's canine training operations, we identified the following issues which require management attention:

Weekly Training

CIU Policy 7.00.00, requires canine teams to be certified in areas of patrol and drug detection yearly. To ensure the canines recertify each year and perform fieldwork duties at the highest level, canine teams should conduct weekly reinforcement training. Training that cannot be conducted is required to be noted on appropriate canine training documents.

Weekly reinforcement training is conducted at the troop level and all canine handlers within their troop participate together on a day specified by the troop CIU sergeant.

OIG staff requested weekly reinforcement training records for 13 canine teams across the 12 troops for March 1, 2015 through June 30, 2015. A review of these training records determined approximately 25% of all the required weekly reinforcement training was not performed and appropriate documentation was not available for 27% of the missed training periods.

Weekly training is essential in ensuring canines perform fieldwork duties to the highest level. Long periods without reinforcement training may have negative effects on canines when performing fieldwork duties. Additionally, FHP procedures do not sufficiently address standards and expectations related to missed training.

Finding 1

Weekly training was not performed or documented as required by policy.

Recommendations

We recommend the FHP Patrol Operations and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement ensure weekly training is performed as required.

We recommend that the CIU Coordinator in conjunction with Patrol Operations and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement formally address canine training requirements to ensure that missed canine training is not only properly documented, but is for acceptable reasons, and details how missed training is made-up.

Management Response

FHP concurs with the recommendations in Finding 1.

In June 2015, the FHP purchased Kanine Visual Pro Software to maintain canine operations training records. It is the CIU Supervisors' responsibility to review and approve the documents within Kanine Visual Pro to ensure that all training is in compliance with FHP policy.

During the Troop Commanders meetings September 29 and October 21, 2015, the importance of weekly training as required by policy was discussed. In addition, on September 30, and October 2, 2015, emails were sent to members of the CIU and the Troop Commanders, respectively, addressing the findings and recommendations of the audit. These emails stated that missed training by a member will be documented in Kanine Visual Pro explaining the reason for missing training.

FHP is in the process of revising the CIU policy to address the use of Kanine Visual Pro Software and require eight hours of makeup training upon missing two consecutive days of training. FHP anticipates the policy revisions will be fully reviewed and implemented by June 1, 2016.

Scent Pack Monthly Inspections

Canine teams use scent packs for training purposes. These scent packs contain six different types of narcotic substances individually packaged in weights of three and twenty-five grams.

CIU Policy 7.00.00, requires CIU supervisors to inspect canine handler scent packs monthly. Each time the scent pack is inspected, a Canine Training Aid Scent Pack Receipt and Monthly Inspection form (HSMV 60076) is required to be completed.

OIG staff requested documentation of monthly inspections from July 1, 2014 through May 30, 2015, for all current canine handlers. Our review of monthly inspection documentation for 29 canine teams determined that all monthly inspections were not performed and documented for 13 canine handlers. Specifically:

- For eight handlers, the inspection forms were not available for one month;
- For two handlers, the inspection forms were not available for two months; and
- For three handlers, the inspection forms were not available for three months.

Canine handlers are given the responsibility of carrying illegal narcotic substances for the purpose of training their canines. By not inspecting the scent packs each month, there is a heightened possibility the scent packs could be compromised.

Finding 2

Scent packs were not weighed and inspected monthly.

Recommendation

We recommend the FHP Patrol Operations and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement ensure scent packs are inspected monthly and inspections are documented in accordance with CIU policy.

Management Response

FHP concurs with the recommendations in Finding 2.

During the Troop Commanders meetings on September 29 and October 21, 2015, the Scent Pack Monthly Inspections were discussed. In addition, on September 30 and October 2, 2015, emails were sent to members of the CIU and the Troop Commanders, respectively, addressing the findings and recommendations of the audit. CIU Supervisors will ensure that an inspection is completed on a monthly basis.

Compliance with the Drug Enforcement Administration Memorandum

The FHP has an Agreement with the DEA to obtain illegal narcotics to use while training canines for drug detection. The FHP receives bulk substances from the DEA and transports the substances to IFRI for repackaging into individual scent packs. Each substance is repackaged in two heat sealed bags with a label that contains the name of the location that packaged the scent pack, a control number, the name of the substance, and the weight of the substance.

The Agreement requires that the label on the scent pack include the date packed, the packer's initials, and a unique control number. During an FHP scent pack inspection, OIG staff observed the label on the scent packs does not contain the packer's initials or the date the scent pack was packaged as required by the Agreement.

Finding 3

Scent packs are not properly labeled.

Recommendation

We recommend the FHP ensure scent packs are labeled in accordance with the DEA Memorandum of Agreement.

Management Response

FHP concurs with the recommendation in Finding 3.

The Memorandum of Agreement with the DEA has been revised and is being reviewed by the DHSMV Bureau of Purchasing and Contracts. The Memorandum of Agreement requires a label denoting a unique control number, which enables FHP to identify the date packaged, the packer's initials, corresponding training aid number, drug name, and controlled substance's net weight. These inner bags will then be individually sealed in an outer poly heat-sealed training bag, which must have the same unique control number assigned to the controlled substance package sealed inside.

Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

The purpose of this audit was to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the FHP canine training operations and compliance with applicable laws and Department policy and procedure.

The scope of this audit included all documentation relating to the FHP canine training program operations for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 Fiscal Years.

The methodology included:

- Reviewing applicable statutes, rules, manuals, and procedures;
- Interviewing appropriate Department staff;
- Observing canine team training;
- Reviewing the process for tracking and documenting canine handler training;
- Reviewing patrol and narcotic canine certifications;
- Reviewing weekly reinforcement training and documentation;
- Reviewing patrol and narcotic dog certification training curriculum;
- Reviewing accreditation standards; and
- Reviewing training aid/scent pack use.



Distribution, Statement of Accordance, and Project Team

Distribution

Terry L. Rhodes, Executive Director
Colonel Gene Spaulding, Director of Florida Highway Patrol
Lieutenant Colonel Michael Thomas, Deputy Director of the Florida Highway Patrol
Chief Cynthia Williams, Chief of Patrol Operations for Southern Region
Chief Ernesto Duarte, Director of Special Services
Chief Troy Thompson, Director of Commercial Vehicle Enforcement
Major Brannon Snead, Commander of the Bureau of Criminal Investigations and Intelligence
Lieutenant Herbert Brown, Homeland Security Coordinator
Sergeant Christopher Porter, Criminal Interdiction Unit Coordinator

Melinda M. Miguel, Chief Inspector General
Sherrill F. Norman, Auditor General

Statement of Accordance

Section 20.055, Florida Statutes, requires the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' Inspector General to review, evaluate, and report on policies, plans, procedures, accounting, financial, and other operations of the Department and to recommend improvements. This audit engagement was conducted in accordance with applicable *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* published by the Institute of Internal Auditors and *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General* published by the Association of Inspectors General.

Project Team

Engagement conducted by:
John Brancale, Auditor
Erin Mook, Auditor

Under the supervision of:
David Ulewicz, Audit Director

Approved by:


Julie M. Leftheris, Inspector General

ATTACHMENT - Management Response



Terry L. Rhodes
Executive Director

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 22, 2015

TO: David Ulewicz, Audit Director

FROM: Colonel Gene S. Spaulding, Director *GSS*
Florida Highway Patrol

SUBJECT: Florida Highway Patrol Management Response to the Florida Highway Patrol Canine Training Audit (201415-35)

The following is our response to the findings and recommendations presented in the report.

Finding 1- Weekly Training

Weekly training was not performed or documented as required by policy.

Recommendation

We recommend the FHP Patrol Operations and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement ensure weekly training is performed as required.

We recommend that the CIU Coordinator in conjunction with Patrol Operations and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement formally address canine training requirements to ensure that missed canine training is not only properly documented, but is for acceptable reasons, and details how missed training is made-up.

Management Response

FHP concurs with the recommendations in Finding 1.

In June 2015, the FHP purchased Kanine Visual Pro Software to maintain canine operations training records. It is the CIU Supervisors' responsibility to review and approve the documents within Kanine Visual Pro and to ensure that all training is in compliance with FHP policy.

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Finding 2- Scent Pack Monthly Inspections

Scent packs were not weighed and inspected monthly.

Recommendation

We recommend the FHP Patrol Operations and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement ensure scent packs are inspected monthly and inspections are documented in accordance with CIU policy.

Management Response

FHP concurs with the recommendation in Finding 2.

During the Troop Commanders meetings on September 29 and October 21, 2015, the Scent Pack Monthly Inspections were discussed. In addition, on September 30 and October 2, 2015, emails were sent to members of the CIU and the Troop Commanders, respectively, addressing the findings and recommendations of the audit. CIU Supervisors will ensure that an inspection is completed on a monthly basis.

Finding 3- Compliance with the Drug Enforcement Administration Memorandum

Scent packs are not properly labeled.

Recommendation

We recommend the FHP ensure scent packs are labeled in accordance with the DEA Memorandum of Agreement.

Management Response

FHP concurs with the recommendation in Finding 3.

The Memorandum of Agreement with the DEA has been revised and is being reviewed by the DHSMV Bureau of Purchasing and Contracts. The Memorandum of Agreement requires a label denoting a unique control number, which enables FHP to identify the date packaged, the packer's initials, corresponding training aid number, drug name, and controlled substance's net weight. These inner bags will then be individually sealed in an outer poly heat- sealed training bag, which must have the same unique control number assigned to the controlled substance package sealed inside.