

	Greensburg Volunteer Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines		
	500 - Bloodhound Team SOG's		
	Effective: 6/1996	Revised: 2/2026	Page: 1 of 17

GREENSBURG BLOODHOUND TEAM (GBHT)

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES (SOG) MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS (SOG 501–516)

500 SERIES – GBHT ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS, AND DEPLOYMENT

- SOG 501** – Greensburg Bloodhound Team (GBHT) Organization and Chain of Command
- SOG 502** – GBHT Operations (Mission, Scope, and General Field Operations)
- SOG 503** – GBHT Membership Requirements
- SOG 504** – GBHT Team Mobilization

- SOG 505** – GBHT Membership Requirements, Standards, and Removal
- SOG 506** – GBHT Deployment Criteria, Risk Assessment, and Operations
- SOG 507** – GBHT Bloodhound Care, Certification, and Readiness
- SOG 508** – GBHT Equipment Cache, Inventory Control, and Team Vehicle Readiness
- SOG 509** – GBHT Training Requirements and Documentation
- SOG 510** – GBHT Communications, Call-Out Procedures, and Operational Reporting
- SOG 511** – GBHT Safety Officer, Medical, and Rehabilitation
- SOG 512** – GBHT Crime Scene Discipline, Evidence Awareness, and Professional Conduct
- SOG 513** – GBHT Minimum Deployment Equipment (Go-Bag Standard)
- SOG 514** – GBHT Deployment Risk Assessment and Go / No-Go Criteria
- SOG 515** – GBHT Missing Person Search Integration and Inter-Agency Coordination
- SOG 516** – GBHT Demobilization, Return to Service, and Equipment Decontamination

SOG 501

GREENSBURG BLOODHOUND TEAM (GBHT) ORGANIZATION AND CHAIN OF COMMAND

501.1 PURPOSE

Establish the organizational structure, authority, and Chain of Command for the Greensburg Bloodhound Team (GBHT) to ensure safe, lawful, and operationally effective deployments.

501.2 POLICY

- A. The GBHT operates under the authority of the Greensburg Volunteer Fire Department (GVFD).
- B. The Fire Chief retains ultimate authority over the Team.
- C. The Team shall operate in accordance with:

- 1. NPBA training standards.
- 2. Westmoreland County Sheriff requirements for deputized members.
- 3. Applicable directives of the Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator.
- 4. Incident Command System (ICS) principles during all deployments.
 - D. All Team operations shall prioritize:
 - 5. Safety of members and bloodhounds.
 - 6. Safety of the public.
 - 7. Preservation of evidence and scene integrity.
 - 8. Professional conduct and accountability.

501.3 CHAIN OF COMMAND

- 1. Fire Chief
- 2. Team Commander
- 3. Team Captain / Officer in Charge (OIC)
- 4. Team Lieutenants
- 5. Senior Handler (in absence of all officers)

501.4 FIRE CHIEF – AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Chief shall:

- 1. Ensure members are appropriately qualified and capable of safe operations.
- 2. Oversee development of Team membership requirements.
- 3. Designate the Team Commander.
- 4. Temporarily assign a command replacement when necessary.
- 5. Provide strategic oversight for inter-agency planning and readiness.
- 6. Maintain express authority to remove (“eject”) any Team Member from the Team for any reason.
 - a. The Fire Chief’s decision shall be final.
 - b. No appeal process shall exist.

501.5 TEAM COMMANDER

501.5.1 Qualifications

- 1. Be or have been an experienced, trained, and certified Bloodhound Handler.
- 2. Have participated in GBHT training and deployments.

3. Have received NPBA man-trailing training for a minimum of five (5) years.

501.5.2 Operational Authority

The Team Commander shall:

1. Develop and maintain safe and efficient field operations.
2. Serve as liaison to the Westmoreland County Sheriff's Department.
3. Determine which members are deputized, subject to Sheriff approval.
4. Ensure NPBA requirements are maintained.
5. Ensure compliance with City administrative requirements.
6. Ensure bloodhounds and equipment remain in a constant state of readiness.
7. Ensure ICS/accountability/crew resource management principles are applied.
8. Develop operational plans covering pre-planning, deployment, field operations, demobilization, and after-action improvement.
9. Complete required documentation and financial records related to Team expenditures.

501.5.3 Deployment Authority

In consultation with the requesting agency Incident Commander:

1. Make the final determination whether deployment is warranted.
2. Determine whether conditions/risk factors support viable trailing operations.
3. Assign Handler/Hound Teams and support personnel based on size-up.

501.5.4 Removal Authority

The Team Commander may remove ("eject") any Team Member for any reason.

1. Decision shall be final.
2. No appeal process shall exist.

501.6 TEAM CAPTAIN / OFFICER IN CHARGE (OIC)

501.6.1 Qualifications

1. Be or have been an experienced, trained, and certified Bloodhound Handler.
2. Have participated in GBHT training and deployments.
3. Have completed at least five (5) years of NPBA man-trailing training.

501.6.2 Authority in Absence of Commander

In the absence of the Team Commander, the Team Captain/OIC shall:

1. Implement and maintain ICS during deployments.
2. Make final determinations regarding deployment viability.
3. Select Handler/Hound assignments.
4. Assign support personnel.
5. Ensure operational safety standards are enforced.

501.7 TEAM LIEUTENANTS

501.7.1 Appointment Appointed by the Team Commander.

501.7.2 Qualifications Certified Bloodhound Handlers and/or specialized skills as approved by Team Command.

501.7.3 Responsibilities Oversee assigned functions, ensure discipline, support readiness, and act as OIC when assigned.

501.8 SENIOR HANDLER (FIELD OIC)

In the absence of Commander/Captain/Lieutenants, the Senior Handler present shall act as OIC and coordinate with the requesting agency IC.

501.9 INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM COMPLIANCE

- A. GBHT deployments shall operate within the requesting agency's Incident Command structure.
- B. The Team Commander/OIC shall maintain internal Team accountability.
- C. No deployment shall occur outside an established/coordinated command structure.

501.10 RELATED POLICIES

GVFD ICS SOG; Mutual Aid Agreements; NPBA Standards; Sheriff Deputization Requirements.

SOG 502

GBHT OPERATIONS (MISSION, SCOPE, AND GENERAL FIELD OPERATIONS)

502.1 PURPOSE

Define GBHT mission, scope of service, and general operational posture for training, deployments, and public-facing activities.

502.2 POLICY

- A. GBHT provides trained handler/hound capability and support personnel for man-trailing operations.
- B. GBHT does **not** assume incident command of search management; the requesting agency Incident Commander (IC) retains scene command and control.
- C. GBHT shall integrate into the incident's ICS/NIMS structure and operate within assigned objectives.
- D. Safety is the first operational priority; all members share responsibility for hazard recognition and risk reduction.

502.3 TEAM MISSION

GBHT exists to:

1. Aid in the search for lost/missing persons.
2. Assist agencies in locating/apprehending fleeing or sought subjects when appropriate and safe.
3. Maintain readiness through training/certification.
4. Support team cohesion and member wellness.
5. Provide community awareness through approved demonstrations and public relations events.

502.4 OPERATIONAL SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

- A. GBHT may respond to requests from approved agencies per SOG 506/514.
- B. GBHT shall not self-deploy.
- C. GBHT operations shall be suspended/terminated when directed by the requesting IC or when GBHT safety thresholds are exceeded.

502.5 FIELD ROLES (OPERATIONAL POSITIONS)

Typical roles may include: Fire Chief; Team Commander; Team Captain/OIC; Lieutenant; Safety Officer; Handler; Support/Backup; Logistics/Accountability (as assigned).

502.6 FUNDAMENTAL FIELD OPERATING RULES

- A. Team members shall not wear bunker gear for trailing operations unless a specific hazard analysis requires otherwise.
- B. Clothing/PPE shall be appropriate for terrain, weather, and mission hazards.
- C. All members shall carry basic safety items appropriate to the environment (lighting, whistle, gloves, etc.).
- D. Members shall maintain formation discipline—support personnel remain with and protect the assigned Handler/Hound Team and do not create mission burden.
- E. Information control and media discipline shall follow SOG 510 and SOG 505.

502.7 RELATED SOGS

SOG 501 (Chain of Command); SOG 504 (Mobilization); SOG 506 (Deployment Criteria); SOG 510 (Comms/Reporting); SOG 511 (Safety/Rehab); SOG 514 (Go/No-Go).

SOG 503

GBHT MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

503.1 PURPOSE

Define baseline eligibility and entry requirements for GBHT membership.

503.2 POLICY

- A. GBHT membership is limited to personnel authorized by the Fire Chief and Team Commander.
- B. All members shall meet minimum GVFD membership and clearance requirements and maintain ongoing readiness.
- C. This SOG addresses **entry requirements**; detailed standards/removal are governed by SOG 505.

503.3 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (MINIMUM)

Applicants shall:

1. Be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
2. Be a member in good standing of GVFD (or specifically authorized by the Fire Chief).
3. Have completed the GVFD probationary year unless waived by the Fire Chief for cause.
4. Have completed required GVFD entry-level training (e.g., Essentials or equivalent as adopted by GVFD).
5. Have ICS familiarity/required baseline training as directed by Team Command (e.g., ICS-100/200 and crew resource principles).
6. Be medically/physically cleared for the role.
7. Provide required background/child clearances and documentation as required by GVFD and Team Command.
8. Apply to the Team Commander and participate in local drills/training when directed.

503.4 AFFILIATION / GRANDFATHERING

- A. GBHT shall not accept non-GVFD personnel unless explicitly authorized by the Fire Chief.
- B. Any previously approved non-GVFD members may be considered grandfathered at the discretion of the Fire Chief and Team Commander.

503.5 MEMBER ORIENTATION

Once approved, new members shall:

1. Review applicable GBHT SOGs.
2. Follow Chain of Command.
3. Demonstrate competence and professionalism during probationary participation as assigned.

503.6 RELATED SOGS

SOG 505 (Standards/Removal); SOG 509 (Training); SOG 510 (Comms/Reporting); SOG 511 (Safety); SOG 507 (Bloodhound Care) for handlers.

SOG 504

GBHT TEAM MOBILIZATION

504.1 PURPOSE

Establish call-out, dispatch interface, response, arrival, and initial on-scene integration steps for GBHT mobilization.

504.2 POLICY

- A. All requests shall be routed through Team Command (Team Commander, Fire Chief, or designated OIC).
- B. GBHT shall not self-deploy.
- C. Mobilization shall emphasize safety, accountability, and rapid integration into requesting agency ICS.

504.3 REQUEST FOR MOBILIZATION

- A. Requests may be initiated via Westmoreland County DPS Dispatch, local police desk, PSP, Sheriff, fire/EMS, or other authorized channels.
- B. The receiving officer shall notify Team Command and confirm authorization prior to committing resources.

504.4 CALL-OUT / INITIAL INFORMATION

- A. Call-out notification shall include, when available:

1. Staging/response location.
2. Estimated time and method of transport.
3. Required/special equipment.
4. Rendezvous point(s);
5. Known hazards and security concerns.
 - B. The OIC shall obtain essential size-up information (LKP, time last seen, weather, terrain, contamination concerns, scene security), consistent with SOG 506 and SOG 514.

504.5 DISPATCH / RESPONSE COORDINATION

- A. Prior to deploying, Team Command shall coordinate:

1. Communications plan (primary/alternate channels)
2. Crew roster and assignments.

3. Safety considerations (weapons, terrain, weather, threat profile);
4. Equipment readiness checks (SOG 508 and SOG 513).
 - B. When applicable, Westmoreland 9-1-1 shall be notified of GBHT units responding and their out-of-service status per GVFD practice.

504.6 ARRIVAL AND ICS INTEGRATION

A. Upon arrival, Team OIC shall:

1. Announce arrival per the communications plan.
2. Report to the requesting IC/Search Command for briefing and assignment.
3. Establish GBHT accountability and staging.
 - B. Handlers/support personnel shall prepare bloodhounds for acclimation/relief and await deployment order.

504.7 INITIAL SCENT ARTICLE / START POINT CONTROL

A. The OIC shall coordinate with the requesting agency to secure and control scent articles and the LKP to reduce contamination.

B. Deployment order shall be set by Team Command based on briefing and viability.

504.8 DEMOBILIZATION REFERENCE

Demobilization procedures are governed by SOG 516.

SOG 505

GBHT MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS, STANDARDS, AND REMOVAL

505.1 PURPOSE

Establish membership categories, minimum standards, conduct expectations, confidentiality requirements, and removal authority for GBHT members.

505.2 POLICY

- A. Membership is a privilege requiring ongoing compliance with all GBHT/GVFD requirements.
- B. Members shall maintain a professional, safe, disciplined posture during training, deployments, and public events.
- C. The Fire Chief and Team Commander retain authority to remove any Team Member at any time.
- D. Operational confidentiality is mandatory.

505.3 MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- A. Handler Member (Bloodhound Handler)
- B. Support Member (Non-handler operational support)
- C. Probationary Member (Handler or Support)
- D. Administrative Support (authorized by Team Command)

505.4 GENERAL STANDARDS (ALL MEMBERS)

Members shall:

1. Meet SOG 503 eligibility requirements and remain in good standing.
2. Follow the Chain of Command and ICS integration requirements.

3. Maintain physical/emotional/behavioral fitness for safe operations.
4. Maintain PPE and readiness appropriate to assignment.
5. Participate in required training (SOG 509).
6. Maintain confidentiality and information control.

505.5 HANDLER STANDARDS (ADDITIONAL)

Handlers shall:

1. Train/certify under NPBA-aligned standards as directed by Team Command.
2. Maintain NPBA membership/dues/certifications when required.
3. Deploy only bloodhounds approved by Team Command.
4. Maintain the ability to safely control and manage the bloodhound throughout operations.

505.6 SUPPORT MEMBER STANDARDS (ADDITIONAL)

Support members shall:

1. Maintain training for assigned roles (ICS, safety, comms, evidence awareness).
2. Perform tasks assigned by Team Command (scene support, logistics, accountability, equipment, transport, safety support).
3. Remain with assigned Handler/Hound Team unless reassigned by OIC.

505.7 CONFIDENTIALITY / MEDIA / PUBLIC STATEMENTS

- A. Deployment details and operational experiences shall not be discussed outside GBHT/GVFD leadership and the requesting agency as needed.
- B. No unauthorized comments to media or on social media.
- C. All inquiries shall be referred to the requesting agency PIO/IC and/or the Team Commander/Fire Chief per SOG 510.

505.8 TRAINING PARTICIPATION ENFORCEMENT

Failure to meet training participation may result in inactive status or removal per SOG 509 and 505.9.

505.9 REMOVAL AUTHORITY / DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- A. Fire Chief may remove (“eject”) any member for any reason; decision final; no appeal.
- B. Team Commander may remove (“eject”) any member for any reason; decision final; no appeal.
- C. Removal may include unsafe behavior, failure to follow command, training lapse, conduct unbecoming, confidentiality violations, readiness failures.

505.10 INACTIVE STATUS

- A. Members may be placed inactive for medical leave, training lapse, administrative review, or operational concerns.
 - B. Inactive members shall not deploy until returned to active status by Team Command.
-

SOG 506

GBHT DEPLOYMENT CRITERIA, RISK ASSESSMENT, AND OPERATIONS

506.1 PURPOSE

Establish criteria for accepting deployments, completing operational size-up, and controlling GBHT field operations.

506.2 POLICY

- A. Deployments shall be evaluated for safety, viability, and mission appropriateness.
- B. Team Commander/OIC makes the final determination to deploy, in coordination with the requesting IC.
- C. GBHT shall operate within ICS and coordinated operational boundaries.
- D. High-risk “go/no-go” decision structure is governed by SOG 514 (this SOG sets the baseline acceptance framework).

506.3 AUTHORIZED REQUESTING AGENCIES

May include law enforcement, Sheriff, EM, fire departments, and other agencies approved by Team Command and the Fire Chief.

506.4 PROHIBITION ON SELF-DEPLOYMENT

Members shall not self-deploy or commit Team assets without authorization per SOG 501 and SOG 504.

506.5 INITIAL INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS (SIZE-UP)

Team Commander/OIC shall obtain, as available: LKP/time last seen, weather/terrain, hazards/threat profile, scene security, crime suspicion/evidence needs, media/crowd concerns, and support resource availability.

506.6 VIABILITY FACTORS

Consider elapsed time, weather/wind, contamination, terrain/access, safety risks, and whether the mission fits man-trailing use.

506.7 OPERATIONAL CONTROL AND BOUNDARIES

Coordinate with IC to establish search area, staging, routes, and access control (especially for evidence protection). No independent operations outside the plan.

506.8 ASSIGNMENTS

Handler/Hound Teams assigned based on experience, training, readiness, operational need, and conditions; support assigned based on mission need.

506.9 EVIDENCE / SCENE PRESERVATION

Evidence discipline is governed by SOG 512; Team Command shall coordinate with law enforcement for scene integrity.

506.10 DEMOBILIZATION AND AFTER-ACTION

Operational closeout and AAR reference SOG 516 and SOG 510 reporting requirements.

SOG 507

GBHT BLOODHOUND CARE, CERTIFICATION, AND READINESS

507.1 PURPOSE

Establish requirements for bloodhound care, certification, training, and readiness.

507.2 POLICY

- A. Bloodhounds shall be trained, cared for, and maintained in a constant state of readiness.
- B. Welfare shall not be compromised for operational objectives.
- C. Only approved bloodhounds deploy as GBHT assets.

507.3 BLOODHOUND REQUIREMENTS

Health/fitness, current vaccinations/veterinary care, safe public/field behavior, NPBA-aligned man-trailing training. Unsafe behavior results in removal from service.

507.4 HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES

Maintain health/readiness, equipment readiness, hydration/rest/rehab, safe transport, and immediate reporting of injury/medical concerns.

507.5 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Regular trailing training; varied environments and conditions; contamination control; safety/accountability. Training documentation per SOG 509.

507.6 EQUIPMENT READINESS (K9)

Harness/lead/long line, hydration, lighting, PPE as needed, K9 first aid, documentation tools. Defective equipment removed from service.

507.7 OPERATIONAL LIMITATIONS

No deployment when conditions are unsafe, heat/cold risk is unreasonable, K9 is fatigued/injured/ill, or required support is unavailable. OIC retains stop-work authority.

507.8 REHABILITATION

Provide rest, water, cooling/warming, and recovery during extended ops.

SOG 508

GBHT EQUIPMENT CACHE, INVENTORY CONTROL, AND TEAM VEHICLE READINESS

508.1 PURPOSE

Define control, inspection, maintenance, and accountability for GBHT cache and Team vehicles (if assigned).

508.2 POLICY

Equipment is a critical operational asset maintained in a constant state of readiness and used only for authorized operations/training/events.

508.3 OWNERSHIP / CONTROL

Equipment may be owned/issued by GVFD, City, donations/grants, law enforcement, or other approved sources; all are subject to accountability.

508.4 EQUIPMENT CACHE MANAGEMENT

Commander may designate an Equipment Officer/Manager. Cache shall support deployments, evidence/documentation support, accountability, K9 welfare, and extended operations.

508.5 INVENTORY CONTROL

Maintain master inventory; review at least annually and after major deployments; report missing/damaged items immediately.

508.6 INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

Inspect prior to/after deployments and routinely; remove defective equipment from service.

508.7 TEAM VEHICLE READINESS (IF APPLICABLE)

Fuel minimum, warning/lighting operational, comms functional, cache secured, vehicle kept clean/professional; report mechanical issues via GVFD process.

508.8 DEPLOYMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ensure equipment checkout/assignment and recovery during demobilization.

508.9 LOSS/DAMAGE/CONTAMINATION

Universal precautions; clean/dispose as required; document and report losses.

SOG 509

GBHT TRAINING REQUIREMENTS AND DOCUMENTATION

509.1 PURPOSE

Establish minimum training requirements and documentation standards for GBHT personnel and bloodhounds.

509.2 POLICY

Training is mandatory; records shall be maintained; failure to comply may result in inactive status/removal (SOG 505).

509.3 REQUIRED TRAINING COMPONENTS

NPBA-aligned trailing, deployment procedures, safety/risk management, ICS/accountability, evidence awareness, communications, night ops, varied environments, K9 first aid/welfare, logistics/demobilization.

509.4 HANDLER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Maintain NPBA requirements as directed: document trails, outcomes, certifications, continuing education.

509.5 SUPPORT MEMBER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Maintain role-appropriate training: safety/PPE, ICS/accountability, communications, deployment support, evidence awareness.

509.6 TRAINING DOCUMENTATION

Record date/location, participants, bloodhound(s), scenario, conditions, objectives, results, safety issues, corrective actions. Retain per Team Command.

509.7 PERFORMANCE / READINESS REVIEW

Team Command may evaluate readiness and place members inactive pending corrective action.

SOG 510

GBHT COMMUNICATIONS, CALL-OUT PROCEDURES, AND OPERATIONAL REPORTING

510.1 PURPOSE

Define call-out, response communications discipline, information control, and required reporting.

510.2 POLICY

- A. Deployments coordinated through Team Command; no self-dispatch.
- B. Communications shall be professional, minimal, and coordinated with the requesting agency.
- C. ICS principles apply.
- D. Documentation shall be completed for all deployments.

510.3 CALL-OUT PROCEDURES

Route requests to Team Commander; if unavailable, Captain/OIC, Lieutenant, then Senior Handler as OIC. Obtain essential incident details consistent with SOG 504/506/514.

510.4 MEMBER RESPONSE

Report to staging; maintain professional appearance; bring required PPE/equipment; no unsafe driving; do not enter unsecured areas unless directed.

510.5 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Operate on assigned frequencies; avoid speculation; avoid transmitting sensitive details over unsecured channels. Team Command communicates mission-critical decisions unless otherwise directed by IC.

510.6 INFORMATION CONTROL / MEDIA

No member statements to media. Direct inquiries to requesting agency PIO/IC and/or Fire Chief/Team Commander. No social media posting without authorization.

510.7 OPERATIONAL REPORTING

OIC completes report including request/arrival times, requesting agency, members/K9s, assignments, conditions/hazards, outcomes, injuries/exposures, equipment issues, risk notes, demobilization time.

510.8 AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

Team Command may conduct AAR; findings inform training/safety/deployment readiness improvements.

SOG 511

GBHT SAFETY OFFICER, MEDICAL, AND REHABILITATION

511.1 PURPOSE

Establish safety oversight, medical monitoring, and rehab procedures for members and bloodhounds.

511.2 POLICY

Safety of personnel, bloodhounds, and the public is the highest operational priority; safety oversight shall match incident complexity and hazard profile.

511.3 SAFETY OFFICER DESIGNATION

OIC may designate a Safety Officer for training, extended operations, high-risk environments, night operations, hazardous terrain, or severe weather. Safety Officer has authority to stop unsafe actions.

511.4 SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

Identify hazards, monitor fatigue, enforce PPE, ensure accountability, address lighting/traffic/perimeter issues, monitor heat/cold/lightning, and monitor K9 welfare.

511.5 MEDICAL SUPPORT

Request EMS standby when warranted (extended ops, temperature extremes, remote terrain, water hazards, elevated risk). Remove distressed members immediately.

511.6 REHABILITATION (REHAB)

Establish rehab as needed: hydration, rest, cooling/warming, nutrition, medical evaluation. Applies to members and bloodhounds.

511.7 BLOODHOUND WELFARE

Monitor for heat/cold stress, injury, fatigue, dehydration; remove from operations when indicated; provide hydration; no forced trailing beyond safe limits.

511.8 STOP WORK AUTHORITY

Any member may request pause; Team Command evaluates immediately; unsafe assignments refused.

511.9 DOCUMENTATION

Document injuries, exposures, near misses, and K9 injuries in the operational report.

SOG 512

GBHT CRIME SCENE DISCIPLINE, EVIDENCE AWARENESS, AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

512.1 PURPOSE

Set evidence awareness, scene discipline, and professional conduct requirements for deployments and training.

512.2 POLICY

Many deployments involve suspicious circumstances; GBHT shall preserve evidence, minimize disturbance, and not interfere with investigations.

512.3 SCENE DISCIPLINE

Enter only necessary areas; use established entry points; avoid evidence areas; do not handle property/personal effects; maintain discipline.

512.4 EVIDENCE AWARENESS

If evidence is observed: do not touch; mark without disturbance if feasible; notify Team Command immediately; Team Command notifies law enforcement.

512.5 PHOTOGRAPHY / RECORDING

No photography/recording unless directed by Team Command and authorized by the requesting agency. No social media sharing.

512.6 PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT / CONFIDENTIALITY

Respectful language; no speculation; no inappropriate commentary; maintain confidentiality; violations may result in removal (SOG 505).

SOG 513

GBHT MINIMUM DEPLOYMENT EQUIPMENT (GO-BAG STANDARD)

513.1 PURPOSE

Establish minimum equipment requirements for GBHT deployments to ensure readiness and safety.

513.2 POLICY

- A. No GBHT deployment shall occur unless minimum equipment is available and serviceable.
- B. Each handler shall maintain a ready Go-Bag; support members shall maintain minimum support equipment.
- C. Equipment shall be checked prior to deployment.

513.3 HANDLER MINIMUM EQUIPMENT

- A. K9 Equipment: collar/harness; long line (20–30 ft minimum); secondary leash; water/bowl; waste bags; towel; weather-appropriate K9 gear as needed.
- B. Handler Equipment: PPE appropriate to environment; headlamp/flashlight; radio/comms device (if issued); spare power; gloves; notebook/pen; map/GPS as available.
- C. Medical: K9 first aid kit; basic human first aid; tourniquet recommended.

513.4 SUPPORT MEMBER MINIMUM EQUIPMENT

- A. PPE: weather-appropriate clothing; terrain boots; gloves; high-visibility vest for roadway hazards; helmet when warranted.
- B. Operational: flashlight/headlamp; spare power; notebook/pen; radio if issued.
- C. Safety (as applicable): marking tape; cones; evidence flagging if authorized; hydration.

513.5 SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT

As required: GPS tracking, additional lighting, cold weather gear, shelter/staging supplies, evidence containment supplies, etc., as directed by Team Command and/or IC.

513.6 SERVICEABILITY / REPORTING

Remove defective equipment; report missing/damaged items to Team Command; do not respond with known unserviceable critical gear.

513.7 RESPONSIBILITY

Members maintain their gear; OIC ensures readiness prior to deployment; Equipment Officer manages cache per SOG 508.

SOG 514

GBHT DEPLOYMENT RISK ASSESSMENT AND GO / NO-GO CRITERIA

514.1 PURPOSE

Provide a formal decision framework for accepting, declining, suspending, or terminating deployments.

514.2 POLICY

- A. No deployment occurs without a risk assessment by Team Commander/OIC.
- B. Safety and K9 welfare override operational objectives.
- C. Team Commander/OIC retains final authority to accept/continue/suspend/terminate operations (in coordination with requesting IC).

514.3 INITIAL RISK ASSESSMENT FACTORS

Evaluate incident type, elapsed time, weather/terrain/visibility, hazards/threat profile, scene security, law enforcement support, evidence needs, scent integrity/contamination, staffing availability, and expected duration.

514.4 GO / NO-GO FACTORS

Decline or suspend when: scene security cannot be ensured; active threat exists; conditions create unreasonable risk; heat/cold danger; K9 unfit; request outside scope; insufficient personnel; command structure not established.

514.5 CONTINUATION REVIEW

Reassess periodically; pause/terminate if safety deteriorates, objective becomes non-viable, IC directs suspension, or K9 welfare requires it.

514.6 DOCUMENTATION

Document accept/decline/suspend/terminate decisions and rationale in the operational report (SOG 510).

SOG 515

GBHT MISSING PERSON SEARCH INTEGRATION AND INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

515.1 PURPOSE

Establish procedures for GBHT integration into multi-agency missing person searches.

515.2 POLICY

GBHT operates within ICS established by the requesting agency and coordinates with IC/Search Branch to complement organized search operations.

515.3 ICS INTEGRATION

Upon arrival, OIC reports to IC, receives assignment, confirms objectives, staging, boundaries, and maintains GBHT accountability.

515.4 SEARCH COORDINATION

Coordinate LKP confirmation, contamination control, mapping, trail documentation; communicate findings immediately to IC/Search Planning/Law Enforcement liaison.

515.5 CONTAMINATION CONTROL

Request limiting traffic near LKP; scent articles handled by authorized personnel; initiate trail under controlled conditions when possible.

515.6 LAW ENFORCEMENT COORDINATION

If criminal activity suspected, follow evidence discipline (SOG 512) and law enforcement direction; GBHT does not assume investigative authority.

515.7 RELEASE / DEMOBILIZATION FROM SEARCH

Prior to leaving, report outcome, confirm release, provide follow-up contact info.

SOG 516

GBHT DEMOBILIZATION, RETURN TO SERVICE, AND EQUIPMENT DECONTAMINATION

516.1 PURPOSE

Establish procedures for demobilization, equipment accountability/cleaning, K9 recovery, reporting completion, and return to service.

516.2 POLICY

- A. All deployments conclude with formal demobilization.
- B. Equipment shall be inspected, cleaned, and restored to readiness.
- C. K9 welfare shall be evaluated post-deployment.
- D. Documentation shall be completed prior to return to full service.

516.3 DEMOBILIZATION PROCEDURE

OIC shall confirm accountability of personnel/K9s, recover equipment, and coordinate formal release with IC.

516.4 EQUIPMENT RECOVERY / INSPECTION / DECONTAMINATION

Clean, inspect, repair/replace, and repack into deployment-ready configuration. Contaminated equipment handled with universal precautions and cleaned/disposed per applicable GVFD infectious disease controls and manufacturer guidance.

516.5 K9 POST-DEPLOYMENT CARE

Hydration, rest, injury inspection, monitoring for heat/cold stress. Document and report injuries; obtain veterinary evaluation when required.

516.6 OPERATIONAL REPORT COMPLETION

Complete report per SOG 510 including outcome, safety issues, evidence observations, equipment issues, risk notes, and demobilization time.

516.7 AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

Commander may conduct AAR; findings drive training/policy/equipment improvements.

516.8 RETURN TO SERVICE

Returned to service when personnel accounted for, equipment operational, K9 cleared, and documentation complete.

GBHT ROSTER - 2026		
Name	Rank	Badge ID
Chief Tom Bell	GVFD Chief	79-C1
Dep. Lou Battistella	Commander	79-C4
Dep. Bud Mertz	Captain	79-200
Dep. David Klingler	Lieutenant	79-C8
Dep. Rob Cameron	Lieutenant	79-87
Dep. Elysia Battistella	Handler	79-898
Dep. David Jackson	Handler	79-89
Dep. Scott Stepanovich	Handler/Administrative	79-252
Dep. Greg Saunders	Handler	79-904
Dep. Doug Fordyce	Handler	79-905
Dep. Gregory Saunders, II	Handler	79-906
Dep. Joey Mangini	Tactical Support	79-907
Dep. Danielle Grosser	Tactical Support	79-848
Dep. Roman Lamberski, DVM	Tactical Support	79-808
Dep. Les Harvey	Support	79-58
Dave Burnfield	Handler/Support	79-805
Patrick Dean	Support	79-820
Austin Wentzell	Support	79-818
Kate Dispennett	Support	79-241
Heidi Randolph	Support	79-853
Natalia Hardaway	Support	79-370