



GEORGIA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

3121 Panthersville Road
P.O. Box 370808
Decatur, Georgia 30037-0808

Vernon M. Keenan
Director

OPERATIONS BULLETIN 2004-01 PRIORITIZING CHEMISTRY SERVICES April 27, 2004

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation-Division of Forensic Sciences, GBI-DOFS, continues to strive to meet the needs of the Georgia criminal justice system. We endeavor to perform our services with as efficient a workforce as possible. Resources are shrinking due to economic factors and this, consequently, effects publicly funded agencies. Currently, funding limitations have dramatically impacted the entire laboratory system, especially the Chemistry discipline. Planning for budget constraints became necessary and the GBI-DOFS has tried to obtain customer feedback through meetings held at GBI-Headquarters with our customers in order to explain our position and to gain insight into their needs.

Unfortunately, the present situation has forced us to prioritize laboratory services in the Chemistry section to allow for the best utilization of staff to address everyone's interests. A decision has been made to focus on the analysis of scheduled drugs. The processing of leafy material evidence will be worked in turn from a backlog, secondarily to the testing of the scheduled drugs. At the current rate of submission of suspected marijuana and with what is already received, it will take approximately 20 months to complete a report on marijuana analyses.

The GBI-DOFS is encouraging agencies to utilize those officers who have been trained in marijuana identification by our staff for those cases that are needed for prosecution. This GBI-DOFS sponsored training has been ongoing for almost 20 years; training hundreds of P.O.S.T. certified officers in marijuana identification. Recently we developed an improved and more extensive identification training program. Starting in July 2002, the training was expanded to 2 days, with all of the proficiency examinations now part of the class. Those individuals successfully completing the program are certified to perform this task, with recertification every 4 years. The GBI-DOFS highly recommends that any officer holding certificates dated prior to July 2002 attend the new class. In an effort to assist in this transition, the GBI-DOFS and the GPSTC have increased the number of training classes to accommodate the expected surge of applicants.

This action is being taken so as to redirect our manpower to analyzing suspected scheduled drugs, leaving other evidence as a secondary service. The GBI-DOFS will continue to maintain the ability to test selected marijuana cases where agencies are not capable of performing their own testing. **This change in GBI-DOFS policy will be effective July 1, 2004.** Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call Chemistry Manager Mark Burns at 404-328-4244 or Deputy Director Dan Kirk at 404-328-4200.

Division of Forensic Sciences
P.O. Box 370808
Decatur, Georgia 30037-0808

Investigative Division
P.O. Box 370808
Decatur, Georgia 30037-0808

Georgia Crime Information Center
P.O. Box 370748
Decatur, Georgia 30037-0748