



MISSION

The Georgia Department of Corrections protects the public by operating safe and secure facilities through the development of professional staff and effective offender management.

Timothy C. Ward, Commissioner
Clay Nix, Director, Office of Professional Standards

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The mission of The Office of Professional Standards (OPS) is to protect and serve the public, employees, and offenders. This diverse office incorporates administrative and criminal investigative functions to provide oversight for the GDC’s leadership and staff while coordinating and collaborating with external local, state, and federal agencies and entities.

OVERVIEW

OPS is responsible for providing unbiased, uncompromising accountability and results that reflect the highest professional standard. This office accomplishes its mission by recruiting the best and most qualified for the job while promoting quality education and training. The office optimizes information, technology, and state of the art equipment and integrates it into the department’s systems and processes.

OPS consists of two main divisions: Criminal Investigations Division and the Intelligence Division. Each OPS Division is comprised of subunits with varied functions such as three Regional Offices, Canine Operations, Fugitive Unit, Internal Affairs Unit, Organized Crime and Gang Unit, Digital Forensics Unit, STG Unit and Compliance Unit.

INFORMATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

The Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is charged with investigating any criminal allegation with a nexus to the GDC. The Special Agents and Criminal Investigators assigned to C.I.D. possess police powers and have statewide jurisdiction. GDC Agents are empowered to arrest individuals violating the criminal laws of the State of Georgia and to serve and execute both arrest and search warrants.

The GDC partners with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in a joint training initiative to ensure all GDC Special Agents receive the nation’s highest quality investigative training. All GDC Special Agents are required to complete Basic Police Mandate Training, as regulated by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (P.O.S.T.).

ORGANIZED CRIME AND GANG UNIT

The Organized Crime and Gang Unit (OCGU) targets high-level criminal organizations that present a threat to the safety and security of the GDC institutional system and the citizens of Georgia. While supporting and leveraging relationships with federal partners, GDC Special Agents assigned as Task Force Officers to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Safe Streets Task Force, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), work tirelessly to disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations operating both inside and outside the prison environment.



CANINE OPERATIONS

The Canine Unit is responsible for enhancing public safety throughout the State of Georgia by providing prompt and effective canine support for the GDC, public schools, and local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. The Canine Unit currently houses, trains, and deploys tracking and trailing canines, narcotic detection canines, cell phone detection canines, and explosive detection canines to support this diverse mission.



FUGITIVE UNIT

The Fugitive Unit’s mission is to recapture escapees and absconded offenders from GDC facilities, to include State Prisons, Transitional Centers, and Probation Detention Centers. Each Special Agent assigned to this unit possesses police powers with statewide jurisdiction. Through the GDC’s partnership with the United States Marshal Southeast Regional Fugitive Task force (SERTF), these agents also possess Federal authority.

INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

The Intelligence Division is comprised of two subordinate units: the Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) and the Digital Forensics Unit (DFU).



CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT

The mission of GDC's Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) is to identify, reduce, and prevent criminal activity by collecting, storing, assessing, and disseminating criminal intelligence information. CIU also provides criminal investigative support to all GDC Investigative Units, GA Information Sharing Analysis Center (GISAC), High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), and numerous outside law enforcement agencies. The CIU also utilizes analysts to monitor the inmate financial systems for criminal activity.

To contact CIU, email intel@gdc.ga.gov.



DIGITAL FORENSICS UNIT

The Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) is responsible for acquiring and analyzing digital evidence, including computers and cell phones. DFU Special Agents, Analysts, and Technicians leverage state of the art technology and specialized training to conduct and support criminal investigations and intelligence operations. The DFU may be contacted at the email address DFU@gdc.ga.gov.



SECURITY THREAT GROUPS UNIT

The Security Threat Groups (STG) Unit's mission is to validate STG related persons effectively, gather intelligence on STG related criminal activities, and provide investigative support in all STG related occurrences. The STG Unit is tasked with maintaining and supervising the department's STG program.

The STG Unit maintains working relationships with the Georgia Gang Investigator Association (GGIA) and GISAC. The STG Unit is often called upon as subject matter experts and conducts quarterly statewide training.

COMPLIANCE UNIT

The Compliance Unit consists of five sections: Audits, PREA, Policy Administration, ACA Coordinator, and ADA/LEPSI Coordinator. This unit collectively provides guidance, technical assistance, oversight, and on-sight support to assist facilities in maintaining operations with departmental standards, federal and state regulations, and ACA standards to guarantee safe, secure, and efficient operation. Through regular internal and external assessments, the Compliance Unit evaluates and ensures quality assurance of operations and services.

AUDITS

The Audits Section evaluates the operations of GDC State and Private Prisons, Transitional Centers, Probation Detention Centers, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Centers, Farms, Distribution Centers; Private prisons are assessed annually and County prisons as requested. This unit's primary focus is to ensure each facility is adhering to departmental standards and supporting each facility's efforts toward ACA accreditation. Comprehensive instruments are used to assess all operational areas with participation from every division.

PREA

The Federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was signed into law in 2003. The law calls for a "zero tolerance" and developed national standards to prevent incidents of sexual violence in prison. The GDC PREA Unit ensures the GDC is compliant with National PREA Standards at all GDC facilities. The PREA Unit conducts audits, provides case management, oversight & support, training, and data collection analysis.

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

The Georgia Department of Corrections operates based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) maintained in a central Policy Management System/ library called PowerDMS. Policy Administration governs the development and dissemination of GDC policies and provides a systematic and uniform process. All GDC employees have access to policies in PowerDMS.

ACCREDITATION SECTION

The Accreditation Section coordinates statewide efforts for the GDC to earn national accreditation, thus improving the agency's operational effectiveness and efficiency by aligning policy, practice, and procedures to established standards. The national accreditation and standards are continually revised to reflect best practices in corrections and law enforcement gathered from agencies across the United States. The GDC is currently obtaining national accreditation through the American Correctional Association (ACA) and has recently earned Central Office and Central Training Academy accreditation. ACA establishes standards in the following five major areas: Administration and Management, Physical Plant, Institutional Operations, Institutional Services, and Inmate Program Audits.

ADA/LEPSI COORDINATOR

Americans with Disabilities Act/LEPSI Coordinator (A.D.A.) protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination based on disability in services, programs, and activities provided by State and local government entities. Title II extends the prohibition on discrimination established by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 794, to all activities of state and local governments regardless of whether these entities received federal financial assistance. A.D.A. focuses on making sure inmate housing needs are being met, creating access to programs and services, providing communication solutions, and providing staff training.



INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT

The Internal Affairs Unit is responsible for conducting administrative investigations into allegations of unlawful and sexual harassment, use of force incidents, worker's compensation claims, and other policy violations. This unit assists in drafting and updating agency policies, such as the Statewide Grievance Procedure and Offender Discipline policies. Also, it conducts training related to any changes in policy and procedure.



OMBUDSMAN

The Ombudsman Unit serves as the liaison between the community and the GDC. The unit provides families, friends, attorneys, and special interest groups a point of contact for concerns about an individual's care and safety or group of offenders. The unit makes appropriate referrals within the agency of each inquiry. The Ombudsman may be contacted by telephone, email, or United States mail. The Ombudsman Unit may be reached at: (478) 992-5358 or Ombudsman@gdc.ga.gov.