



# DRUG DETECTOR DOG PROCEDURE

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## PURPOSE

1. These procedures detail:
  - the handling of controlled drug samples in the training of the New Zealand Customs Service (Customs) drug detector dogs (DDD)
  - the handling of DDDs in cargo inspections, marine, mail centre and terminal work areas
  - these procedures provide guidance to the following personnel:
    - Customs Detector Dog unit
    - DDD Handlers
    - Chief Customs Officer (CCO) Detector Dogs
    - CCO Detector Dog Training
    - National Detector Dog Trainers

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## Definitions

## Quality Assurance Procedures

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# POLICY STATEMENT

2. The policy statements for this procedure are in [Appendix 1](#) and cover:

### General

### Dog selection and ownership

### Dog care

### Training

### Dog handlers

### Controlled drugs

# DELEGATED AUTHORITY

3. It is the responsibility of any person responsible for the management and handling of drugs to do so in a safe and professional manner, which does not endanger any person, property or the environment.
4. The National Dog Trainers are responsible for training issues and advising the CCO Detector Dogs/Managers on issues effecting dog training and care. They also advise on consistent practice across the country.

# Person in charge

5. A CCO or ACCO in each region where Detector Dog Unit drug samples are held shall assume the responsibilities of the 'Person in Charge'. The Person in Charge is responsible for the following:
- fulfilling the tasks of the Person in Charge when required in these procedures
  - ensuring the quantity of drugs held is kept to a minimum required for the conduct of dog training
  - ensuring only approved personnel handle the drugs
  - ensuring all personnel have completed training appropriate to their role
  - ensuring all documentation is complete and current.
6. The Person in Charge must consider operational requirements and threats and the need to train in response to any changing requirements when managing drug samples. The

Person in Charge shall compile written procedures when it is necessary to respond to or train for any extra-ordinary operational requirements

## Handler's role

7. CCOs will, as workloads dictate, provide rosters to allocate handlers to specific work areas.
8. Handlers are responsible to the appointed CCO Detector Dogs. However, while working in other work areas in Customs, for example airports, they are under the direction of that area CCO. Handlers will perform the duties as requested, provided they are not dangerous or detrimental to the dog or handler. At all times, the dog is the immediate responsibility of the handler.
9. Handlers may be required, particularly when working within other work areas, to perform Customs duties not involving the DDD (such as inspections).
10. The CCO Detector Dogs must approve requests for assistance outside of rostered duties, including those from other government agencies

## PROCEDURES

### Health and safety

#### Handlers

11. The handler must make sure that there is little or no risk to the dog or themselves before deploying the DDD.
12. DDD Handlers will be advised of hazards relating to handling and contact with dogs. These are the same as those affecting any detector dog handler.

#### Others

13. Persons working with DDD Handlers must be conversant with safety matters relating to drugs and in particular with actions that are taken following a dog indication.

#### Dog

14. The safety of the DDD must not take precedent over the safety of the handler and other persons. The DDD cannot be operated in situations where their activity would result in persons being injured or killed.



## Handling drug samples

15. Many drugs can be very unsafe if ingested or inhaled. Any person who is handling drugs shall:
  - ensure the drugs are handled and transported in a manner that will not cause any hazard to any person
  - follow stringent hygiene practices when handling exposed drugs
  - use sterile gloves when handling drug samples
  - wash their hands as soon as possible after handling any drugs.
16. Whenever any samples are to be repacked, the persons repacking the sample need to wear face masks to prevent any inhalation or ingestion of fumes.
17. When using the drug samples for training and an accident occurs where you may inhale or ingest some of the sample due to a breakage of the packaging, seek medical attention immediately. Record this in the accident register.

## Safety equipment

18. There is a range of safety equipment available to DDD Handlers. The level of risk for any search will determine the use of this equipment.

## Deployment

19. DDD teams are deployed against a range of Customs activities:
  - cargo inspections
  - marine deployments
  - airports
  - warrant activity (external and internal)
  - mail centres.
20. DDD teams are deployed under varying circumstances:
  - routine deployment –no risk targets have been identified and DDD teams do random searches of CCAs and international flights


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- alert deployment - target(s) have been identified as matching a specific alert, for example goods or consignments that are subject to a specific alert

21. Public displays may be authorised by the CCO Detector Dog Unit if:
- they do not interfere with operational requirements
  - the exercise is one of public relations rather than public entertainment.

### Deployment best practice

22. In operational circumstances, a second officer must accompany each DDD team. The accompanying person may perform other functions but must be available should the handler report a positive indication. On being notified of the possible presence of drugs, the accompanying officer will be responsible for actions taken in respect of that indication. The purpose of this is to:
- leave the handler free to control and take care of the dog
  - ensure the event is properly dealt with without the distraction of the dog
  - avoid loss of handler's time should Court appearance result
  - assist in the preservation of evidence by ensuring the original packaging is not destroyed and fingerprint evidence is not obliterated
  - avoid accidental swallowing of drugs and/or poisonous substances by the dog.
23. When two or more dogs are working together (Customs or other agency dogs), handlers are to ensure they do not affect the operation of the other dog team(s).
24. When working in areas where people are present, for example air terminals, contact by the DDD on people is to be avoided at all times. No dog shall be operational if it displays undesirable behaviours including, jumping up on persons, scratching with paws, nipping/biting with teeth or other undue contact.
25. DDDs are not to be given access to areas in which their presence is not appropriate, for example staff mess rooms, unless deployed operationally.

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### Air terminals (also refer to the Terminal SOPs)

27. While on duty in the terminal, take direction from the nominated search leader, CCO or ACCO in the airport.
28. On all operational matters, take direction from the CCO or ACCO. Accept no instruction that will compromise the safety of the dog or person(s) or adversely affect the future performance of the dog.



29. Remain responsible for the management of your dog.
30. The handler can deploy their dog operationally in any area which will increase the effectiveness of the dog as long as it does not interfere with general passenger processing and any other work areas, for example MPI and AvSec.
31. When a dog makes an indication, advise the appropriate officers. Further action will be decided by the CCO, ACCO or nominated officer of the airport.
32. During the dog's down time, be available to assist with either personal or baggage search activity. The on duty CCO or ACCO ensures handlers are involved in core Customs activity, including profiling. The DDD Handler is not expected to become a baggage searcher if the terminal has no secondary staff, or to be "locked" into the process. The dog will also require your attention. Use common sense and act as a DDD Handler first.

### **Cargo inspections**

33. Each morning, the handler allocated liaises with the Planners, or Air Op's.
34. At each examination, gain a briefing by the Inspections officer and any special instructions relating to the use of a DDD.
35. When indication is made, the Inspections officer is responsible for locating/securing the drug(s).
36. Other inbound cargo in the store may also be screened by the DDD.
37. After DDD activity is complete, assist with the examination if appropriate.
38. Between examination bookings, remain in contact with the Planners and Air Op's by telephone (or cellphone). This enables additional appointments to be made during the day.

### **Mail Centre (also refer to the Mail Centre SOPs)**

39. While on duty in the Mail Centre, handlers fall under the control of the CCO at the Mail Centre. On all operational matters, take direction from the CCO. The handler remains responsible for the management of their dog.
40. Receive direction from the CCO Mail Centre as to which mail needs to be screened.
41. Work with your dog in accordance with these instructions. Once an indication is made, the handler conducts the examination, exhibit handling, reporting.



42. When not carrying out DDD activity, assist with mail examination. These actions are acceptable:
- take up the role of a mail examiner as long as it does not affect your primary role as a DDD Handler
  - attend to DDD related matters away from the Mail Centre when you are not required for DDD screening. Inform the CCO Mail Centre.
43. These actions are unacceptable:
- examination of mail outside of the Examination Room
  - vacating the screening belts while mail is being processed to examine mail your dog has indicated on
  - holding mail over to the next day when a mail examiner is available to examine it - any mail not examined during that shift should be handed on to the next shift to action
  - working your dog outside of the allocated screening areas on the conveyor belts without approval of the CCO Mail Centre
  - use of live drug interceptions as a sample except when the dog is wearing booties and at no time is the live drug interception able to be damaged.

## Marine

44. Operational handlers are to complete the Ship Search Course before being deployed in the marine work area.
45. All DDDs must comply with Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) requirements (inoculated against rabies) before being deployed on craft search activity.
46. Handlers normally receive advice of Response or Marine activity the day before.
47. While on duty with Response or Marine, handlers are under the control of the relevant CCO or Rummage Leader. On all operational matters, take direction from the CCO or Rummage Leader. Remain responsible for the management of your dog.
48. A briefing will be held before the activity, including operational instructions for the DDD team.
49. While working on a vessel, remain with a Response or Marine officer. When an indication is made, remain responsible for the dog while the Response or Marine officer(s) carry out search/retrieval.
50. At all times ensure that unreasonable demands are not placed on the dog, and that it is kept safe.
51. Handlers may be used in search activities during dog rest periods.



## Boarding vessels

52. Allow dogs to be boarded on vessels only if all safety issues relating to the situation have been considered and resolved.
53. Prior to boarding vessels engaged on overseas trade, handlers are to ensure MPI requirements are complied with (inoculated against rabies) and handlers should advise the MPI Quarantine Service they are boarding the vessel.

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56. DDDs should be deployed with booties on when working outside the accommodation area to protect the dog from an injury. When on yachts booties are to be worn through the entire search. Handlers are to wear their SRBA vests when searching any vessel.

## Searching of yachts – special conditions

57. On arrival at the yacht, liaise with the Response or Marine officer and formulate action regarding best search method by the DDD team.
58. Wear boat shoes as standard boots may damage decking.
59. Prior to boarding, the owner/skipper must be made aware that a dog will be present for a search, and provided an opportunity to place mats down on the floor and other areas to prevent any possible damage.
60. DDDs are to wear booties at all times while searching yachts to prevent any damage to the vessel.
61. It may be appropriate to have small vessels vacated by crew during search. The skipper should remain in the search area.

## Warrant activity

62. On all operational matters, take direction from the CCO Investigations or Officer in Charge (OIC). A briefing will be held before any warrant activity, including operational instructions for the DDD team and health and safety.
63. Prior to the deployment of the DDD, the handler will access the search area to ensure no hazards are visible that would physically harm the dog, for example other dogs on the property, sharp broken objects, agitated offenders.

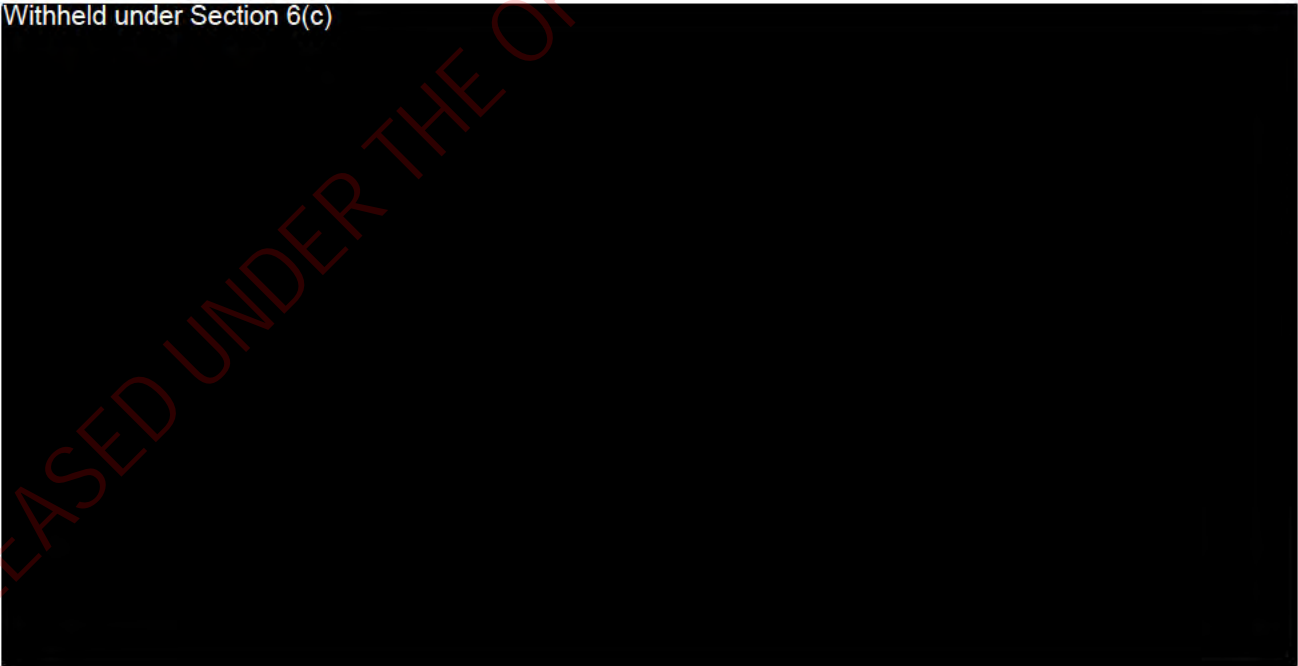
64. When a DDD makes an indication, advise the appropriate officer, for example CCO Investigations, OIC or exhibit officer.
65. Accept no instruction that will compromise the safety of the dog or persons or adversely affect the future development of the dog.

### Work for other agencies

66. From time to time, Customs are requested to provide DDD teams to support other agencies. This can take the form of an operational or training activity.
67. Each request must be formalised in writing (email or letter) and include details as to what the activity involves.
68. Approval to give assistance is at CCO level or above. In considering such requests the CCO Detector Dog Unit must consider Customs' own operational activities, and whether the request covers activity that our teams are legally able to provide. These could include assistance to Police for a warrant and assistance to Corrections for a prison search. All health and safety issues must be resolved before assistance is given. If doubt exists as to the legality of proposed action, that activity must not be undertaken.
69. Following the event, the handler undertaking the assistance is to complete an Activity Report.

### Drug samples

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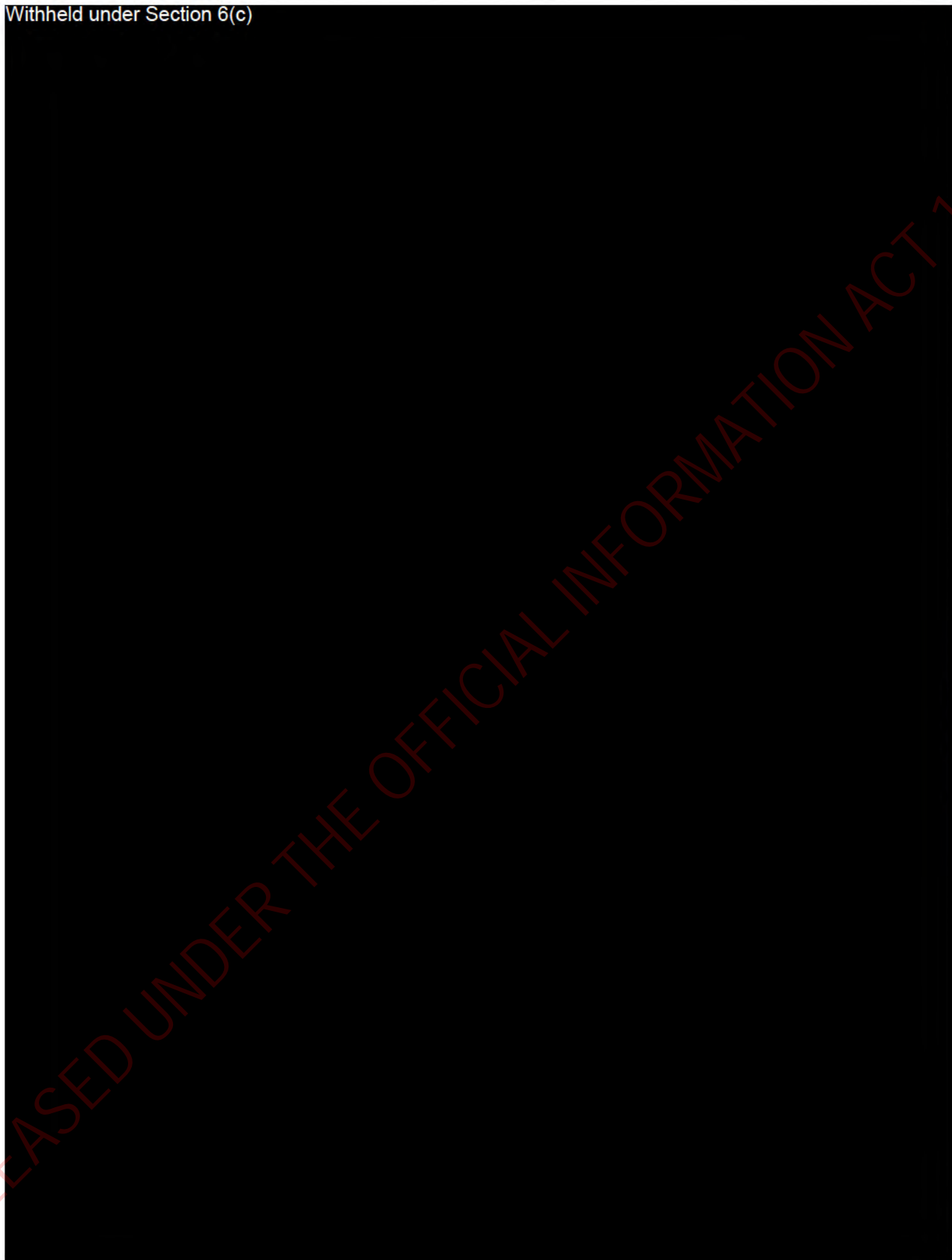




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## Storage of drug samples

### Drug safe

86. The drug safe shall only be used for the storage of drug samples.
87. The drugs shall be stored in a drug safe that provides cool and dry conditions, to prevent any damage to the samples.
88. The drug safe shall be appropriate and be in sound structural condition.
89. The drug safe shall be kept locked so that no person can gain access to the drugs without the appropriate people being present.
90. The drug safe should be located with consideration being given to the particular nature of the contents. The location of the safe should be on a need to know basis only.

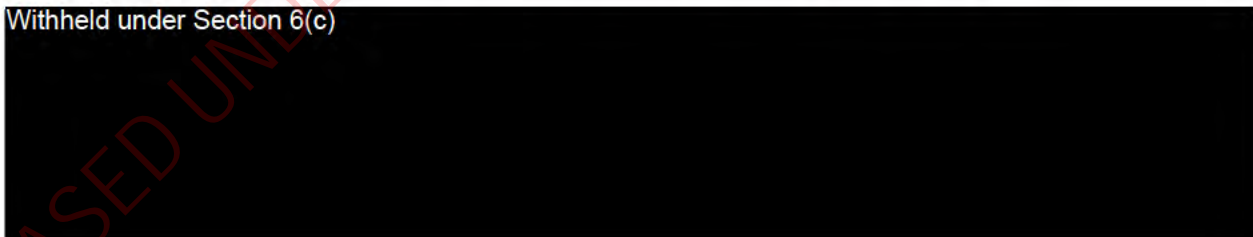
### Storage of contaminants

91. If contaminants are stored with the drug samples they must be kept in such a manner that allows their removal without affecting the sample itself. Contaminants must not be stored in direct contact with the sample.

### Housekeeping

92. The following requirements apply in relation to the cleanliness of the drug safe:
  - the floor of the safe shall be kept free of dirt or grit and packages must have dirt and grit removed prior to being returned to storage
  - the locker shall be kept free of items that could contaminate the drugs
  - rubbish shall be removed from the immediate vicinity of the drug safe.

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## Control of samples during training

94. The use of drug samples in training shall be under the personal control of personnel who are Approved Handlers. The Approved Handler must have personal control of the location where the training is being conducted, in order to:
  - prevent the theft of the drugs
  - maintain public safety.

95. The handler whose dog is undertaking the training exercise must not lay the drug sample. Another Customs officer must be present to conduct this on behalf of the handler. At all times the handler must be in control of the dog while the other person takes control of the security of the sample.

### Using samples

96. All movements of drugs and contaminated items out of and into safes must be recorded in full in the register provided. Where the number of samples is asked for, they must be counted and the number entered – not a term such as “all”.
97. When removing drugs from safes, check by:
- counting and verifying identification of the total samples held for drug type before any are removed
  - counting and verifying identification of the samples being removed
  - drug samples removed for training purposes are to be witnessed by the CCO Detector Dog Unit, or nominated officer to verify that the procedures have been followed correctly.
98. When returning drugs to safes, check by:
- counting and verifying identification of the samples being returned
  - counting and verifying identification of the total samples held for drug type after they are returned
  - drug samples returned after being used for training purposes are to be witnessed by the CCO Detector Dogs, or nominated officer to verify that the procedures have been followed correctly.
99. Place a clean sheet of paper on the bench before preparing the sample and remove after use. Use clean paper each time.
100. Use appropriate tongs or sterile gloves to remove or replace the drug samples in the containers. Samples are not to make contact with hands or any other source of odour that could cross-contaminate them.
101. The handler whose dog is being trained must not lay samples. At all times one person is in control of the dog while another officer takes control of the security of the sample.
102. Wash hands after all contact with samples.



### Serviceability of drugs

103. Drugs are generally chemically stable. However due to several causes such as exposure to heat or moisture, rough handling or age, the drug may chemically degrade effecting its odour and chemical makeup. Regular visual inspections of the drugs must be carried out to ensure the drugs are still in serviceable condition.
104. On occasions the drug samples can loose their odour, or moisture has somehow entered the sample. These samples need to be replaced by new ones. The old defect samples will be destroyed by an approved facility.

### Discrepancies and damages

105. If at any stage it is discovered that a sample is unaccounted for, a verbal report shall be made immediately to a CCO Detector Dog Unit, followed by a written report.
106. If it is discovered that any sample is damaged:
- repair or repackage any damaged sample packet
  - have this process witnessed by the CCO Detector Dog Training or a nominated CCO
  - verify substance weight, new packaging weight and the total weight
  - record the repair in the relevant sample register and witness
  - complete a job sheet.

### Replacement samples

107. The CCO Detector Dog Training and approved source are to:
- ensure all new samples are obtained from a source approved by the manager
  - properly receipt, label, number and weigh samples
  - record details of the new samples in the relevant register and witness.

### Disposal of samples

108. Time-expired, surplus or unserviceable drug samples shall be transferred to an approved facility decided upon by CCO Seized Goods for destruction.

109. The CCO Detector Dog Training is to:

- give the old samples to the CCO Seized Goods for destruction
- record details of the removal of old samples in the relevant register and witness
- complete a job sheet
- properly receipt and weigh samples.

## Returns and reporting

110. A seizure of drugs should not be claimed as a successful detection by the DDD unless that seizure can be attributed substantially to the dog.
111. There are times when a dog indication is not the sole reason that a seizure was made. This also is to be recorded as it is a measure of success for the dog section.
112. Details of assignments undertaken are to be completed in the SSPs and weekly reports. Seizures made at the Mail Centre are also to be recorded in the form of an Activity Report and a Seizure Report.
113. A Drug Interception Report is to be completed and retained under 'Dog Section/Dog Seizure' folder for each individual dog. The CCO Detector Dogs may provide a combined dog seizure report based on the SSP and weekly reports.

## REFERENCES

### Legislation

#### Customs and Excise Act 1996:

- [Section 172\(1\)](#) Use of aids by a Customs officer
- [Section 149A\(2\)](#) Preliminary search of persons by use of aids

#### Misuse of Drugs Act 1975:

- [Section 8\(2\)\(g\)](#) Exemptions for sections 6 (dealing with controlled drugs) and 7 (possession and use of controlled drugs)

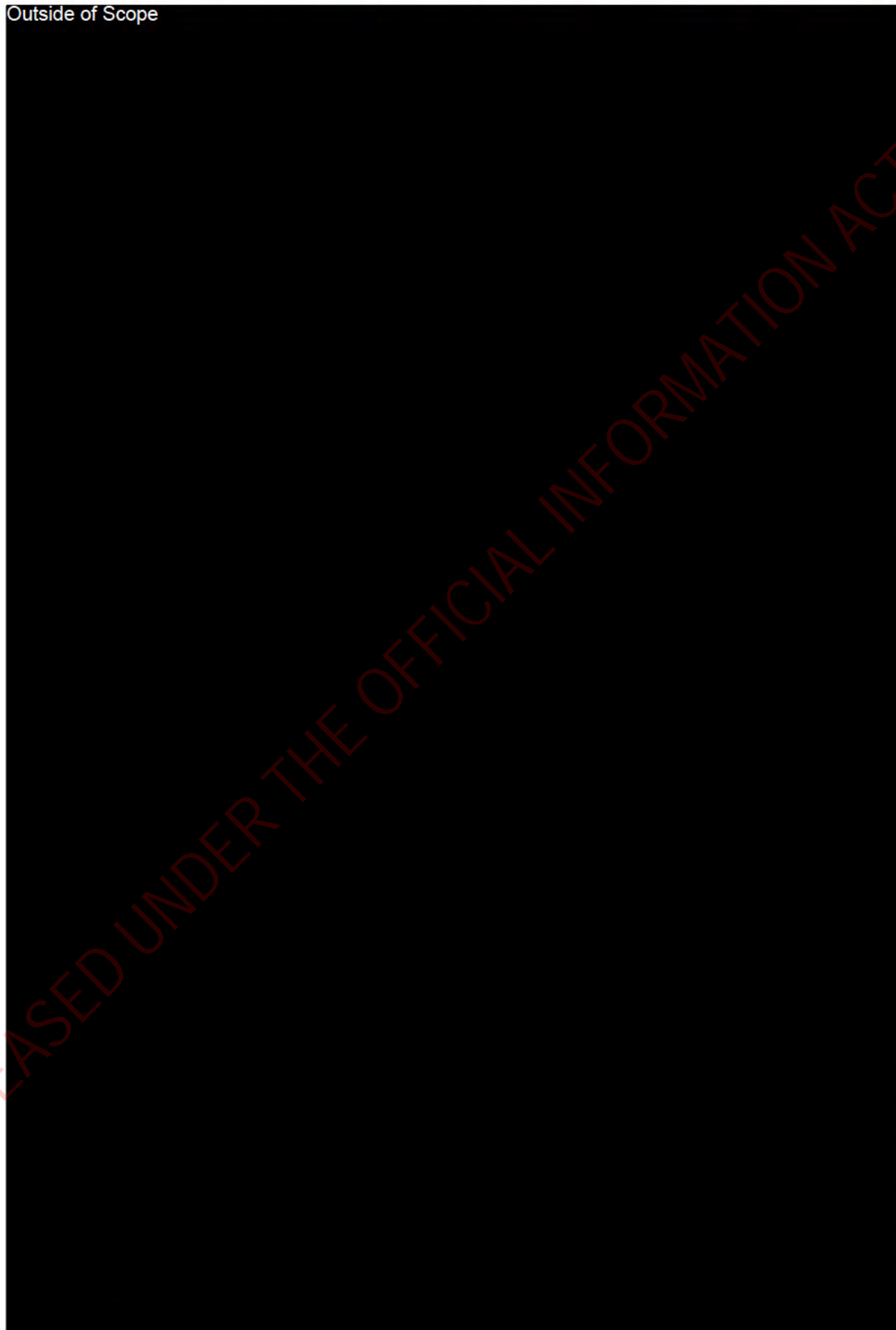
#### Other legislation

- [Dog Control Act 1996](#)



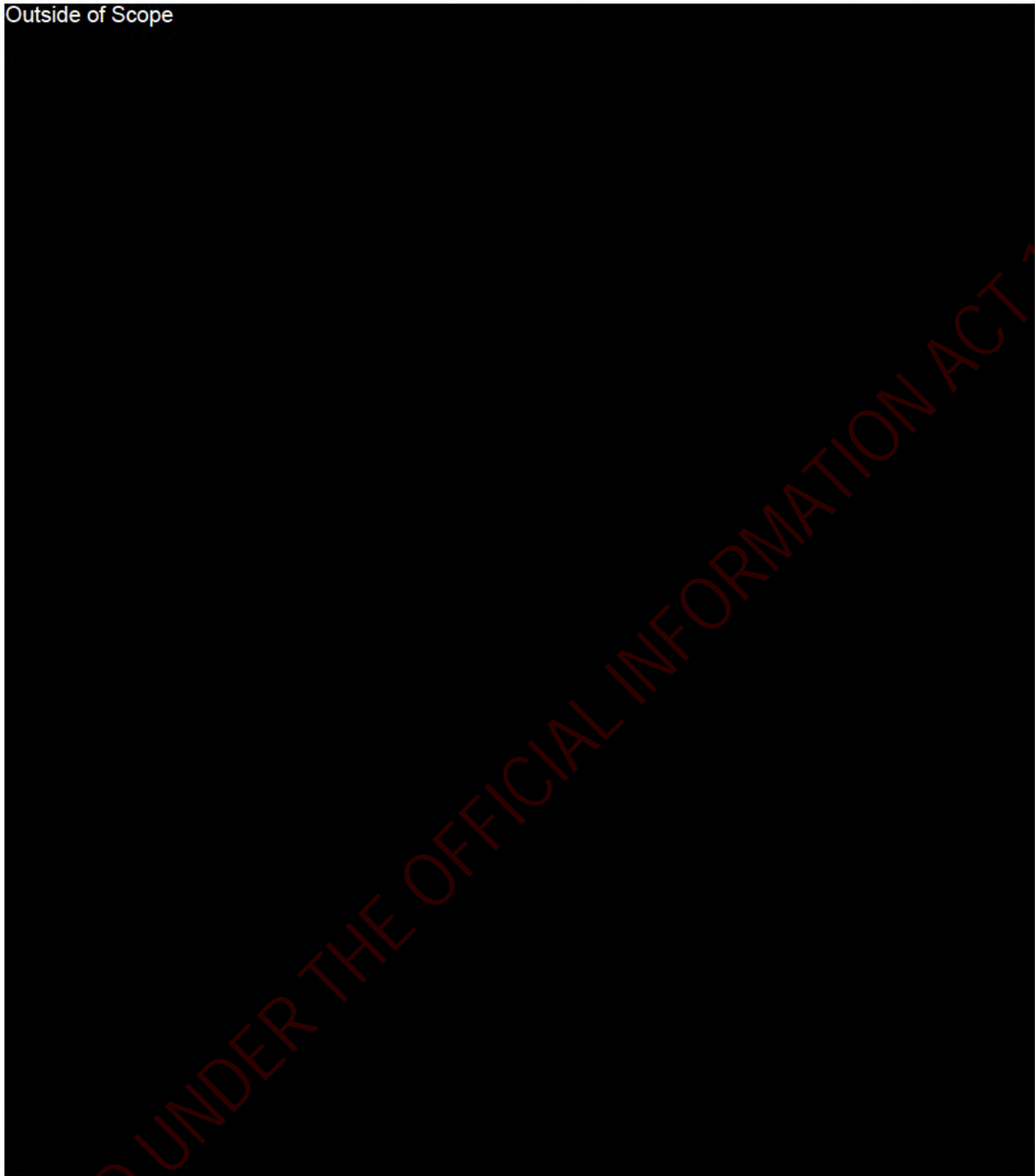
## Other relevant policies, procedures and working information

Outside of Scope



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## Definitions

### Customs officer or officer

A Customs officer or officer is a person appointed by the Chief Executive of Customs as a Customs officer for the purposes of the Customs and Excise Act 1996 (the Act), or any other person employed by the Chief Executive who is declared by the Chief Executive to be a Customs officer for the purposes of the Act, whether at the time of appointment or otherwise.

### Drug safe

For the purpose of these procedures, a drug safe is a designated safe for the storage of drug samples.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

The [National QAPS](#) for this procedure are:

- Detector Dogs – storage and use of drug samples/explosives
- Process Activity Reports
- Officers' Notes

## APPENDIX 1 – POLICY STATEMENTS

### General

1. The Act gives Customs the right to use aids for searching, including dogs, when exercising any power of boarding, entry or search provided in the Act.
2. Customs operates a pool of dogs and dog-handlers, located in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, specifically for detecting secreted illicit substances, principally narcotics.
3. Customs deploys DDDs and their handlers for the detection of drugs. This capability is a key asset for Customs to provide community safety.
4. Customs holds small and large quantities of drug samples for the training of the DDDs. The samples are used to enable the DDD Handlers and their dogs to practice the detection of drugs.

### Dog selection and ownership

5. Dogs shall be selected by the National Trainers and purchased by CCO Detector Dog Training as required. At the time of the detector dog's first registration by Customs, an approved veterinarian must implant an approved identity microchip into the dog, ensuring that the dog is then recorded on the national microchip database.
6. Dogs shall remain the property of the Crown while operational. On completion of operational life (retirement) the Crown may relinquish ownership. Future ownership shall be determined at the discretion of the CCO Detector Dogs and CCO Detector Dog Training, in consultation with the National Trainers. Regard must be given to ensuring the change of ownership does not become a liability to the Crown. Dogs are retired to be domestic pets only and must not subsequently be used for any purpose relating to the role for which they were trained. Retired dogs are not to be used for breeding.

### Dog care

#### Housing and equipment

7. A dog handler or detector dog trainer observing any adverse impact on a Customs working dog that may be caused by the retired working dog at the same residential address should report the issue as soon as reasonably practicable to the CCO Detector Dogs and the CCO Detector Dog Training. The CCO Detector Dogs and the CCO Detector Dog Training will then assess the situation and work with the dog handler to resolve any issues. If the issues impacting adversely on the Customs working dog cannot be resolved in any other reasonably practicable way and are believed to be a result of the retired working dog at the same residential address, the CCO Detector Dogs and CCO Detector Dog Training may recommend that the Manager Operations Support ask the dog handler to rehome the retired working dog within a specified time period. If



the dog handler declines to rehome the retired working dog having been asked to do so, the Manager Operations Support may decide to rotate the dog handler to another role and re-assign the current Customs working dog to another dog handler.

8. Kennels will be purchased with the authority of the CCO Detector Dogs.
9. Kennels must be situated at the handler's residence and are to comply with local by-laws. They should be sited to avoid prevailing winds and preferably should be positioned where visitors will not normally pass, or be able to have unauthorised access to them.
10. It is the handler's responsibility to have a fully fenced section for the dog.
11. The CCO Detector Dogs may authorise the reimbursement of costs (at the most reasonable rate) for a concrete slab at the handler's residence for the kennel.
12. Where it is considered appropriate by the CCO Detector Dogs, holding kennels will be provided at the normal place of duty or other suitable location.
13. Other necessary dog equipment should not be made or purchased privately, but should be obtained and purchased locally with the agreement and approval of the CCO Detector Dogs.
14. All housing and other equipment is to be maintained by handlers to a reasonable standard.

### Home care

15. DDDs are working dogs and must be treated this way at all times. They are not to be treated as family pets although family members can assist with the dog's care.
16. Handlers are required to exercise, toilet and feed the dog allocated to them outside of working hours. Allowances for this are covered in the relevant employment contract.

### Feeding

17. The feeding of Customs dogs shall be as directed by the National Trainer in consultation with the relevant veterinary surgeon.
18. Dog food will be supplied by Customs, and should be obtained from a single source in each (dogged) port at the most reasonable contract rates.
19. Handlers should not obtain dog food outside this provision without approval of the CCO Detector Dogs.

### Health

20. Only veterinary surgeons and/or clinics approved by the CCO Detector Dogs are to be consulted. Other than in cases of extreme emergency, handlers should not consult veterinary surgeons or clinics without prior approval.



21. Each time a DDD is examined or treated by a veterinary surgeon, a written report relating to the treatment should be obtained. Reports are to be retained by the CCO Detector Dogs.
22. Where a DDD is found to suffer from an incurable ailment, or is required to undergo repeated treatment for the same ailment, consideration can be given to retiring the dog. This consideration will include input from the National Trainer as well as the relevant veterinary surgeon.
23. All DDDs will be desexed on the recommendation of the CCO Detector Dogs and the National Dog Trainers.
24. Handlers are responsible for the general worming and flea treatment of their DDD. They are also responsible for the dog's general health and physical fitness.

### Vaccinations

25. All DDDs must receive vaccinations required by law. This includes rabies vaccination administered by MPI veterinary surgeons (required for dogs boarding vessels). The National Dog Trainers will advise of any additional requirements.
26. Records of vaccinations are to be kept and each handler is responsible for ensuring vaccinations are kept up to date.

### Registration

27. All Customs dogs must be registered as working dogs as required by the Dog Control Act 1996. Fees payable are set by the local territorial authority (council).

### Retired dogs

28. When DDDs are retired, they may only be used as domestic pets. When dogs are handed over to a new owner, it shall be on condition that the dog will not be used for any other purpose.
29. A dog handler or detector dog trainer observing any adverse impact on a Customs working dog that may be caused by the retired working dog at the same residential address should report the issue as soon as reasonably practicable to the CCO Detector Dogs and the CCO Detector Dog Training. The CCO Detector Dogs and the CCO Detector Dog Training will then assess the situation and work with the dog handler to resolve any issues. If the issues impacting adversely on the Customs working dog cannot be resolved in any other reasonably practicable way and are believed to be a result of the retired working dog at the same residential address, the CCO Detector Dogs and CCO Detector Dog Training may recommend that the Manager Operations Support ask the dog handler to rehome the retired working dog within a specified time period. If the dog handler declines to rehome the retired working dog having been asked to do so, the Manager Operations Support may decide to rotate the dog handler to another role and re-assign the current Customs working dog to another dog handler.



## Dog vans

30. Suitably fitted-out vehicles will be supplied to handlers for the transport of their dogs. Handlers are responsible for the general maintenance and cleaning of their allocated dog van.
31. Vehicle design and fit out must allow safe and hygienic transport for dogs. All dog vehicles should also be alarmed.
32. Vans are a method of transporting the dogs and are not designed as holding kennels. On occasions (such as operational trips away from base) dogs may need to be temporarily kept in the van. The dog's health and safety must be considered.

## Private use of dog vans

33. Private use of Customs' vehicles is not permitted, except where the CCO Detector Dog Unit is satisfied that the welfare and security of the dog may be put at risk if the Customs vehicle is not used.

## Training

### Initial training

34. Training of dogs and handlers is carried out under the direction of the National Detector Dog Training Unit. If any training is undertaken at the Police Dog Training Centre, Police discipline must be observed. Handlers should familiarise themselves with the discipline requirements prior to attending.
35. The CCO Detector Dog Training and the National Dog Trainers will approve structure of courses, depending on the make up of the detector dog teams. Once completed and objectives achieved, they will be considered suitable for operational deployment.

### Ongoing training

36. The CCO Detector Dog Training and the National Dog Trainers will assess ongoing training needs. These will be recorded in training plans and prepared in consultation with the relevant handler and the CCO Detector Dogs. Plans are to be regularly updated. Planning details will form part of the handler's PRD. Non-training issues arising from the plans, such as failure to complete targets, are to be reported to the CCO Detector Dog Unit.
37. Some training may be undertaken with District Police Dog Trainers if available.
38. The CCO Detector Dog Training and the National Dog Trainers will monitor the performance of all Detector Dog teams nationally and provide reports to the CCO Detector Dogs.
39. The O/C RNZPC Dog Training Centre will conduct national trials annually.
40. The CCO Detector Dog Training and the National Dog Trainers will conduct a further formal working trial of each detector dog team at least annually. Trials will not occur within one month of the national trials conducted by the RNZPC Dog Training Centre.
41. If a team does not meet minimum standards set for each trial, their operational status will be considered and they may be subject to further testing. The National Trainers, in consultation with the CCO Detector Dog Training, will determine this.
42. When training with an outside organisation, the guidelines in [Work for other agencies](#) must be followed.



## Dog handlers

### Recruitment

43. In selecting new handlers, the additions to standard appointment procedures are:
- applications should be invited from within Customs
  - the CCO Detector Dog Training is to be a member of all appointment panels
  - short-listed candidates are to undertake an assessment under the direction of the CCO Detector Dog Training, National Dog Trainers, CCO Detector Dogs, to see if the candidate has empathy with dogs and the ability to learn new ideas
  - short-listed candidates are to complete and pass the NZ Police PCT and a swim test as required by all Response Officers prior to being accepted for the practical assessment.

### Fitness requirements

44. All Handlers are to complete and pass the Police PCT and Customs swim tests no later than one (1) day before their due date.
45. It is the responsibility of the CCO Detector Dogs to advise handlers of their upcoming due date no less than one (1) month before.
46. If an Operational Handler fails to meet the required standard support will be provided by the CCO Detector Dogs on a case by case basis to assist the handler to meet the standard.
47. Any Operational handler who does not pass the fitness assessment will be placed on Limited Operational Duties which will restrict certain duties to mitigate any Health and Safety concerns. Within this period the payment of normally applicable flexibility allowances will be reviewed and will be dependant on the ability of the Handler to be deployed in certain Operational areas. Any such review will be undertaken by Investigations and Response Managers and ODHR.
48. Any restriction of duties and or allowances will be removed upon subsequent meeting of the standard.
49. Operational Handlers failing the standard for the first time will be given three months to reach the required standard. If the standard is not achieved during this period, movement or rotation outside of the current work area will ensure within a further three month period.
50. All Handlers must comply with minimum fitness standards in order to complete Officer Safety and Tactics (OST) Level Two and Level Two Refresher



## Education

51. Handlers may be considered for training as Detector Dog Trainers.

## Succession

52. A DDD Handler requires special attributes to be successful, including a strong sense of full-time commitment and empathy with the canine half of the working team.
53. To ensure DDD units perform at their optimum, there needs to be a defined process of selection, ongoing education and retirement from the units.

## Retirement

54. Because such strong full-time commitment is called for, there is a restricted “life span” as a handler. While there is no set restriction on the time in role for a handler, it is normally expected that a Detector Dog Handler would be in the role for a period equivalent to the working life of two detector dogs. Given the period of time in the role is anticipated to be restricted; staff need support and encouragement to up-skill in areas other than dog handling.
55. Officers will be appointed to a Detector Dog Handler position for the working life of their detector dog. Given the dogs are trained when they are around 15 months and retired when they are approximately 8 years old, this means the officer can expect to be in the position for approximately 7 years before an assessment as to the handler’s future in the detector dog unit is undertaken.
56. Where a dog is retired early (for whatever reason), the handler may, with the approval of the CCO Detector Dogs and CCO Detector Dog Training, continue in the position with a replacement dog where a dog is available.
57. If a handler and/or detector dog has medical or other issues, their suitability to continue in their position will be assessed on a case by case basis by the CCO Detector Dogs and CCO Detector Dog Training.
58. At a reasonable time before a dog is due for retirement, an assessment as to the handler’s future in the detector dog unit is to be undertaken by a panel consisting of the CCO Detector Dogs, CCO Detector Training and a HR advisor. This can normally be expected to happen when the detector dog is close to 8 years old, although the timing will give due consideration to the future succession and training requirements on the service.
59. The assessment will include consideration of:
  - future prospects for the handler:
    - have they already reached their highest level of performance?
    - if so, is that level acceptable in the long term?
    - does the handler have the desired motivation?



- career development issues – it may be in the handler’s best interests to take on a new position to ensure they continue developing
  - any issues identified through the PRD process and feedback received
  - requirements of the Service with respect to future succession and training – how many detector dogs are due for retirement in the coming period, does this require any changes to the scheduled retirement dates
  - the operational requirements of the Service to continually improve effectiveness through the ongoing development of staff and ensuring operational staff have a well rounded knowledge across the breadth of our business
  - management considerations – is the position still required or is it better placed elsewhere?
60. The assessment panel will make recommendations to the Manager Response, who will be the decision point with respect to the handler’s future in the detector dog unit.
61. Any handler that disagrees with the assessment panel decisions has the right to request in writing that the decision be reviewed. This review will be undertaken by a Group Manager (or equivalent).

## Controlled drugs

### For training purposes

62. To ensure the efficacy of Customs’ dogs, it is necessary to conduct training with actual drugs. This creates an issue for Customs because:
- they are controlled drugs of classes A, B and C as defined in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975
  - integrity issues are raised that require proper management procedures and controls
  - there are health and safety issues for handlers and dogs
  - drugs will not be effective for training purposes if they are contaminated.
63. Personnel employed by Customs as DDD Handlers or employed at a location where drugs are permanently stored must complete training appropriate to their role.
64. DDD Handlers and other personnel who are required to physically handle, use or transport drugs must be trained to satisfy the policy of the Detector Dog Section.
65. A written record of the training curriculum and the dates and results of each handlers training must be maintained.



### Procuring and destroying samples

66. All drug samples for training purposes are to be obtained from a legitimate source approved by the Manager Response (usually the Police or Investigations). All samples should be collected, and receipted, by a CCO and witness.
67. A register is to be maintained of all samples obtained and this should clearly record, as a minimum, the date, time, quantity and type/s of samples. Drug samples procured should be noted in the register by the supplying agency and the witness (names and signatures).
68. Where, for the sake of necessity, samples are required to be held at more than one place in a port, a separate register should be maintained for each place.
69. A legitimate authority (approved by the manager) shall destroy all drug samples used for training that have exceeded their useful life. Given that each region may use different procedures or destroying authorities, the following principles should be applied.
  - drugs referred for destruction should be delivered to the destroying authority by the CCO, a witness and CCO Seized Goods
  - the date and time, and quantity and type(s) of drugs forwarded for destruction shall be noted in the register
  - these shall be witnessed by the CCO, the witness, CCO Seized Goods and the receiving authority's representative (names and signatures).
70. In regions where the destruction occurs at the time of referral, the fact that the drugs were destroyed should also be noted.

### Replacement of samples

71. Drug samples used for training purposes should be replaced annually or when their effectiveness is impaired or at six-monthly intervals, whichever is the earlier.

### Security, storage and allocation of drug samples

72. Samples for training purposes are obtained from a source approved by the Manager Response.
73. Old samples are handed over to the CCO Seized Goods for destruction.
74. Each drug type is stored in separate sealed jars. Depending upon the risk of cross contamination, these jars are held in the same or separate safes.
75. If items that are being contaminated with drug odour are stored with drugs, they must be kept in such a manner that allows their removal without affecting the sample itself.
76. The CCO Detector Dogs, CCO Detector Dog Training, National Dog Trainers and Handlers are the only people permitted to manage and replace samples or contaminates. Each time a safe is opened by a dog handler, a CCO, National Trainer or



nominated person must witness this. Drug samples are to be removed only for training. Sterile gloves and tongs are to be provided for handling the samples.

77. Samples are not to be stored other than in the safes provided. Once the training exercise has been completed, they must be returned to the safe. No drugs are to be stored in dog vans or other unauthorised places.
78. Safe combinations are to be changed and checked by the CCO Detector Dogs annually and each time there is any movement of staff out of the Dog Unit.
79. Samples may not be placed in “live” consignments such as mail during training. If persons are used to carry drugs in training exercises, they must be either Customs or Police personnel. If civilians are used, only contaminants (odour only) material can be placed on them.
80. The persons designated as having approval to manage the movement in and out of drug samples or contaminant must be fully aware of these procedures and [GM POL 20 Drug Dog Policy](#).

81. Withheld under Section 6(c)

82.

### Disposal of samples

83. Time-expired, surplus or unserviceable drug samples shall be transferred to an approved facility decided upon by the CCO Seized Goods for destruction.
84. Prior to being transferred to the approved destruction facility, the drug samples shall be weighed and properly receipted. Details of the transfer must then be recorded in the Drug Samples register and witnessed.