DAVIS POLICE DEPARTMENT
Handling Drugs
Policy and Procedure 4.08-C

I. STATEMENT OF ISSUE

The handling of drugs and those who are under the influence requires careful consideration and planning by officers. The following information is provided as a brief overview of commonly encountered drugs and their observable effects. Drug identification and especially drug influence recognition is primarily obtained through repeated exposure to drugs and those who use them.

II. DRUG CLASSIFICATIONS

A drug may be described as any substance used in the composition or preparation of medicine, but also is often an illegal substance that causes addiction, habituation, or a marked changed in consciousness. Of the many thousands of drugs available, relatively few will produce an appreciable effect on the central nervous system. The central nervous system consists of the brain, brain stem, and spinal chord and is responsible for control of all the body's systems. The drugs that effect the central nervous system are the drugs of choice for abusers, as these drugs can, at least initially, provide what the user perceives as a highly pleasurable effect.

The drugs that effect the central nervous system generally fall into one of the following categories:

1. Stimulants
2. Hallucinogens
3. Opiates
4. Marijuana
5. Alcohol
6. Depressants
7. Inhalants
8. PCP

Drugs effect the central nervous system by minimizing and or blocking the body’s own neurochemical/peurohormone.

III. STIMULANTS

A. Central nervous system (CNS) stimulants are among the most commonly abused drugs. CNS stimulants include:

1. Cocaine
COCAINE is medically used as an anesthetic in eye surgery. It is rarely encountered by the patrol officer in this form. Cocaine is most commonly encountered in its illicitly manufactured forms of cocaine powder or cocaine base. Cocaine powder is usually white in appearance and can be ingested by inhaling the powder through the nose or mixing the powder with water and injecting it. To smoke cocaine it must be converted to a base. The conversion process is simple enough that most anyone can do it. Cocaine base commonly referred to as “rock,” “crack,” or “freebase,” appears as a white or off white rock and is smoked.

2. Amphetamine

AMPHETAMINE is medically used for diet control and weight loss. It is obtained by prescription in a pill or tablet form from a doctor and primarily taken orally. Because of the availability of methamphetamine, illicitly manufactured amphetamine is rarely encountered anymore.

3. Methamphetamine

METHAMPHETAMINE is most commonly encountered in its illicitly manufactured form which can appear as a white, tan, or brown powder, or as a rock very similar in appearance to rock cocaine. Methamphetamine can be taken orally, but is most commonly ingested by inhaling through the nose, injection or smoking.

NOTE: In many cases, it is difficult to distinguish amphetamine from methamphetamine from cocaine without a lab analysis.

Symptoms of stimulant use may include:

- Pupil constriction (chronic heavy-habitudal users)
- Hyperactive
- Body tremors
- Pupil dilation
- Euphoria
- Emaciated body
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations
- Violence
- Burnt fingers

Officers dealing with individuals under the influence of CNS stimulants or individuals who are known to use drugs should use extreme caution. These individuals may exhibit symptoms very similar to those associated with PCP (including not feeling pain), are prone to violence and will frequently harm themselves because of their extreme paranoia.

IV. HALLUCINOGENS

A. Hallucinogens are those drugs that cause a perception of something that does not exist outside the human mind. Hallucinogens have no medical use and include:

1. LSD

LSD is the most commonly encountered and strongest hallucinogen. It is colorless, odorless, tasteless liquid that is placed on or in items that are ingested orally. It can be
placed on or in almost anything and is undetectable except by laboratory analysis. The most common items it is found on are sugar cubes, small decorative stickers, postage stamps, and in Visine bottles.

2. MDMA (Ecstasy)

MDMA, commonly referred to as Ecstasy, is one of a number of designer drugs that are chemically very similar to amphetamine and methamphetamine. These drugs may be found in powder form or capsules, but are most commonly found in tablets. Tablets and capsules are typically swallowed. The powder form is usually ingested orally by dissolving in a liquid, such as fruit punch, soda pop or coffee.

3. Psilocybin mushrooms

Psilocybin mushrooms are a specific species of small mushrooms. The spores can be obtained through the mail and are grown at home. The cap of the mushroom is from 1/2" to 2" wide and dark gold in the center of the cap to light gold on the outer portion of the cap, or vice versa. Just below the cap on the stem there may be a black ring. Psilocybin mushrooms are ingested orally whole in or in part, or may be brewed in a soup or tea.

4. Peyote (mescaline)

Peyote is a small spineless cactus that grows wild in the southwest United States. The cactus consists of numerous small “buttons” which are picked and dried, then ingested orally. The hallucinogenic compound in peyote is mescaline.

Symptoms of hallucinogen use may include:

- Hyperactive
- Passive
- Body tremors
- Hallucinations
- Paranoia
- Pupil dilation

Officers dealing with individuals under the influence of hallucinogens or individuals who are known to use these drugs should use extreme caution. These individuals may exhibit symptoms very similar to those associated with PCP except they will feel pain. The sensory perceptions of these individuals are extremely sensitive and anything that affects their senses may cause them to become violent.

CAUTION should be used in handling any drug in liquid form especially LSD. Drugs in liquid form can easily be absorbed through the skin.

V. OPIATES

A. Opiates are those drugs that are obtained from, or are made to simulate those drugs obtained from, the opium poppy. Medically, all of the opiates are used for pain relief, diarrhea control and as cough suppressants. They are found in pill form, capsule form, or as injectable syrup. Opiates include:

1. Codeine
2. Percodan
3. Diluadid
4. Hycodan
5. Darvon
6. Methadone
7. Vicodin
8. Morphine
9. Demoral
10. Heroin

B. The most commonly abused opiate is heroin. Unlike the other opiates, heroin has no medical use. Heroin is illicitly manufactured in several different forms, all of which have an odor similar to vinegar. The most common form found is “tar” heroin. Tar heroin is black in color and gains its name from its similarity in appearance to roofing tar. Brown heroin is a brown powder, which is very rare on the west coast. Heroin is commonly packaged in small balloons or clear cellophane. All forms of heroin can be injected or smoked.

Signs of opiate influence may include:

· Sleepy appearance
· Slurred speech
· Slow speech
· Droopy eyelids
· Pain relief
· Cold skin
· Pupil constriction
· Injection marks

VI. MARIJUANA (CANNABIS)

A. Cannabis is any drug that is derived from the various species of the marijuana plant. These drugs include:

1. Marijuana (The active ingredient is THC or Tetra Hydra Cannabinol)

   Marijuana is one of the most common drugs you will encounter. As most people have already seen marijuana, no further description is necessary.

2. Hashish

   Hashish is basically a compressed version of marijuana and has no medical use. It appears brown to black in color and looks just like what it is, compressed dried leafy material. Hashish is commonly packaged in foil.

3. Hash Oil

   Hash oil is a highly concentrated form of marijuana obtained by removing the active ingredient of marijuana (THC) from the marijuana leaf and concentrating it. Hash oil
is black in color, a thick gummy substance and commonly packaged in dark amber vials.

4. Marinol

Marinol is a synthetically produced THC in liquid form that is used in the treatment of glaucoma.

Symptoms of cannabis influence may include:

- Watery eyes
- Green tongue
- Droopy eyelids
- Bloodshot eyes
- Marijuana odor
- Dilated pupils
- Poor depth perception

VII. **ALCOHOL**

By far the most commonly encountered drug is alcohol. Since most people have experienced it, no further time will be devoted to it.

VIII. **DEPRESSANTS**

Central nervous system (CNS) depressants are some of the most commonly prescribed drugs. They are medically used to treat seizures, epilepsy, and depression and to provide sedation or calming effects. There are more than 250 types of depressants on the market. Many can be identified by use of a Physician's Desk Reference. They are available in tablet or capsule and are usually taken orally but may be injected.

If a person takes a prescribed dose, it is not uncommon that there will be no observable effects. Observable symptoms are usually observed with the stronger depressants, unprescribed doses, or when the depressants are taken together with other depressants or any other drug, particularly alcohol. Symptoms of depressant influence are very similar to the effects of alcohol and may include:

- Slurred speech
- Droopy eyelids
- Sleepy
- Poor coordination
- Disoriented
- Bloodshot eyes

Several depressants can produce effects similar to those by CNS stimulants and hallucinogens.

IX. **INHALANTS**

A. Inhalants include a wide variety of chemicals that can be easily purchased from stores, these include:

1. Volatile solvents
Volatile solvents include paints, thinners, lacquers, fingernail polish remover and airplane glue. These substances are commonly inhaled using a rag treated with the substance and placed against the mouth and nose.

2. Aerosols

Aerosols are chemicals discharged from a pressurized container by the propellant force of a compressed gas. Intoxicating effects are most often caused by the compressed gas and not the primary contents of the container. Aerosols include hair spray, insecticides, deodorants, frying pan lubricants, and camera lens cleaners. These substances are inhaled by discharging the contents into the lungs or by filling a balloon with the aerosol and then inhaling the content of the balloon. Many of these aerosols contain nitrous oxide.

3. Anesthetic gases

Anesthetic gases are drugs in gas form. These include chloroform, amyl nitrate, butyl nitrate, and nitrous oxide. The anesthetic gases are ingested in the same manner as the aerosols. Only nitrous oxide is controlled.

Symptoms of inhalant influence may include:

- Chemical odor
- Chemical debris
- Dizziness
- Watery eyes
- Nasal secretions
- Disoriented
- Confusion
- Slurred speech
- Sleepy

X. PCP

PCP (phencyclidine) is in a class by itself as the effects it produces are unlike any of the other drug categories. PCP has no medical use. It can be found in crystalline form that emits no odor, but more commonly it is in a liquid form that is yellow in color and emits a strong chemical odor. Marijuana or cigarettes that are used have a dark paper wrapper to assist in hiding the discoloration from being dipped in the liquid.

In the past, PCP users have been known to exhibit extremely violent behavior. Many of the users have learned to limit their dosage by smoking only a part of a cigarette vs. the entire cigarette. As a result the number of violent encounters with these individuals has decreased dramatically. The PCP user today commonly appears to be under the influence of alcohol, but with an odor of PCP.

Symptoms of PCP influence may include:

- Blank stare
- Chemical odor
- Sweating
- Slow/slurred speech
- Droopy eyelids
- Retracted eyelids
· Disoriented
· Slow reactions

Officers dealing with individuals under the influence of PCP or individual who are known to use these drugs should use extreme caution. These individuals have a reduced sensitivity to pain. The sensory perceptions of these individuals are extremely sensitive to anything that affects their senses and may cause them to become violent. Anyone suspected of using PCP who is in a catatonic state (high dose) will very likely become violent at some point and should be restrained using multiple handcuffs/flex cuffs.

Caution should be used in handling any drug in liquid form, especially liquid PCP. Drugs in liquid form can easily be absorbed into the skin.

XI. Drug Combinations

A majority of drug users will frequently use more than one drug at a time producing a variety of observable symptoms. These may include any and all of the above signs and symptoms depending on the type of drugs and quantity ingested.

XII. Safety Considerations

A. Individuals who abuse drugs typically are not in the best health. They carry and transmit a variety of infectious diseases. These diseases include HIV and hepatitis. Care should be exercised in touching these people and anything they come in contact with particularly hypodermic syringes. When dealing with a drug user, wearing gloves is highly recommended. When searching their person, vehicle and/or residence use extreme caution. The injury that could be received from a single needle is not worth the misdemeanor charge for possession of a hypodermic syringe. If you should receive an injury from a needle or come in physical contact with blood from an intravenous drug user, IMMEDIATELY notify a supervisor and seek medical treatment.

B. It is highly recommended that after handling these individuals you thoroughly wash your hands. You might also consider obtaining the hepatitis B vaccination series that is available at City expense.

C. Caution should be used in handling drugs that are in a liquid form (i.e. PCP or LSD) or the items that contain them. These drugs can be absorbed through the skin. It is suggested that you carry several plastic Baggies with your gear and avoid physically touching these drugs/containers.

D. If you or another officer should become dosed with either PCP or LSD, get help IMMEDIATELY. Notify other officers present of what has occurred and contact a supervisor. Get medical attention as soon as possible. Medical personnel have drugs that can counteract the effects of PCP and LSD. Try to handle the situation as low keyed and as calmly as possible. Explain to the dosed officer that you will have to take their weapons and do so. Keep a fellow officer with the dosed officer at all times, as a familiar face will help comfort the officer. Remove officer from outside stimuli (i.e. lights bars, yelling, radio traffic, etc.). Stimuli such as this can cause a violent reaction.

E. Individuals under the influence of certain drugs may have high propensity towards violence and a decreased or non-existent sensitivity to pain. Use of cocaine, methamphetamine, hallucinogens, certain inhalants, and PCP all produce paranoia. In
higher doses, each of these drugs can produce violence we previously thought was possible only with PCP.

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7/00

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2/04 Minor changes made to some “trend” information
   Section XII, F deleted
05/19 drug laws updated