



GPD upgrades to trauma kits

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JASON HENRY/Special to The Sun

Gainesville Police Department Sgt. Dan Stout displays the department's new trauma first-aid kit that he helped develop. The improved kit will enable officers to better respond to emergencies on the scene and includes a military-grade pressure bandage, Celox, which is a blood clotting agent, a tourniquet for major bleeding and a chest seal.

The Gainesville Police Department replaced all first-aid kits in its patrol cars recently with more extensive trauma kits, which allow all GPD officers to have basic lifesaving skills in an emergency.

"We always had the standard first-aid kits with Band Aids and all that stuff," said Sgt. Dan Stout, a former paramedic. "But we needed something in our cars that would really help us if we needed it."

Stout led the way in introducing the new trauma kits to GPD after being asked last fall by his chief to look at better preparing officers to handle the potential injuries they and the general public face because of better and more powerfully armed criminals.

"We were in need of better tools, training and equipment to take officers through the end of the fight," Stout said.

Not long after Stout proposed his idea for the more extensive safety kits, GPD received approval and began training officers to use the more complicated materials in the trauma kits, he said.

The new kits, which are mounted between the front and back seats in patrol cars, contain a military-grade pressure bandage that controls the bleeding from gunshot and stab wounds. The bandage is used by combat troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The trauma kits also contain a hemostatic agent, Celox, which is a super absorbent substance that aids in clotting. Celox is used mainly for more serious conditions like arterial bleeding.

Both the pressure bandage and the Celox have been used by GPD, once at a bank robbery in May and just last Thursday in the case of the man who was shot and attacked by someone with a machete.

Sgt. Greg Armagost was present at both incidents, and he utilized the materials on both occasions.

In the case of the man struck with the machete, Armagost said the victim sustained significant wounds all over his body, leading to high levels of blood loss.

"I had to use two bags of Celox," he said. "But it stopped the bleeding in a short period of time, at least until the paramedics got there."

The new kits also contain a tourniquet, a device used to control circulation to an appendage for a period of time, and it can be self-applied by officers themselves or can be used on someone else. The tourniquet has not been used yet by GPD, as it is only used for very serious bleeding.

Another item new to the GPD's new trauma kits is the Ascherman chest seal, which also has yet to be used by officers. The chest seal is a one-way flutter valve that is applied when there is a puncture wound to the chest, where there is not just a bleeding issue but also a breathing issue.

Armagost said the kits are important because the police are the first to arrive on the scene when a dangerous crime has occurred, and before paramedics can enter the scene must be secure and stabilized.

"Just having those things available to us, it gives us peace of mind knowing we can take care of a situation where we couldn't before without the trauma kits," Armagost said.

The Alachua County Sheriff's Office is looking into putting in place a similar set of kits in its patrol cars, but no official steps have been taken, Stout said.

Stout said he hopes the trauma kits will save more lives.

"From the time the event happens to when the EMT gets there, it could be six to eight minutes, which is an eternity when you're losing blood," he said. "I always tell my guys, 'You have the rest of this person's life to get this thing done, so do it, do it fast and do it well.'"