

## 45.O CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Policy: The Washington County Sheriff's Office is committed to serving the community through proactive programming and public empowerment, with the goal of reducing criminal opportunity throughout Washington County.

### 45.1.1 Crime Prevention

- A. Targeting programs by crime type and geographic area on the basis of crime data.
  - 1. Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch programs
  - 2. Property security assessments to prevent repeat victimization
  - 3. Community crime prevention presentations addressing area specific crime issues.
- B. Targeting programs to address community perceptions or misperceptions of crime.
  - 1. Triad Program, addressing senior citizen crime concerns
  - 2. Community meetings to provide accurate statistics of crime activity within a specific area of Washington County.
- C. The Crime Prevention Unit shall conduct a documented evaluation of crime prevention programs, at least once every three years; this evaluation shall be submitted to the Sheriff for his review.
  - 1. Assessment of event records and calls for service, as recorded in the agency's C.A.D. system, in locations where prevention efforts have been concentrated.

45.1.2 This agency assists in organizing crime prevention groups in residential and business areas targeted for such activity in standard 45.1.1 and maintains liaison with these and other interested community groups.

- A. The Washington County Sheriff's Office takes an active part in the operation of community crime prevention.
  - 1. Deputies attend Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch meetings.
  - 2. A crime prevention deputy is designated to serve as a Law Enforcement Advisor to the Triad S.A.L.T. (**Seniors and Law Enforcement Together**) Council and attend monthly meetings of that senior citizen group.

45.1.3 The agency provides crime prevention input into development and/or revision of zoning policies, building codes, fire codes, and residential/commercial building permits.

A. The Washington County Sheriff's Office provides physical security assessments of residential and commercial properties.

1. Home security surveys
2. Commercial security survey and loss prevention assessment
3. School and institution security assessments
4. Security assessment of building plans using CEPTED

## 45.2 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

45.2.1 The community involvement function provides the following, at a minimum:

A. Establishing liaison with existing community organizations or establishing community groups where they are needed.

1. Neighborhood Watch Groups in crime effected areas.

B. Assisting in the development of community involvement policies for the agency.

1. Crime prevention unit shall play a role in the policy development dealing with crime prevention and involvement of the community in crime prevention.

C. Publicizing agency objectives, community problems, and successes.

1. Community presentations to service organizations and other interested community groups.
2. The use of local television media to produce and air public service announcements regarding crime trends and prevention techniques.
3. The use of media coverage to publicize the agency's community events and programs.

D. Conveying information transmitted from citizens' organizations to the agency.

1. Gathering information and concerns from community groups through organized community meetings and referring this information to the agency for appropriate action as needed.

E. Improving agency practices bearing on positive police community interaction and community outreach efforts.

1. Sheriff's Citizen's Law Enforcement Awareness Program
2. TRIAD, focusing on issues unique to the senior population.
3. Participation in Children's Village life skills program for second grade students.
4. Agency participation in delivering CERT (**Citizen's Emergency Response Training**) to local business and community service organizations.
5. Active and ongoing partnership with local emergency management and the local fire and rescue companies with the MVERS (**Maryland Virtual Emergency Response System**).
6. The **Sheriff's Prescription Drug Turn-In Program** serves a need within the community by collecting medications that are no longer needed for patient treatment and are unwanted and are considered trash. Collected drugs may include those left over from a previous prescription, unused over the counter medications or outdated medications, which no longer effectively treat the symptoms they were intended for.

If left in the home, these drugs may fall into the hands of young children, be taken by mistake or potentially stolen and abused. If medications are disposed of by being placed in the trash or flushed down a toilet, they will come in contact with our water supply, and will contaminate the county's ground water.

Drug collection is conducted by uniformed deputies using receptacles, which are physically secured with locks and lids. Collected drugs are then destroyed by the use of a commercially inspected blast furnace to ensure total destruction of all materials.

This agency conducts drug collection events at various times and locations throughout Washington County and will accept medications from the public at the Patrol Division 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

7. Developing problem oriented or community policing strategies.
- Provide citizens with training in detailed reporting of suspicious or criminal activity, with emphasis on reoccurring patterns of frequency and time of day, to facilitate enforcement activity with a higher likelihood of problem resolution or apprehension of suspect(s).

45.2.2 At least quarterly, the Crime Prevention Unit shall prepare and submit to the Sheriff a report that includes the following elements.

- A. A description of current concerns voiced by the community.
  - B. A description of potential problems that have a bearing on law enforcement activities within the community.
  - C. A statement of recommended actions that address previously identified concerns and problems.
  - D. A statement of progress made toward addressing previously identified concerns and problems.
- 45.2.3 All department personnel are responsible for crime prevention and when relevant crime prevention information comes to their attention, they shall forward this information to the Crime Prevention Unit for inclusion in the quarterly report. This information may be transmitted by email, by voice mail, by written report or by personal contact.
- 45.2.4 The Crime Prevention Unit shall conduct and document a survey of citizen attitudes and opinions at least once every three years with respect to:
- A. Overall agency performance.
  - B. Overall competence of agency employees.
  - C. Citizen's perception of officers' attitudes and behavior.
- 45.2.5 The Crime Prevention Unit shall compile the results of the survey, and prove them to the Sheriff, with a written summary at least every three years.
- 45.3 Ride-Along Program

To describe the Department's Ride-Along Program and the guidelines both officers and citizens must adhere to while participating in the program.

#### 45.3.1 POLICY

It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to promote trust and improve communication between the police and community by educating the public about its duties and responsibilities by use of the ride-along program. Members will participate in the program with the intent to foster positive relationships and to fulfill the mission of the agency.

#### 45.3.2 DEFINITIONS

- A. Civilian – A person who is not a Maryland certified police officer.
- B. Categories of Participants
  - 1. Approved members of the general public

2. Family members of departmental employees (Note – “significant others” are not family members)
3. Agency Chaplains
4. High School/College Interns
5. Citizen Police Academy participants
6. Visiting law enforcement personnel
7. Non-sworn members of the Department
8. Applicants

#### 45.3.3 ADMINISTRATION AND SCHEDULING

- A. The Assistant Division Commander shall be responsible for the administration of the Ride-Along Program with the exception of the High School/College Intern program. The Community Relations supervisor will administer that program as stated in this order.
- B. All members of the general public must follow the below mentioned guidelines prior to participating in the program.
- C. The participant may contact any division supervisor to receive an application, waiver of liability, and ride-along guidelines. Upon completion of the application and waiver forms, they will be forwarded to the Assistant Division Commander for review. The ride-along participant keeps and abides by the guidelines.
  1. If the participant is a juvenile, he/she must have concurrence and a signature of a parent and/or legal guardian.
  2. The waiver is valid only on the date(s) and time(s) listed on the waiver.
  3. The waiver is valid only if approved, in writing, by the Assistant Division Commander (or higher authority).
- D. The Assistant Division Commander will cause a check to be made of the applicant’s criminal history via NCIC/CJIS and a check for any wants/warrants.
- E. Anyone having a criminal case pending against them alleging the violation of any law or ordinance, arrested by members of this agency, or who has been convicted of any felony will not be allowed to participate. Applicants who have been arrested for any offense and charged by a member of this department will not be permitted to participate. Persons who may present a liability or hindrance to the operations of the agency may be denied the opportunity to participate.

- F. Participants will not be assigned to an FTO if he/she is actively training a student officer and will not be assigned to a two-man vehicle.
- G. Supervisors have the authority to disapprove anyone based upon just cause that will be documented in memo form and forwarded, via chain of command, to the Assistant Division Commander.
- H. If approved, a specific “tour of duty” will be scheduled at least seven (7) days in advance.
- I. The Assistant Division Commander will maintain all ride-along related forms for three years past the last ride-along date.
- J. A person may not participate in the ride along program more than two times per calendar year and not more than four hours per ride unless approved by the Assistant Division commander or higher authority.
  - 1. This does not apply to the Student Intern Program.

#### 45.3.4 GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS

The following guidelines have been established in an effort to assure complete understanding as to the purpose, respective role, dangers involved, and personal responsibilities of each ride-along participant. The safety of the participant is of the utmost importance.

- A. Proper “casual” attire is required. All clothing will be clean, in good repair, and worn as designed. No shorts, athletic clothing or suggestive or inappropriate clothing as deemed by the on duty supervisor.
- B. Participants will not appear for their ride-along, nor be on a ride-along, while intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol, nor with the odor of alcoholic beverages on their breath or about their person. They will not report while under the influence of any medication or other substance that would affect their ability to properly conduct themselves.
- C. Possession of any weapon is strictly prohibited even if the participant possesses a concealed weapons permit. At no time will the participant indicate; give the appearance of; or act as though they possess a weapon.
  - 1. Maryland certified law enforcement officers may carry one firearm on their person during the ride-along and must carry their agency identification with them at all times.
- D. A participant is not expected to be, and will not conduct himself as, having any affiliation with the Department.
- E. A participant does not have, nor will he attempt to exercise, any police authority or arrest power.

1. Maryland certified police officers who are out of their jurisdictional boundaries may not exercise police power or authority except in cases of emergency.
- F. A participant will not conduct himself in any manner that could cause personal danger to him, to the participating officer, or to members of the community.
- G. A participant will not be expected, or called upon, to render first aid or medical assistance.
- H. If injured during a ride-along, the participant will report the injury to his host officer immediately, who will document it in an administrative report that will be submitted, via chain of command, to the Sheriff. The Sheriff's Office will not be responsible for any injuries to participants as noted in the ride-along waiver. Participants will be responsible for their own treatment.
- I. A participant may be called upon to testify in a court of law due to their presence at any alleged law or ordinance violation; however, this will be avoided whenever possible.
- J. Participants will avoid conversation with any prisoners, suspects, witnesses, or others contacted on police business unless permission has been granted by the host officer.
- K. Ride-along participants must use seat belts at all times.
- L. Ride-along participants may not interfere with deputies.
- M. Ride-along participants may not use the police radio except in cases of emergency.
- N. Civilians will remain in the departmental vehicle at all times unless instructed by the Deputy and will not enter any private resident or property at any time
- O. Civilians will carry sufficient funds or other means to make phone calls in the event the deputy has to leave the civilian at a safe location.
- P. Civilians will ensure there is someone available to pick them up in the event the deputy has to leave the civilian at a safe location.
- Q. Civilians will not participate in any police action unless instructed to do so by the deputy.

#### 45.3.5 GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATING OFFICERS

- A. A deputy selected to participate in the ride-along program will:

1. Ensure the participant abides by all the guidelines set forth in this order;
  2. Advise their supervisor when any circumstances arise which they feel may warrant the removal of the participant from the program. If the participant becomes a hindrance to the officer's performance of duties, he will be returned to the supervisor who will decide whether to terminate their participation. All cases of improper behavior or unusual incidents involving a participant will be documented in memo form and reported via chain of command;
  3. Ensure they do not become engaged in a vehicle pursuit whenever a ride-along is present in the departmental vehicle;
  4. Apprise the participant of various dangers involved as specific situations are encountered;
  5. Not permit their rider to leave the departmental vehicle when there is any apparent danger. Should hazardous circumstances arise and the opportunity to leave the ride-along at a safe location is available, this will be done after notifying Communications of the location of the participant. If the host officer will be busy for an extended period of time, arrangements will be made by the supervisor to have another officer pick up the participant;
  6. Not allow the participant to enter any private dwelling without permission of the property owner even if there is no threat of danger; and,
  7. Will briefly explain the operation of the police radio should an emergency arise and the ride-along participant needs to call for assistance.
- B. In the event the deputy is assigned a high-risk call for service, the deputy will:
1. Return the civilian to the Sheriff's Office prior to responding to the call; or,
  2. Leave the civilian at a safe location prior to responding to the call.
- C. If the civilian is left at a safe location, the duty officer may arrange for another deputy to transport the civilian to the Sheriff's Office.
- D. If it is not practical or safe to leave the civilian at a safe location, the civilian will be instructed to remain in the vehicle.

#### 45.3.6 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Supervisors will:



1. Ensure the waiver is signed and the ride-along is approved, in writing, by the Assistant Division Commander (or higher authority).
2. Ensure both the participant and the officer assigned are familiar with the guidelines prior to being assigned to the field;
3. Notify the appropriate person (Assistant Division Commander or Training Coordinator) whenever a participant fails to appear for a scheduled tour of duty; compromises the integrity of the program; or jeopardizes the safety of anyone;
4. Deny any person the privilege of serving as a ride-along participant whenever such denial is in the best interest of the agency. If a ride-along is denied, the supervisor will document and submit the reasons for rejection from the program to the appropriate person (Assistant Division Commander or Training Coordinator); and,

#### 45.3.7 EXCEPTIONS

- A. Non-sworn Sheriff's Office personnel, family members, Citizen Police Academy participants, Chaplains, and visiting law enforcement personnel are subject to all guidelines specified in the program with the following except, the Criminal history/motor vehicle records checks, etc.

#### 45.3.8 STUDENT OFFICERS/ NEW SWORN HIRES

- A. Student Officers or new sworn hires waiting to go into the academy may participate in the ride-along program once per calendar week if:
  1. there is a deputy available, and
  2. It does not interfere with their academic duties and responsibilities
- B. Student Officers or new sworn hires are not permitted to wear the academy uniform while riding.

#### 45.3.9 SWORN MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT

- A. Sworn members of the Department may ride along with supervisory approval, however they are not to take any enforcement action unless an emergency arises, at which time they will place themselves "on-duty" and subsequently receive payment for services rendered.

#### 45.3.10 HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE INTERN PROGRAM

- A. Students pursuing a career in law enforcement can be exposed to the requirements of a law enforcement career before entering the field as a profession. The student can get firsthand observations of law enforcement operations by participating as a Student Intern.

B. Eligibility Requirements

1. Student must be enrolled and actively taking law enforcement/corrections related classes at an accredited college or high school at the time of application.
2. Student must be at least 18 years of age or have the written permission of parent or legal guardian at time of acceptance into the program.
3. Students must have written approval from their faculty advisor to be accepted.
4. The student must complete a “waiver of liability” form as prescribed by the Sheriff of Washington County.

C. Procedures

1. The Intern applicant will submit, to the Community Relations Supervisor, a standard application form
2. The applicant or applicant’s parents/legal guardians will agree to a background check, which will minimally include:
  - a. Criminal records check
3. Any derogatory information found during the background check will be cause for rejection of the applicant for an internship.
4. There will be no more than two (2) internships available at any one time.
5. The Community Relations Supervisor will coordinate placement of the intern in each Division of the Sheriff’s Office.
6. All interns will be required to serve a minimum of sixteen hours in each Division of the Sheriff’s Office. The Sheriff’s Office will attempt to place the intern in their Division of interest; however, no guarantees can be made due to the varied duties and responsibilities of the Sheriff’s Office.
7. All interns will be given evaluation forms and attendance forms as prescribed by the Sheriff. Interns will be responsible for ensuring that the Deputy he/she is assigned to for that tour completes the evaluation forms.
8. At the completion of the internship, the intern will submit all completed evaluation forms and attendance forms to the

Community Relations Supervisor, who will complete one master evaluation for the intern to submit to their faculty advisor.

9. Applicants for the program will be made aware that he/she is serving at the pleasure of the Sheriff of Washington County, and that the internship may be terminated by the Sheriff, at any time.
  10. Applicants for the program will be made aware that interns are not paid and such service is strictly voluntary.
- D. Community concern over safety and security within the agency's service area.
- E. Citizens' recommendations and suggestions for improvements.