


Atlanta Police Department Policy Manual		Standard Operating Procedure
Effective Date: March 2, 2021		APD.SOP.3140 Night Commander
Applicable To: All employees		Review Due: 2025
Approval Authority: Chief Rodney Bryant		
Signature: Signed by RB		Date Signed: 3/2/2021

# 1. PURPOSE

To establish the duties and responsibilities of the police department's Night Commander assigned to the Field Operations Division (FOD).

# 2. POLICY

The function of the Night Commander is intended to:

1. Ensure the presence of an on-duty command level supervisor during the morning watch hours.
2. Oversee field operations and provide command level supervision at all significant events.
3. Act in a manner that maximizes employee safety and maintains the normal development of operational activities.
4. Make necessary decisions and issue appropriate orders pertaining to the night operations of the department in the absence of other command level supervision.

# 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The Chief of Police or his/her designee shall monitor this process, may adjust the hours, and may identify additional significant events when a Night Commander must be notified or must respond to the scene.
- 3.2 The FOD Commander shall schedule and supervise the Night Commander.
- 3.3 The Night Commander shall insure that all employees under his or her direct supervision at the scene of a significant event are in compliance with established police procedures. If necessary, the Night Commander shall make decisions and issue orders pertaining to police operational activities. The normal duty hours for the assigned Night Commander shall be Monday – Friday from 2230 – 0630 hours. The duty hours for the temporary Night Commander, who shall fill in for the assigned Night Commander, shall be Saturday – Sunday from 1900 – 0300 hours.
- 3.4 All departmental section commanders and assistant section commanders shall assume the duties and responsibilities of temporary Night Commander when scheduled or directed by the FOD commander.



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4. ACTION
  - 4.1 The FOD Commander shall complete and disseminate at least a six-month assignment schedule for the temporary Night Commanders. This schedule shall include allowances for days off, personal leave, training, and any other type of approved leave.
    - 4.1.1 The FOD Commander shall insure that a Night Commander staffs all assigned shifts. If a Night Commander is unable to serve as scheduled, he or she shall arrange with another commander to serve as his or her replacement with the approval of the FOD Commander. It is the scheduled Night Commander's responsibility to identify a replacement if a scheduling conflict exists between the scheduled Night Commander's duties and other commitments.
  - 4.2 The Night Commander shall be in charge of any significant incident to which he or she is required to respond, until relieved by a commander of equal or higher rank. Conflicts of rank shall be resolved in the following manner:
    1. If a zone commander is present at the scene of an incident within his or her area of responsibility, the zone commander's decision shall prevail. The Night Commander shall assume the role of assistant incident commander.
    2. If a conflict should occur between the Night Commander and another police commander of equal rank (not the zone commander), the Night Commander's decision shall prevail. This does not include incident commanders where the Incident Command System has been activated or an incident involving the deployment of SWAT personnel as outlined in APD.SOP.4040 "Special Operations Section" and APD.SOP.4043 Special Weapons and Tactics.
    3. If a conflict should occur between the Night Commander and a police commander of a higher rank, the Night Commander shall defer to the higher-ranking commander and note the incident in the tour of duty report to the FOD Commander.
  - 4.3 The Night Commander shall remain on-duty through his or her tour of duty, unless personally relieved by another Night Commander.
  - 4.4 The assigned Night Commander shall be assigned unit radio number 18. The temporary Night Commanders shall use their assigned radio numbers. Generally, the Night Commander shall operate using the Detective radio channel or the Zone Five radio channel. The temporary Night Commander shall coordinate with the on-duty Communications Section's watch commander at the beginning of each tour of duty and provide their name, and cellular telephone number.
  - 4.5 The Night Commander shall possess a portable police radio and a cellular telephone at all times while on duty. The Night Commander must notify the Communications Section's watch commander of the beginning time and ending time of each tour of duty.
  - 4.6 Upon the completion of his or her tour of duty each night, the Night Commander shall submit a written report to the FOD Commander identifying the zones visited and detailing any significant events. The FOD Commander shall insure that a copy of the Night Commander's report shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police, the Assistant Chief of Police, the SSD Commander, the CID Commander, the SSP Commander, and the other Command Staff members on a daily basis.
  - 4.7 The Night Commander shall call the Chief of Police whenever an officer is killed or seriously injured in the line of duty; uses deadly force resulting in a death or serious bodily injury; incidents



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- involving death or serious bodily injury involving Atlanta Police civilian personnel or any incident that may result in high profile media attention.
- 4.8 The Night Commander shall respond to the scene of each major incident and indicate it on the Night Commander's report. (CALEA 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Standard 11.3.3)
- 4.9 While on the scene of a major incident, the Night Commander may be the liaison between the department and the media and may conduct all media interviews. All protocol for releasing information shall follow the guidelines as stated in the APD.SOP 1060 Public Affairs.
- 4.10 The Communications Section's watch commander shall notify the Night Commander of all significant events.
- 4.11 The following incidents require the notification of the Night Commander by the Communications Section's watch commander via portable radio or cellular telephone:
1. An accident involving a hazardous material;
  2. A police chase or vehicle pursuit;
  3. A police help call;
  4. A bomb threat, a suspected bomb or suspicious package is located;
  5. A police department employee is injured and requires medical treatment;
  6. Any occurrence that generated or shall generate media (television, radio, newspaper) coverage;
  7. A police department employee is involved in an incident requiring police intervention;
  8. An incident involving missing children or vulnerable adults with dementia or other mental incapacities;
  9. An incident involving the "natural" death of a human;
  10. An unusually high number of pending calls for service in any one zone; or,
  11. Any incident when directed by the Chief of Police, the Assistant Chief of Police, or a division commander.
- 4.12 The following incidents shall require notification of the Night Commander to respond to the scene of the incident, after being notified by the Communications Section's watch commander via portable radio or cellular telephone:
1. A police department employee is arrested;
  2. Any accident involving human fatalities;
  3. A homicide or suspected homicide;



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4. Terrorist activity, a kidnapping, a civil disorder, a riot, a barricaded gunman, a sniper, or a hostage situation;
  5. A suspected bomb or suspicious package is located;
  6. A firearm discharge involving a police officer that results in death, injury, or property damage;
  7. A claim of diplomatic immunity or political asylum;
  8. A missing child aged 12 or under; or,
  9. Any incident when directed by the Chief of Police, the Assistant Chief of Police, or a division commander.
5. DEFINITIONS  
N/A
6. CANCELLATIONS  
APD.SOP.3140 "Night Commander" effective September 15, 2017
7. REFERENCES  
APD.SOP.4040 "Special Operations Section" and APD.SOP.4043 Special Weapons and Tactics.  
  
Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, (CALEA) 6th Edition Standard 11.3.3
8. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES
  - 8.1 Section 4.11(8) amended to include vulnerable adults.
  - 8.2 Section 4.12(8) added.