

# ASHEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL

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[SOP 3008 - Watch Command](#)

## INTRODUCTION

This directive is in place to make sure that each department member has an understanding of notification procedures to be followed in cases involving serious crimes and critical incidents. Notification procedures ensure that proper consultations take place in determining the need for appropriate or additional resources to address the incident at hand. A further goal is to make certain that actions are properly authorized and command staff members are able to make informed judgments and comments.

## POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Asheville Police Department (APD) to keep commanders and supervisors informed of unusual events and to ensure specific police department and city officials are notified about serious crimes and critical incidents.

## DEFINITIONS

Administrative Notification: immediate and direct notification to the Chief of Police and Bureau Commanders regarding a sensitive department-related serious incident.

Critical Incident: an occurrence or event, natural or human-caused, which requires an emergency response to protect life or property.

Command Notification: an electronic text notification containing information concerning a serious or critical incident likely to generate significant media attention or public concern.

School Notification: notification to public/private schools, daycares, colleges, or universities upon the confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving an immediate threat to the health and safety of students or staff.

Serious Crime/Incident: a situation that is significant and has the potential for an important or dangerous result.

## **RULES AND PROCEDURES**

### **507.1 INITIAL NOTIFICATIONS**

- A. In most cases, the first stage of the notification process will begin when the scene supervisor requests notification of department members who will be actively involved in conducting the investigation or controlling the scene.
- B. The scene supervisor will notify the on-duty Watch Commander of the serious or critical incident. The Watch Commander will decide if any further notifications are necessary.
- C. If further notifications are initiated, the Watch Commander will follow the procedures below to make needed notifications to police, city, or [school officials](#).
- D. The Watch Commander or designee will ensure notifications are made to specific members in the event of a serious or critical incident, dependent upon the circumstances. The Watch Commander will either personally make necessary notifications, specifically designate another member to make them, or initiate wider notifications via the Communications Center.
- E. If the incident is of a nature likely to require the sustained or ongoing response of more than one agency, Incident Command system protocol should be initiated, and contact will be made with Buncombe County Emergency Services for coordination of the multi-agency response, see [Policy 1100 – Critical Incident Response](#).

### **507.2 ADMINISTRATIVE NOTIFICATIONS**

- A. The on-duty Watch Commander or designee will initiate an immediate and direct notification to the Chief of Police and Bureau Commanders in the event of department-related serious incidents of a sensitive nature.
- B. Incidents requiring immediate administrative notification include but are not limited to, the following: [11.4.5]

1. Serious illness or injury to any department member.
  2. Department members involved in any shooting.
  3. Death or serious injury of a prisoner while in custody of the department.
  4. Incidents involving contact with City Council members.
  5. Any criminal charge against a department member. [26.3.2]
- C. Additional command or staff notifications will be authorized at the discretion of the Chief of Police or Bureau Commanders. Watch Commanders should use their best judgment when deciding to issue an administrative notification.

### **507.3 COMMAND NOTIFICATIONS**

- A. If a situation requires immediate notification of executive staff members, a command notification may be initiated. The on-duty Watch Commander or designee will immediately initiate a command notification for any incident likely to generate significant media attention or public concern, with the exception of incidents in section [507.2](#).
- B. Incidents requiring a command notification include those that include the following elements:
1. Homicide or suspicious death.
  2. Major fire or hazardous material incident.
  3. Hostage or barricade situation.
  4. Commercial robbery or any robbery involving serious injury.
  5. Felonious assault involving firearms.
  6. Transportation accidents, vehicular, air, rail, water, etc., that result in serious injuries, death, or extensive property damage.
  7. Natural or man-made disasters that result in injuries, death, or extensive property damage.
  8. Serious civil disorders within the city.
  9. Department-issued AMBER, missing endangered, or Ashanti alerts.
  10. Incidents of a scale that necessitate a sustained response by multiple city agencies.
- C. A comprehensive list cannot be provided; therefore, command notifications should be authorized anytime the Watch Commander judges a situation to require a command notification.
- D. Command notifications will be initiated via Everbridge or, if necessary, through the Communications Center.

- E. The Watch Commander will provide, at a minimum, the following information in the notification:
  - 1. Type of Incident;
  - 2. Location of Incident; and
  - 3. Responsible Watch/Incident Commander.
- F. Command notifications are to be distributed to a predefined contact group, including executive staff and the department's Public Information Officer.

#### **507.4 SCHOOL NOTIFICATIONS [41.2.4]**

- A. School notifications will be requested through the Communications Center as soon as the investigating officer or scene supervisor confirms the existence of a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving an immediate threat to the health and safety of public/private schools, colleges, universities, or daycares.
- B. School notifications will be made to any affected school facility within the city limits of Asheville. Notifications may be issued to schools within proximity to the city limits when necessary; however, the local law enforcement agency must be concurrently notified.
- C. The Communications Center will ensure notification is made in a timely manner to the affected school's safety officials (e.g., school resource officers, school resource officer supervisor, and campus police/security) and/or other responsible facility authorities.
- D. Notification circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - 1. Homicides.
  - 2. Robberies or violent assaults.
  - 3. Gun discharges (shots fired).
  - 4. Any threat, real or perceived that could affect student safety.
  - 5. Circumstances that would affect bus routes.
  - 6. Emergency situations that occur near pick-up or drop-off times.
- E. A command notification will be sent in any situation involving a school notification or lockdown.

BY ORDER OF:



Tammy Hooper  
Chief of Police