

# Asheville Police Department Policy Manual

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## Associated Directives

[Policy 1100 - Critical Incident Response](#)

[SOP 3008 - Watch Command](#)

## Introduction

This directive is in place to ensure that each department member understands the notification procedures to be followed in cases involving serious crimes and critical incidents. Notification procedures ensure that proper consultations are conducted to determine the need for appropriate or additional resources to address the incident. A further goal is to ensure that actions are properly authorized and that command staff can 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. [11.3.3]

**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 begins when the scene supervisor requests notification to 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 required, the watch commander will follow the procedures below to notify police, city, or school officials.
- D. The watch commander or designee will ensure that notifications are made to specific members in the event of a serious or critical incident, depending on the circumstances. The watch commander will either personally make the necessary notifications, designate another member to make them, or initiate broader notifications via the communications center.
- E. If the incident is likely to require the sustained or ongoing response of more than one agency, the incident command system protocol should be initiated, see [Policy 1100 – Critical Incident Response](#).

### **507.2 Administrative Notifications**

- A. The on-duty watch commander or designee will immediately and directly notify the chief of police and bureau commanders of department-related serious incidents of a sensitive nature. Incidents requiring immediate administrative notification include, but are not limited to, the following: [11.3.3] [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. Any criminal charge against a department member. [26.3.2]
- B. 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 to executive staff, 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, except for incidents covered in Section [507.2](#). [11.3.3]
- 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 [missing person alerts](#).
  10. Incidents at a scale that requires a sustained response from multiple city agencies.
- C. A comprehensive list cannot be provided; therefore, command notifications should be authorized whenever the watch commander determines a situation requires one.
- D. Command notifications will be initiated via Everbridge or, if necessary, through the communications center. [11.3.3]
- 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, **at a minimum**, 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 a significant emergency or dangerous situation posing an immediate threat to the health and safety of public/private schools, colleges, universities, or daycares.
- B. School notifications will be sent to any affected school facility within Asheville's city limits. Notifications may be issued to schools within proximity to the city limits when necessary; however, the local law enforcement agency must be notified **at the same time**.
- C. 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.
- D. A command notification will be sent in any situation involving a school notification or lockdown.

By order of:



Jackie Stepp  
Interim Chief of Police