



Policy 505 **DRAFT**

Subject Community Policing	
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By Order of the Police Commissioner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

POLICY	2
COMMUNITY POLICING (CORE) PRINCIPLES	2
DEFINITIONS	3
GENERAL	4
Community Engagement Form	4
REQUIRED ACTIONS	5
Patrol	5
District Sworn Members	5
Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCO) and Supervisors	6
District Action Teams (DAT)	8
District Supervisors (Patrol and District Action Teams (DAT))	8
District Commander	8
Youth and Community Partnership Division	9
Community Partnership Unit	9
Criminal Investigation Division	10
CID Detectives	10
CID Command	11
Data-Driven Strategies Division (DDSD)	11
Recruitment Section	11
Education and Training (E&T)	11
Policy and Research Unit (PRU)	11
REFERENCED POLICIES	12
RESCISSION	12
COMMUNICATION OF POLICY	12

POLICY

It is the policy of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) to institutionalize Community Policing principles across the agency to strengthen public safety through meaningful community partnerships and expanded opportunities for engagement. This policy provides guidance for applying these principles within the Department's organizational structure and outlines the role of the Youth and Community Partnership Division in coordinating youth and community initiatives to support members in fulfilling their community policing responsibilities.

COMMUNITY POLICING (CORE) PRINCIPLES

Community Policing is a philosophy emphasizing community involvement in crime prevention efforts through five core principles:

Community Engagement & Policing. While BPD is responsible for policing its community, it is also an integral part of it. BPD will only be successful in its crime reduction efforts by effectively engaging and listening to the needs of the people who live in the neighborhoods BPD protects. Working with and learning from residents, BPD officers must focus toward fully understanding issues that impact Baltimore City communities. BPD will work collaboratively with residents to create problem-solving strategies tailored to the challenges faced by specific neighborhoods and communities in Baltimore City.

Community Partnerships. Community Partnerships are paramount to building trust and improving public safety through collaborative problem solving. BPD will collaborate with diverse community members, organizations, businesses, and local, state and federal agencies to develop problem solving and crime prevention methods in Baltimore City. BPD will also engage academic partners to support the implementation of evidence-based policing models and evaluate the effectiveness of approaches.

Organizational Transformation. The progression of departmental management, personnel, and information systems to support community partnerships and proactive problem solving. By shifting decision-making authority to patrol officers and aligning resources with community-identified priorities, it fosters new lines of communication with the public and builds the trust and accountability needed for effective community policing.

Problem Solving. A process that uses police and community members' expertise to identify and understand the underlying issues that create crime, disorder, and fear of victimization.

Constitutionality. BPD is dedicated to upholding the Constitution and enforcing laws in a fair, impartial, and ethical manner. BPD is committed to creating and maintaining a culture of service that builds trust and legitimacy in all communities, values the sanctity of human life, and provides for the safety and wellbeing of all. (Baltimore Police Department's Mission Statement – Policy 305, *Department Mission and Vision*).

DEFINITIONS

Community Engagement – Consensual interactions that improve accessibility, relationship-building, trust, meaningful connections, and positive experiences between members of BPD and the people to whom they provide services. These interactions can be Formal or Informal and aim to strengthen community connections and collaboration. As with other consensual interactions (Voluntary Contacts and Field Interviews¹), the individual(s) is/are free to leave or decline any request by the member at any point.

Daily Problem Solving —The routine, ongoing process by which officers identify, analyze, and address conditions that contribute to crime, disorder, and community concerns.

Formal Engagement — a type of Community Engagement that involves scheduled participation in neighborhood and community meetings/events and outreach efforts. Examples include neighborhood association meetings, business district meetings, neighborhood block parties, and interagency neighborhood walks.

Informal Engagement — a type of Community Engagement that is unscheduled. Informal Engagements include Voluntary Contacts² as well as activities (e.g., business checks, foot patrols, and throwing a ball with youth) with the goals of building rapport, deepening relationships, learning community concerns, especially underlying issues that contribute to public safety issues, and building partnerships. Informal Engagements go beyond simple greetings, brief pleasantries, or casual small talk, and are meaningful conversations that build partnerships or improve a member's understanding of community issues.

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) — A preventative policing approach that seeks to understand the underlying conditions for why crime and disorder repeats in particular geographies. The POP approach is a more intensive problem-solving method that includes the SARA decision-making model (see definition below) and employing efforts to address or resolve different problems and issues within the communities that BPD serves. These problems can range from minor disputes between neighbors to high-risk environmental conditions or lesser offense issues. While these problems may not always present an immediate public safety concern, if left un-addressed they can lead to future issues and calls-for-service. Through Daily Problem Solving, officers will work with community members to address community concerns on an ongoing basis. POP is a complementary strategy and ***should not*** be viewed as a substitute for criminal investigations.

Procedural Justice — Treatment of a person by law enforcement officers in such a way that the person feels they were treated fairly and with consistency, dignity and respect, they were given voice, the officer was neutral and transparent, and the officer conveyed trustworthy motives. (See Policy 325, *Procedural Justice in Interactions*).

Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment (SARA) MODEL — a decision-making model that guides BPD members in how to identify problems, analyze data and associated factors, develop appropriate responses and evaluate the results of chosen responses.

¹ See Policy 1112, *Field Interviews, Investigative Stops, and Weapons Pat-Downs*.

² Voluntary Contact: A non-investigative consensual encounter between a BPD member and one or more person(s) with the intent of engaging in a casual and/or non-investigative conversation (e.g., chatting with a local business owner or resident about community relations). During a Voluntary Contact, the person(s) is/are free to leave or decline any request by the member at any point. (See Policy 1112, *Field Interviews, Investigative Stops, & Weapons Pat-Downs*).

Trauma-Informed Practices — Trauma-Informed Practice is a strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma. It emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, and creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

GENERAL

1. All members, professional staff and sworn, are expected to perform their duties in a manner that is consistent with the Community Policing Principles above.
2. All members shall apply procedural justice principles as outlined in Policy 325, *Procedural Justice in Interactions*.
3. When requesting Community Chaplains service, members shall make their requests in accordance with BPD policy and procedures.
4. All members shall follow BPD guidelines when working alongside Auxiliary Police members.

Community Engagement Form

5. For the most accurate reporting at the end of the sworn member's tour, the Community Engagement Form in Axon shall be completed following:
 - 5.1. All Formal Engagements.
 - 5.2. Informal Engagements where the interaction resulted in the community members sharing concerns or information related to underlying issues that contribute to public safety issues in the community.
 - 5.2.1. Informal engagements that consist solely of greetings, brief pleasantries, or casual small talk **are not required to** be documented in the Form.
 - 5.2.2. Members are encouraged to complete the Form if they engaged in Informal Engagements that deepen relationships, but community concerns were not discussed, such as providing an individual with resource information or making a 311 request on behalf of the individual. By documenting these encounters, it improves BPD's ability to highlight positive engagements with community members.
6. For engagements where multiple BPD members are in attendance or present, only one report should be completed. For Formal Engagements, the attending Unit Sergeant is responsible for ensuring the Form is submitted in Axon but may designate a specific sworn member to complete it.
 - 6.1. If a sworn member attends an engagement alongside a professional staff member (including Community Partnership Unit members), the sworn member is required to complete the Community Engagement Form.

7. During a Community Engagement, members shall not engage in conduct that would lead a reasonable person to believe they must comply, provide identification, or respond. Members shall act in a manner that would inform a reasonable person that the engagement is voluntary. Members may ask for the individual's name but, shall inform the individual that providing their name is voluntary.
8. Members shall not use the Community Engagement Form to report interactions that are strictly enforcement-related, investigative in nature, and/or fall under other reporting requirements per BPD policy. This is in reference to interactions required to be reported in Incident Reports, Field Interview Reports, E-tix, etc. (e.g., arrests, Field Interviews, warnings, Investigative Stops, responding to criminal activity reported from victims or witnesses, or crimes in progress).
9. Members are not required to activate their BWCs during Community Engagements but if an incident occurs near them or the engagement elevates to an encounter that requires activation, (e.g., the engagement becomes a Field Interview) members shall adhere to Policy 824, *Body-Worn Camera*.

REQUIRED ACTIONS

Patrol

District Sworn Members

12. NCO participation in community engagement activities or meetings does not exempt Patrol members from attending or participating when assigned or directed. Other sworn members assigned to districts, regardless of rank, are required to participate in Informal Engagements and attend Formal Engagements assigned to them by their District Commander. Engagements shall be documented in the Community Engagement Form in accordance with the [Community Engagement Form](#) section above.
 - 12.1. If a scheduling conflict arises for a Formal Engagement, members scheduled to attend a Community Meeting or event shall immediately notify their direct supervisor and the point of contact for the meeting/event.
- NOTE:** NCO participation in community engagement activities or meetings does not exempt Patrol members from attending or participating when assigned or directed.
13. During Informal and Formal Engagements, district sworn members shall work to build familiarity with community members and identify emerging community concerns.
 14. All district sworn members shall be responsible for incorporating Daily Problem Solving into their day-to-day tasks. This includes:
 - 14.1. Submitting quality 311 service requests when non-law-enforcement public safety concerns are identified, consistent with problem-solving responsibilities.
 - 14.2. Documenting identified community problems and any related actions in the "Additional Notes" section of the Community Engagement Form when such issues arise during Formal or Informal Engagements.

- 14.3. Escalating complex problems to their District NCO units, after receiving approval from their District Command.

Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCO) and Supervisors

15. NCOs shall log all Formal Engagements into BPD's Community Engagement Tracker, for scheduling awareness and tracking.
16. NCOs shall provide guidance, when requested, for sworn members who are assigned to attend community meetings.
17. NCOs shall serve as the primary liaison between communities within their assigned district and the District Command.
18. Since NCOs are generally not required to answer calls for service during their shifts, they are required to use this availability to strengthen community relationships through consistent, visible, and purposeful engagement.
19. NCO Supervisors shall work with District Supervisors to ensure all Formal Engagements for their districts are on District Commander's calendars for awareness.
20. NCO Supervisors shall collaborate with District Command to enable the newly assigned District Commanders to engage in timely introductory meetings with the Community Relations Council (CRC) president and other community leaders to support continuity during leadership transitions.
21. NCO Supervisors shall review the monthly data report of engagement trends sent by the Community Partnership Unit. (See #41). The report is sent to aid in resource deployment and support data-driven strategic planning with District Command and other supervisors.
22. NCO Supervisors shall regularly review engagement data to ensure all identified problems are entered and monitor the status of all issues referred to them by community members, business owners, District members, detectives, and District Command.

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) Initiatives

23. NCOs shall use information obtained through both Informal and Formal Engagements to determine when a crime trend or community concern requires further analysis, the development of a POP initiative, or referral for a criminal investigation. Examples of such POP initiatives may include, but are not limited to:
 - 23.1. A concentration of abandoned vehicles,
 - 23.2. Areas with an ongoing presence of unhoused people,
 - 23.3. Vacant properties,
 - 23.4. Problematic businesses,
 - 23.5. People dealing with addiction.

24. NCOs shall conduct POP initiatives, using the SARA method, for any identified issues that contribute to broader patterns or problems of concern within the district, whether identified by from patrol members, detectives, or by their District Command.
- 24.1. Identified problems that require POP initiatives shall be led by the NCO Unit under the direction of the District Commander. NCOs shall partner with the District Action Team, District Intel Officer and District Analyst, where needed.
- 24.2. NCOs shall use the POP Form in Axon to track ongoing priority problems and longer-term district POP priority problems.
- 24.2.3. If the problem was initially entered into a Community Engagement Form, the NCO shall make that indication in the appropriate field of the POP Form.
25. NCO Units shall, with the assistance of their District Command and the Community Partnership Unit, identify partnerships and resources to aid in the POP initiatives, such as:
- 25.1. Partnering with relevant City agencies to address environmental or structural issues that may be contributing to the identified problem or criminal activity under investigation.
- 25.1.3. Examples of environmental or structural issues include, but are not limited to:
- 25.1.3.2. Vacant or unsecured properties,
- 25.1.3.3. Poor street lighting,
- 25.1.3.4. Illegal dumping,
- 25.1.3.5. Overgrown lots,
- 25.1.3.6. Broken or missing street signage,
- 25.1.3.7. Abandoned vehicles, and
- 25.1.3.8. Damaged or missing fencing.
- 25.1.4. Examples of possible interventions for environmental or structural issues include, but are not limited to:
- 25.1.4.2. Boarding properties,
- 25.1.4.3. Improving lighting,
- 25.1.4.4. Vacant lot cleanup,
- 25.1.4.5. Trash and debris removal, and
- 25.1.4.6. Removal of abandoned vehicles.
- 25.1.5. Examples of agencies that provide services or assistance to affected community members include, but are not limited to, the
- 12.1.3.1 Department of Public Works (DPW), the
- 25.1.5.2. Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD),
- 25.1.5.3. Department of Transportation (DOT),
- 25.1.5.4. Recreation & Parks,
- 25.1.5.5. Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD),
- 25.1.5.6. Health Department,
- 25.1.5.7. Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE), and

25.1.5.8. Mayor's Office of Homeless Services

- 25.2. Engaging human services providers to deliver assistance or services that benefit the victims and/or community members impacted by criminal activity under investigation.
 - 25.3. Identify any relocation needs based on imminent threats and develop a plan in coordination with the Victims Services Unit.
26. NCO Units shall document all problem-solving efforts related to the above identified problems on the POP Form, ensuring that actions, findings, and coordination steps are recorded.

District Action Teams (DAT)

- 27. DAT members shall work with the NCO Unit to identify and investigate crime trends that may have underlying issues and community concerns that fall under the purview of DAT.
- 28. When assigned to attend community engagements, DAT members will attend community engagements related to incidents they are investigating or have previously investigated when their presence is necessary to assist in responding to community questions, support district transparency, strengthen community trust-building, or provide investigative insight.

District Supervisors (Patrol and District Action Teams (DAT))

- 29. District Supervisors shall ensure that any issues or community complaints identified at community meetings are properly documented, and that all necessary referrals and notifications are completed.
- 30. District Supervisors shall work with NCO Supervisors to ensure all Formal Engagements for their districts are on District Command's calendars for awareness.
- 31. District Supervisors shall work with the NCO Unit to ensure other patrol members are assigned to attend community engagements when applicable.
- 32. District Supervisors shall refer to Policy 1708, *Sworn Performance Evaluation*, and Policy 1712, *Departmental Awards and Commendations*, when identifying and documenting exceptional performance, including notable growth, achievement, and contributions to Community Policing.
- 33. District Supervisors shall review the monthly data report sent by the Community Partnership Unit and coordinate with NCO Supervisors when applicable. (See #41)

District Commander

- 34. District Commanders shall continually emphasize the importance of Community Policing to all members under their command.
- 35. District Command shall work with their NCO Supervisor to ensure that newly assigned District Commanders engage in timely introductory meetings with the CRC president and other community leaders to support continuity during leadership transitions.

36. When assessing district crime trends and service needs, District Commanders shall coordinate with specialized unit Commanders to ensure that the appropriate personnel attend monthly Commanders' Meetings whenever their participation is necessary to support district transparency, strengthen community trust-building, or provide investigative insight.
37. When possible, District Commanders shall strive to assign units to consistent geographic areas to foster a deeper understanding of neighborhood conditions, increase relationship building, and thereby improve problem solving capacity.
38. District Commanders shall ensure NCOs prioritize their time on POP initiatives.
39. District Commanders shall collaborate with their NCO Supervisors and the Community Partnership Unit (CPU) to determine the appropriate resources needed to address recurring problems.
40. District Commanders shall work with CPU to develop crime plans and resource-deployment strategies to align with the support needs identified through community engagement and problem-solving activities, ensuring operational coordination.
41. District Commanders shall collaborate with District Supervisors to ensure community priorities and engagement activities are incorporated into district deployment strategies and weekly crime plans.

Youth and Community Partnership Division

Community Partnership Unit

The Community Partnership Unit (CPU) serves as the central hub for supporting community policing efforts across the Department. CPU collaborates with all parts of the department to connect Baltimore residents, city agencies and community partners with BPD initiatives. A key function of CPU is to strengthen relationships, support public safety, and ensure that BPD's work reflects the needs and concerns of the neighborhoods it serves. This includes tracking meaningful community interactions and using that information to inform departmental strategies and resource allocation. By bringing together resources, partnerships, and practical tools, CPU helps officers, residents, and stakeholders work better together.

42. CPU members shall work to strengthen relationships between the Department and community stakeholders by promoting transparency, trust, and consistent communication.
43. CPU members shall identify opportunities for meaningful engagement and proactively connect BPD members, residents, and partners with relevant Department initiatives.
 - 43.1. This includes ensuring volunteer personnel (Chaplains and Auxiliary members) are informed of all upcoming engagements through BPD's Community Engagement Tracker.
44. CPU members shall provide support to other BPD members on community policing strategies, resources, or engagement best practices.
45. CPU members shall serve as liaisons to city agencies, community-based organizations, and other external partners to facilitate collaboration and assist NCOs in problem-solving.

- 45.1. CPU members shall connect community members and organizations with appropriate Department resources, programs, or personnel.
46. CPU members shall attend community engagements, meetings and events as assigned by their Command.
47. CPU members shall work with NCOs and districts to maintain updated records of community partners, events, and ongoing initiatives to support Department-wide coordination.
48. To ensure districts are aware of engagement trends and to support strategic planning and resource deployment, CPU members and supervisors shall work with DDSD to analyze engagement data, including insights, and send a monthly report to District Commanders and Supervisors, including NCO Supervisors.
49. CPU members shall maintain regular communication with their supervisors regarding ongoing partnerships, as well as NCO Supervisors and District Command regarding emerging issues and engagement needs.
50. CPU shall inform the districts, advisory boards, and community partners when policies and trainings are out for public comment.
51. When resources for POP Initiatives are limited, CPU shall coordinate with District Commanders and NCO Supervisors to identify potential external resources and determine achievable goals..
52. CPU shall encourage internal and external feedback about training that is posted for public comment.

Criminal Investigation Division

CID Detectives

53. CID detectives shall ensure that all communications with victims and their next of kin are done in a trauma-informed manner.
- 53.1. This includes coordinating with the Victim Service Unit (VSU) when appropriate for serious crimes or sensitive situations, in accordance with BPD policy and the applicable CID standard operating procedures.
54. In accordance with Policy 805, *Victim and Witness Assistance and Relocation*, CID Detectives shall coordinate with VSU regarding any relocation needs based on imminent threats.
55. Investigative plans may leverage service partners, such as partnering agencies or community organizations, when their involvement can help address contributing factors.

CID Command

56. CID Command shall ensure that CID Supervisors work in coordination with District Command, to facilitate detective attendance at community meetings, including Commanders' Meetings, when requested by the District.

Data-Driven Strategies Division (DDSD)

57. DDSD shall collaborate with the Community Partnership Unit to improve processes for analyzing data from the Community Engagement Form to identify gaps or trends in community engagement.

Recruitment Section

58. Recruitment shall participate in community engagements to maximize recruitment opportunities.
59. Collaborate with YCPD and NCOs in supporting youth and volunteer initiatives, by spreading awareness of the Departments community-based programs, including:
- 59.1. Auxiliary Police
 - 59.2. Chaplains
 - 59.3. Public Safety Jr. Cadets (ages 14–17)
 - 59.4. YouthWorks

Education and Training (E&T)

60. E&T shall integrate community policing and trauma-informed policing principles into entry-level training and incorporate these principles into the annual Training Needs Assessment to ensure their inclusion in relevant In-Service Training.
61. E&T shall reach out to subject-matter experts, both internally and externally, such as YCPD and/or BPD's Equity Office, as appropriate, in designing training to reflect departmental and community priorities.

Policy and Research Unit (PRU)

62. PRU shall encourage internal and external feedback in drafted policies that are out for public comment.
63. PRU shall notify the Community Partnership Unit when policies or trainings are posted for public comment.

REFERENCED POLICIES

Policy 305, *Department Mission and Vision*

Policy 325, *Procedural Justice in Interactions.*

Policy 502, *Auxiliary Policy Unit,*

Policy 805, *Victim and Witness Assistance and Relocation*

Policy 824, *Body-Worn Camera*

Policy 1112, *Field Interviews, Investigative Stops, and Weapons Pat-Downs*

Policy 1708, *Sworn Performance Evaluations*

Policy 1712, *Departmental Awards and Accommodations*

RESCISSION

Rescind PCM 24-05 *Community Policing Requirements*, dated 22 April 2024.

COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

This policy is effective on the date listed herein. Each employee is responsible for complying with the contents of this policy.