



General Order P-3

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POLICY

It is the policy of the Baltimore Police Department to utilize aircraft to assist (ground) police units with law enforcement functions such as crime prevention, apprehension of suspects, and searches for police units and civilians.

BACKGROUND

The Aviation Unit is under the Command of the Special Operations Section. Any police unit may request an aircraft, such as the helicopter, for assistance via their respective dispatcher, Citywide channel or by telephone to the Communications Section. The aircraft's ability to navigate through the air enables a quick response to a location, and the altitude of the aircraft allows the crew to observe and to cover a very large area. **Safety** is, ultimately, the most important factor when the aircraft is in operation.

The Aviation Unit's aircraft can function and perform a multitude of tasks:

- Force Multiplier - An airborne law enforcement asset, is often referred to as "Force Multiplier." Aboard the aircraft are optical devices and cameras that enable the flight crew to see and record events. The combined team of ground police units and aircraft units increases arrest rates.
- Command and Control - The aircraft's ability to hover over a crowd or civil disorder enables the flight crew to quickly assess the behavior of the crowd; thus, potentially preventing any crowd from becoming a mob.
- Pursuits - High-speed vehicle pursuits are unnecessary when an aircraft is on active patrol. The aircraft's bird's-eye view of the vehicle's location or direction of travel allows ground police units to converge towards the vehicle in a safer manner. This tactic reduces risk to civilians and police units.
- Traffic - During hazardous conditions, fires or major accidents, the aircraft can assist by quickly selecting the best alternative routes for emergency vehicles. The aircraft can also serve to airlift equipment and personnel across blockages.
- Officer Safety - The aircraft's visual vantage point enhances officer safety by being able to "see" around corners and behind fences. The flight crew can also canvass an area and warn officers of any impending danger.
- Search and Rescue - Equipped with searchlights and thermal imaging equipment, the aircraft's search is effective during both day and night operations.

- Surveillance - The aircraft's superior coverage enables the flight crew to locate suspects who may use escape tactics to evade apprehension. At night, the aircraft with FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared) can track suspects in the dark and direct ground police units to intercept them. The aircraft can also assist in the recovery of evidence, if discarded.
- Fire Fighting Support - The aircraft can assist in fire fighting, pinpointing locations of backfires, moving equipments and water sources.
- Community Relations - It is important for the community to understand that the aircraft protects and serves them. The flight crew's involvement in community events establishes a positive persona vital to the Department's and the aircraft's image.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

- The Aviation Unit shall operate all aircraft within certain safety and flight limitations that provide the safest and most efficient service possible to the Baltimore Police Department and the community.
- In addition to the guidelines of this Order, all personnel assigned to the Aviation Unit shall adhere to the applicable Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, the aircraft's manufacturer procedures and the Aviation Unit's Standard Operating Procedures.
- In accordance with the Aviation Unit's Standard Operating Procedures, all aerial operations shall return to the respective base airport, Headquarters rooftop heliport or the nearest airport or heliport during hazardous weather conditions. Such conditions include, but are not limited to:
 - Visibility is less than three miles.
 - Wind velocity in excess of twenty-five knots.

HELICOPTERS

The helicopters, commonly referred to as "Fox" and "Foxtrot," are available during routine patrol flights for calls for service at the request of police units.

The helicopters may be utilized for selective patrol, special attention areas, overt and covert surveillance, community relations, and educational programs. Requests for these special types of missions shall be made in writing to the Commanding Officer, Aviation Unit. Photographic services are also available, and all such requests shall be made in writing via official channels the Director, Photography Unit.

GENERAL SAFETY RULES

- **NO ONE** is to approach the helicopter unless permission is granted from a crewmember.

- At all times, remain clear of the tail rotor blades.
- All persons shall stay at least **100 feet** away from any turning rotor blades, unless directed by an aircraft crewmember.
 - **Never** approach or depart the helicopter from the rear.
 - Always approach and depart the helicopter in a crouched position from the front of the aircraft.
 - At all times, be conscious of the terrain grade such as when the ground is sloped at an angle higher than the rotor blades.
- Prior to approaching the helicopter, secure hats and any other loose objects that may be blown by the rotor system.
- Do not park any vehicles within 100 feet of the helicopter.
- Smoking is not permitted onboard the helicopter or within 100 feet of the helicopter, whether the aircraft is in operation or not.

EMERGENCY OR PRECAUTIONARY LANDING

Member

- The first law enforcement unit that arrives at the scene of an emergency landing of a helicopter shall provide aid to any injured person.
- Aircraft components should **only** be moved to aid the injured if aircraft components are jeopardizing the welfare of an injured person.
- Preserve the security of the aircraft and treat the landing site as a crime scene.

Crewmember, Aviation Unit

- While the helicopter is in flight, consideration must be given to the possibility of an emergency situation that necessitates landing in an area other than those officially designed as heliports or airports.
- Any unscheduled landing, emergency or precautionary, requires the commencement of specific procedures that delineate the responsibilities of those personnel needed to effectively handle the situation and ensure adherence to all mandated Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) regulations.
- Once an emergency landing is imminent, a crewmember shall notify the Communications Section of an emergency or precautionary landing by utilizing the Official Baltimore Police Department Code Signals, Form 123. The crewmember shall broadcast a "10-50" for "helicopter landing" followed by the appropriate status code (Green, Amber or Red) and then give location.

- **GREEN** - Aircraft is making a normal landing at a location other than that authorized in accordance with this Order.
 - **AMBER** - Aircraft is making a precautionary landing as a result of a unique condition or minor malfunction.
 - **RED** - Aircraft is making an emergency landing that is to result in personal injury and/or substantial aircraft damage/major malfunction.
- When the aircraft has made an unscheduled landing either under a “10-50 Amber” or a “10-50 Red,” a crewmember shall provide, if able, the Communications Section with one of the following post-landing status codes:
 - **GREEN** - Aircraft has landed routinely without personal injury or property damage. No further assistance is needed unless specifically requested by any crewmember.
 - **AMBER** - Aircraft has conducted an unscheduled or precautionary landing with no personal injury or property damage.
 - **RED** - Aircraft has conducted an emergency or precautionary landing with personal injury and/or property damage/major malfunction.

NOTE: The loss of voice communications during a “10-50 Amber” or “10-50 Red” shall automatically be construed by the Communication Section to be a “Red” status.

Citywide Dispatcher / Area Dispatcher, Communications Section

- Be mindful when the aircraft is “10-08” or “in service” and advise the aircrew of any calls for service. Assist the aircrew with additional requests for service for the aircrew may be working on a different channel.
- Keep track of any additional requests and dispatch the calls for service accordingly when the aircraft becomes clear.

NOTE: Always be mindful of any “10-50” transmissions from the aircrew.

Emergency Dispatch Supervisor, Communications Section

- In the event of a “10-50” followed by an “Amber” or “Red” status, dispatch the following units to the scene:
 - Emergency Services Unit (ESU) and any available units from the Special Operation Section.
 - Additional patrol units, as needed, to properly secure the scene.
 - Accident Investigation Unit (AIU) to investigate and document the incident.
- In the event of a “10-50” landing with “Amber” or “Red” status, make the following notifications:
 - Police Commissioner.
 - Deputy Police Commissioner.

- Chief, Patrol Division.
 - Duty Officer.
 - Commanding Officer, Special Operations Section.
 - Commanding Officer, Aviation Unit.
 - Flight Operations Supervisor, Aviation Unit.
 - Director, Public Affairs Section.
 - Any other applicable Law Enforcement or Public Safety Agency if landing occurs outside city limits.
- Notify Citywide Dispatcher to alert the helicopter of any sniper situations (from the Official Baltimore Police Department Code Signal “10-91”).
 - In the event of a Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) incident, immediately notify any departmental aircrew. Personnel at the Aviation Unit must also be notified so appropriate safeguards can be taken.

AVIATION UNIT PERSONNEL - GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Flight Officers

- The pilots of the Aviation Unit are employed primarily for their expertise as professional aircraft pilots, and are designated as Flight Officers by the Police Commissioner. Their primary responsibility is the safe and effective operation of departmental aircrafts.
- To qualify for helicopter Flight Officer status all candidates must meet the basic requirements for entry-level police officer and must possess a Commercial/Instrument Pilot Certificate with rotor craft-helicopter rating. Minimum flight time of 1,400 hours in helicopters, 800 hours pilot-in-command, 700 hours in a turbine helicopter and a current Class II-FAA Medical Certificate are also required.

Aerial Observers

- Are Police Officers/Agents who function primarily as mission coordinators. It is their responsibility to safely control all law enforcement aspects of the patrol flight in such a way that flight safety is not compromised.
- Selection for the position of Aerial Observer shall be Police Officer/Agent who possesses a minimum of three years of police experience. Aerial Observers are to serve a probationary period of ninety days, during which time the Aerial Observer may be deemed as “Not Suitable” for the position and removed from the Aviation Unit. Applicants for the Aerial Observer must also meet the standards of an FAA - Class II Flight Physical.

Standardization Instructor (SI) / Check Pilot

- Shall supervise aircrew standardization and training, serve as the Unit’s primary evaluator and training manager, and be responsible for the administration of the Aircrew Training Program.

- Identify training requirements and request resources based on mission, operational standards and proficiency, ensuring compliance with Federal, State and local requirements.
- Plan and conduct training inspections and compile records documenting mandatory requirements.

Technical Advisor

- Shall be designated by the Police Commissioner, and shall serve in this capacity until such designation is revoked. Selection shall be based upon comprehensive knowledge of aviation activities and experience in flight operations including qualification as an operational aviator.

Operations Supervisors

- Primarily responsible for the supervision of the flight crew and unit's daily operations. Also, the Operations Supervisors shall coordinate special operational missions with other departmental units as well as other law enforcement agencies (for example: photographic flights, sensitive investigations and surveillance flights).
- The Operations Supervisors have the additional responsibility of training all Aerial Observers and their periodic recurrence training. Other responsibilities of the Operations Supervisors include, but are not limited to, preparing daily flight schedules and conducting preflight briefings.

Headquarters and Services Supervisor

- Primarily responsible for the supervision of administrative and unit facility duties. These responsibilities include the coordination of all departmental required training and the daily administrative functions as deemed by the Commanding Officer, Aviation Unit.
- Additionally, the Headquarters and Services Supervisor shall manage and review all statistical data, tracking and inspection of issued departmental flight equipment and the supervision of maintenance for both the unit hangar and the heliport at the Headquarters building.
- The Headquarters and Services Supervisor is also to act as the liaison to the Baltimore City Department of Safety, Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MOSHA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to ensure the Aviation Unit's compliance with standards and requirements.

Commanding Officer

- Be responsible for the monitoring of any fiscal matters and ensuring budgetary compliance pertaining to the Aviation Unit.
- Shall serve as the Aviation Unit's director of maintenance.

- Oversee the operational and administrative aspects of the Aviation Unit. These include, but are not limited to, ensuring the coordination of all flight activities, schedules, training and safety standards.
- Ensure members comply with all Federal, State and local laws, Departmental General Orders and Standard Operating Procedures as they pertain to the Aviation Unit.
- Coordinate all flight activities, schedules, training of flight officers and reporting as required.
- Publish a Divisional Memorandum detailing the Standard Operating Procedures for the Aviation Unit.
 - The Standard Operating Procedure will serve as an Annex to this General Order and distributed to authorized personnel as determined by the Division Chief.
 - Be responsible for reviewing the Standard Operating Procedure on an annual basis, at the minimum, to ensure that the protocols contained therein are in keeping with current mandates and requirements.
 - Ensure members of the Aviation Unit are held responsible for the proper performance of their duties in keeping with this Order and all applicable Standard Operating Procedures. (Any violation of this Order or the Aviation Unit's Standard Operating Procedures may result in disciplinary action to include that member's removal from the Aviation Unit.)

EMERGENCY RESPONSE - HOMELAND SECURITY

It is the intent of the Aviation Unit to provide support services during any emergency incident. The Aviation Unit conducts random patrols of sensitive areas designated by the Commanding Officer, Special Operations Section, as Homeland Security targets, such as hospitals, watersheds, and marine ports.

Shift Commander, Communications Section

- In the event that an incident occurs that may be vital to Homeland Security or be deemed an incident of mass destruction, immediately notify the Commanding Officer, Aviation Unit.

Commanding Officer, Aviation Unit

- Ensure that the Operations Supervisors and the Headquarters and Services Supervisor are notified and prepared for duty.

REVISION

Remove and destroy/recycle General Order P-3, "Helicopter Unit," dated 23 September 1977.

COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

Supervisors shall be responsible for communication of this directive to their subordinates and to ensure compliance. This directive is effective on the date of publication and is to be read at all roll calls for five consecutive days and posted on Departmental Bulletin Boards.

By Order of Kevin P. Clark Police Commissioner