



# Policy 313

Subject

## LIMITED PRESENCE IN PUBLIC LOCATIONS

Date Published

1 July 2016

Page

1 of 2

*By Order of the Police Commissioner*

### POLICY

It is the policy of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) that no more than two (2) members may be present at a public location at any one time without the approval of a supervisor.

1. **Unnecessary Congregation.** The general intent of this policy is to prevent unnecessary congregation of officers at locations considered to be “in the public eye.”
2. **Negative Perceptions.** The BPD has a legitimate interest in avoiding the negative perceptions associated with groups of officers who are (or appear to be) congregating in public locations at which there is no apparent need for police service, as members of the community may interpret such behavior as a failure of the BPD to adequately pursue its public safety mission.
3. **Public Engagement.** No part of this policy is intended to deprive officers of reasonable meal or break times, or to prohibit engagement with the general public, business owners, etc.

### DEFINITION

**Public Location** — For the purposes of this policy, a “public location” shall be considered any building, park, restaurant, convenience store or other similar location used by or accessible to the general public.

### EXCEPTIONS

This policy does not apply to:

1. Any location at which legitimate police activity must occur;
2. Special event details (e.g., football or baseball games, New Year’s Eve, etc.) during which large numbers of officers must remain in a limited area of operation;
3. Community-based activities (e.g., Town Hall meetings, Community Comstat, etc.) requiring the attendance of multiple members of the department; and
4. Departmentally sanctioned activities occurring at the office/lodge/social hall of a fraternal organization (e.g., the Fraternal Order of Police, the Vanguard Justice Society, etc.).

**REQUIRED ACTION****Member**

1. Adhere to the policy described in this directive.
2. Do not engage in loud or disruptive activity at any public location.
3. Do not engage in any activity that prevents your ability to monitor the police radio.
4. Absent a legitimate law enforcement necessity, officers may not, while at a public location:
  - 4.1. Stop, stand or park a departmental vehicle (marked or unmarked) on a sidewalk or in a fire lane, crosswalk or similarly unlawful location; or
  - 4.2. Allow a departmental vehicle (marked or unmarked) to impede the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
5. Unless authorized to do so by your supervisor, do not travel to or otherwise be present at any location that is an unreasonable distance from your assigned post or area of operation.

**Permanent-rank supervisor**

1. Ensure subordinates are aware of and comply with the policy described in this policy.
2. As necessary, disperse any group of three or more officers gathered at a public location.
3. Unless a legitimate need exists, do not allow a subordinate to travel to or otherwise be present at any location that is an unreasonable distance from his/her assigned post or area of operation.

**RESCISSION**

Remove and destroy/recycle Policy 313, *Limited Presence In Public Locations* dated 9 September 2013.

**COMMUNICATION OF POLICY**

Commanders shall be responsible for communication of this policy and to ensure compliance. This policy is effective on the date listed herein.