




Cocoa Beach Police Department

Standard Operating Procedure



Effective Date: December 25, 2023	Replaces: Amends: August 28, 2016	Number: 211.10
Subject: Citizen Observer Patrol	Re-Evaluation: 2025	
Distribution: All Members	Related CFA Standards: 2.09M, 13.01M	
Approving Authority: Chief of Police Mike Coffin		
Approval Date: December 11, 2023		

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to establish guidelines for Citizen Observer Patrol (COP) volunteer members in the performance of all volunteer duties.

2. SCOPE

This standard operating procedure shall apply to all members of the Citizen Observer Patrol volunteer program.

3. POLICY

It is the policy of the Cocoa Beach Police Department to utilize non-sworn volunteers to assist in law enforcement related functions. Non-sworn volunteers shall not be assigned duties requiring sworn officer status.

4. PROCEDURES

A. ORGANIZATION, AUTHORITY AND LATITUDE (CFA 2.09M)

1. The Chief of Police, or designee, shall appoint a sworn member as the sworn coordinator to oversee the COP program.
2. The Chief of Police, or designee, may assign members of the COP program to serve as a civilian coordinator and assistant civilian coordinator.
 - a. The civilian coordinators shall act as the liaison between COPs and the police department. COPs shall follow their chain of command to ensure program consistency.
 - b. The civilian coordinators shall maintain data documenting the monthly work product of members assigned to them.
3. Citizen Observer Patrol members are not sworn officers and have no law enforcement authority.
 - a. Under no circumstances will COPs identify themselves as law enforcement officers or present themselves in any way that might lead persons to believe that they have law enforcement authority.
 - b. COPs shall act as the “eyes and ears” for the police department in the performance of their duties.

B. REQUIREMENTS (CFA 2.09M) (CFA 13.01M)

1. Volunteer hours shall be determined by the sworn or civilian coordinator according to department needs.
2. COPs may be subject to calls for assistance.
3. COPs shall attend department meetings and training.

C. DUTIES (CFA 13.01M)

1. The primary function of the COP program is to assist the police department through observation, increasing public presence in the neighborhoods, reporting suspicious activity, and providing assistance to the public.
2. Duties that a COP may perform are:
 - a. Search for missing persons.

- b. Patrol the community for suspicious activity.
 - c. Patrol the community for safety hazards.
 - d. Conduct residential, vacation, business, and park checks.
 - e. Patrol for graffiti and property damage.
 - f. Conduct traffic control but shall not have enforcement authority.
 - g. Perform non-hazardous directed patrol assignments.
 - h. Assist citizens with disabled vehicles.
 - i. Serve as school crossing guard.
 - j. Assist in crime prevention programs.
 - k. Assist with disaster response.
 - l. Other duties as directed by the Chief of Police, or designee.
- D. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS
- 1. The COP program sworn coordinator shall review new [Cocoa Beach Police Department Volunteer Applications](#).
 - 2. The minimum requirements for COP volunteer program membership are:
 - a. Be at least 19 years of age.
 - b. Be a Brevard County resident.
 - c. Not have been dishonorably discharged from the United States military.
 - d. Not have been convicted or pled no contest to a felony or any offense which would be a felony if committed in Florida.
 - e. Not have been convicted of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.
 - f. Not have used any controlled substances within the last 2 years other than prescription drugs under the guidance of a licensed physician.
 - g. Not be addicted to any legal or illegal substance including alcohol, or prescription drugs. Applicants may be required to submit to drug and alcohol testing.
 - h. Possess a valid driver's license. Driving history may disqualify an applicant from the COP program. Unlicensed applicants may be considered but will be restricted to duties not requiring vehicle operation.
 - i. Be able to perform the essential functions of the assigned duties.
 - j. Pass a background investigation.
- E. UNIFORMS
- 1. The department shall provide:
 - a. identification card
 - b. uniform
 - c. windbreaker or jacket
 - d. rain jacket
 - e. traffic vest
 - f. whistle
 - g. ball cap
 - 2. COPs shall be responsible for providing their own black shoes. COPs operating on the waterway shall wear footwear appropriate for vessel operations.
 - 3. COPs are expected to present a professional appearance.
 - 4. Issued uniforms will be the only acceptable attire for COPs while on duty. COPs shall not wear their uniforms off-duty, except when travelling directly to and from their residence and their assigned patrol area.
 - 5. COP identification card shall be displayed while on duty.
- F. CONDUCT

1. COPs represent the department while acting in their official capacity and must conduct themselves professionally.
2. COPs shall be polite and courteous to the public and members of the department at all times.
3. COPs will comply with all lawful instructions given by sworn officers.
4. COPs shall restrict their activity to those tasks and duties for which they have been trained.
5. COPs shall not display their identification or uniform to secure special privileges or personal gain.
6. A COP's position with the department may provide them with access to confidential or
7. sensitive information. This information shall not be divulged to unauthorized persons.
8. No COP shall report for duty while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
9. COPs shall respond to the sworn coordinator for information concerning citizen complaint investigations on COP members. Investigations may require verbal and written information which shall be provided if requested by the sworn coordinator.
10. While on duty, COPs shall not carry firearms or other weapons on their person, in department vehicles or facilities. This includes COPS who have been issued a Florida State Concealed Weapons permit.
11. Any department supervisor has the authority to relieve a COP of duty if they are observed violating any law, City policy, or department policy. The Chief of Police, or designee, shall be notified immediately of such action.
12. Any COP who is arrested for any crime shall make notification to the Chief of Police through their chain of command.
13. The use of tobacco products is prohibited while on duty.

G. TRAINING (CFA 13.01M)

1. COPs will be required to complete the following training prior to assignment:
 - a. Department Standard Operating Procedures
 - b. Accreditation Orientation
 - c. Criminal Justice Information Services Training
2. COP members may perform a variety of duties which may require specialized training to include, but not limited to:
 - a. Radio Communications
 - b. Vehicle Operations
 - c. Vessel Operations
 - d. Special Purpose Vehicles
 - e. Traffic Control
 - f. School Crossing Guard
 - g. Basic Boating Familiarization
3. The [Volunteer – Citizen Observer Patrol Program Training Checklist](#) may be used as a guide for onboarding new COPs.

H. RESPONSIBILITIES (CFA13.01M)

1. Upon reporting for duty, COPs shall inquire with the shift supervisor as to any areas of special attention or tasks they can assist with.
2. COPs shall patrol in two (2) member teams, unless otherwise authorized by the Chief of Police, or designee.
3. COPs shall contact the Communications Center on the designated channel prior to the start of their shift, advising them of their ID and vehicle number.
4. COPs will complete all paperwork prior to the end of their shift.
5. Upon completing a shift or assignment, COPs shall fuel the vehicle used, if below half full, and return the vehicle to its assigned location. Prior to going out of service, each member shall check out with the Communications Center and record the time.

6. When COPs observe any suspicious or criminal activity, they shall immediately withdraw to a position of safety and contact the Communications Center to request law enforcement assistance. Determination of suspicious activity shall not be based on a person's racial or ethnic status or characteristics.
7. COPs shall not deliberately or knowingly put themselves in any dangerous situations nor approach suspicious persons or vehicles.
8. COPs shall not conduct traffic stops under any circumstances.
9. COPs shall never operate the department vehicle in an emergency capacity.
10. COPs shall comply with all applicable traffic laws when operating department vehicles.
11. COPs shall not conduct interrogations, field interviews or any other act which would imply directly or indirectly, that they are a law enforcement officer taking enforcement action .
12. COPs shall contact the Communications Center when getting in and out of the vehicle.
13. COPs shall comply with applicable department directives, laws, and local ordinances.
14. COPs shall not respond to the scene of police investigations or apprehension efforts unless directed by a police supervisor.
15. COPs shall only respond to calls for service which are directed by the Communications Center or the on-duty shift supervisor, with the exception of incidents that are approved for COPs or are encountered while on patrol.
16. All COPs are responsible for recording their hours worked, actions taken and for the timely submission of the data to the civilian coordinator.
17. Each COP shall be responsible for utilizing the proper department forms. All department forms shall be issued and maintained by the sworn coordinator.
 - a. Common forms specific to the COP program are:
 - b. [Citizen Observer Patrol Volunteer Activity Log](#)
 - c. [Citizen Observer Patrol House Check Activity Log](#)
 - d. [Citizen Observer Patrol Marine Patrol Activity Log](#)

I. RECORDS

1. COP records are official Cocoa Beach Police Department records and shall be maintained by the sworn coordinator in accordance with department directives.

J. VEHICLE USE

1. Vehicles shall be equipped with an amber lens light bar. The light bar shall only be used for official purposes.
2. Operators and passengers are required to wear seatbelts.
3. Vehicles shall be locked when not in use.
4. COPs shall not add or modify any equipment or device installed on a department vehicle.
5. Prior to driving the vehicle, COPs shall perform the following maintenance safety checks:
 - a. Check tires for proper inflation and excessive wear.
 - b. Check for damage and faulty equipment such as headlights, wipers, etc. Any damage to vehicles, vessels or equipment is to be reported to the on-duty shift supervisor.
6. COPs shall carry and monitor only the department issued police radio while on patrol.
7. Vehicles shall not be operated off paved roadways unless directed otherwise for a special assignment or function.

K. VESSEL OPERATIONS

1. Volunteer vessel duties will include but not be limited to:
 - a. Patrolling canals, channels and waterways within the city limits.
 - b. COPs are not responsible for enforcing any laws or regulations but are only tasked with maintaining a high-profile appearance on the waterways and reporting suspicious or suspected unlawful activity.

2. COPs must successfully complete the department's basic boating familiarization course before operating the COP vessel. Authorization to operate the COP vessel is restricted to those COPs that have been properly trained in vessel operations and are familiar with Cocoa Beach waterways. Documentation from an approved vessel training curriculum or boating association can be submitted to the office of the Chief for consideration of authorization.
 3. The COP vessel is clearly marked and readily distinguishable from law enforcement vessels and will be comparatively equipped to use the following items:
 - a. Police radio (800MHZ)
 - b. VHF marine radio
 - c. Personal Floatation Devices for operator and riders
 - d. Fire extinguisher
 - e. Spotlight
 - f. Anchor and anchor line
 - g. Handheld air horn
 - h. First aid kit
 - i. Department issued water rescue retriever.
 4. COPs shall not modify any equipment installed on the COP vessel.
 5. COPs shall report any deficiencies or other conditions that impact operations to the on-duty shift supervisor.
- L. NIGHTTIME OPERATIONS
1. COPs may assist at vehicle crash scenes, if directed. COPs shall only assist at crash scenes at night if they are properly equipped with reflective vest, flashlight, and flares/cones. COPs shall contact the Communications Center and advise of their location.
- M. INJURIES
1. Injuries sustained by COPs during the performance of their duties are subject to applicable Worker's Compensation benefits.
 2. Injuries shall be reported in accordance with department and City policies.