

# FORT MYERS POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 15.1

**TITLE:** Patrol Operations

**INDEXING:** Patrol Operations; Patrol Responsibilities; Types of Patrol

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish the Patrol Division's function within the police department.

## SCOPE

These procedures shall apply to all Fort Myers Police Department personnel.

## DISCUSSION

The patrol force comprises the largest and most visible segment of the entire police department. Members assigned to the Patrol Division are responsible for the vast majority of all case closures, including arrests, recovery of property, aid to citizens, and protection of the public. No specialized unit or section contributes more to the department's reputation and goodwill than the Patrol Division. This general order outlines the patrol officers' responsibilities to the community and to the police department.

## SECTION I: PATROL/SHIFT ASSIGNMENTS (CALEA 41.1.1a,b,c,d,e,f)

- A. The police department provides twenty-four (24) hour a day, 365 day a year, emergency response and patrol coverage, officers shall report for their duty shift as assigned. Patrol Shift briefings shall be held daily at the beginning of each shift, pursuant to General Order 15.2 – Patrol Briefings. All officers are to report fully prepared to assume their duties. **(CFA 17.01M)**
1. Shift Assignments: Patrol shifts are designated as either Day or Night. Personnel are assigned to patrol shifts based on vacancies in a particular shift. It is, however, within the Operations Bureau Commander's authority to approve patrol members changing shifts for the purposes of:
- Furtherance of a member's formal education;
  - Family problems;
  - Health problems; and
  - Personal reasons approved by the commander.

2. Days Off/Rotation: Patrol Officers work 12 hour shifts and work 2 days, off 2 days; work 3 days, off 2 days; work 2 days, off 3 days. This translates to weekends off every other weekend. The schedule is prepared bi-annually.

Each day of the week is designed to maintain adequate coverage; however, if certain events or situations arise that require extra patrol on certain days of the week, it is within the Bureau Commander's authority to rearrange patrol members' days off in order to provide adequate coverage. Such rearrangements must be made in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

3. Routine Patrol Assignments: Officers shall be assigned to a geographical area (Ward/Zone), dependent upon the current needs of the respective Districts, for the purpose of providing police services to the citizens and / or businesses located there. Transfers from District to District shall be contingent upon supervisory approval.
4. Special assignment: Officers may be assigned, on or off-duty, to specific duty posts. The assignment may consist of contractual security for a private business or citizen (off-duty), or to guard a prisoner (on-duty). These assignments are usually short term and determined by the special needs of the community.
5. General considerations: Unless otherwise detailed, directed, or dispatched, no officer shall leave their assigned area without first obtaining proper relief or supervisory permission. All officers shall properly patrol their assignment area.

## **SECTION II: METHODS OF PATROLLING**

- A. Vehicular Patrol: Motor vehicle patrol is the primary method of patrolling. This consists of operating a marked or unmarked vehicle.
- B. Bicycle Patrol: Bike patrol is an alternative patrol method available to all properly trained officers. Bike patrols enable officers to interact more with the public. (See General Order 18.3 – Bicycle Unit)
- C. Foot Patrol: Foot patrol is an alternative patrol method available to all officers so that they can interact more with the public.
- D. Marine Patrol: This type of patrol is generally one that is assigned to specially trained officers and encompasses patrolling all waterways in the City. Only those officers possessing the required training shall perform marine duties. (See General Order 18.4 – Marine Unit)

## **SECTION III: RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Preventive Patrol: The deployment of personnel is designed to allow for a certain amount of time for preventive patrol. This time should be directed toward solving specific problems within each response area based upon each officer's assessment of these problems. A combination of the following is suggested:
  1. Traffic enforcement: Based upon data available through personal knowledge, statistical data, and information from the Traffic Enforcement Unit.
  2. Discovery of Hazards: Officers should become familiar with their response area so they can thoroughly & actively patrol all communities within their area of responsibility. Immediate action should be taken in emergency situations, and the incidents shall be reported to the appropriate entity or agency for proper follow-up.

3. Directed Patrol: Based upon data obtained from patrol briefings, supervisors, BOLO's, or from Crime Analysis.

B. Crime prevention: It is part of a patrol officer's responsibility to act as a crime prevention specialist. Officers shall identify and interact with organized crime prevention groups and Neighborhood Watch Associations within their assigned areas of responsibility. Additionally, upon completion of investigations of crimes, officers should offer empathetic advice to the victim on how crime may be prevented in the future. The victim may also be referred to the Community **Engagement** Coordinator or District Lieutenant for further assistance.

C. Investigation and Detection of Crime: All reported and detected crime must be thoroughly investigated. Officers shall know the crimes that require the response of a special unit and / or supervisor and should take the appropriate action taken. Patrol officers will conduct follow-up investigations on misdemeanor complaints when further information or evidence is available, and when directed to do so by a supervisor. All preliminary and follow-up investigations will be properly reported. Community **Engagement** Coordinator's will assist when possible for crimes occurring in the areas of responsibility. Follow-up investigations may consist of: **(CALEA 42.2.2a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h)**

1. Reviewing and analyzing all reports prepared in the preliminary phase.
2. Collect physical evidence and review laboratory findings.
3. Conducting interviews as necessary to include officers, informants, etc.
4. Reviewing pertinent departmental records.
5. Arranging for the appropriate dissemination of information.
6. Identify and apprehend suspect(s).
7. Planning, organizing and conducting searches.
8. Preparation for court presentation.
9. Assisting the State Attorney's Office in the prosecution.
10. Determine suspect's involvement in other crimes.
11. Second contacts shall be made with principals involved in a case that require follow-up investigations.

D. Traffic Direction & Control: Each officer is responsible for the safe and efficient flow of traffic in their assigned area while on-duty. Hazards constituting an immediate threat of life and property shall be dealt with immediately. The officer discovering such a hazard will attempt to correct the problem or, if beyond their capabilities, notify the dispatcher and divert or control traffic as necessary to protect the public. The Communications Center will contact the proper agency and request appropriate response for the correction of the hazard. The officer will remain at this post until the hazard has been corrected, proper action has been taken to protect the public, or when relieved by proper authority. Existing hazards that do not pose an immediate threat to life and property shall be reported to the dispatcher. The Communications Center will notify the proper agency and request appropriate response. Potential hazards shall be reported in writing to the Shift Commander.

- E. Regulation of Business: Generally, the department is not directly involved in the regulation of business activities. However, there are certain statutes and ordinances concerning businesses that require and authorize the attention of law enforcement agencies. Each officer should be familiar with the businesses in their assigned area and those statutes and ordinances directed related to business activity. (Examples: Alcohol sales, special events, etc.) Each officer should also be aware of the general responsibilities of other agencies, (ABT, etc.) dealing in business regulation so referrals can be made, when necessary.
- F. General public contacts: Patrol officers shall attempt to establish and foster understanding and cooperation with citizens through positive, professional contacts.
- G. Other department functions: Patrol officers should be familiar with the duties and responsibilities of other units, bureaus, or sections within the department and the proper method for communicating with and utilizing those resources.

**SECTION IV: SHIFT STAFFING**

- A. *To ensure adequate coverage and operational effectiveness, no more than three (3) patrol officers shall be off on scheduled vacation or training at any given time without prior approval of the Bureau Commander. If fewer than three (3) officers are on scheduled vacation or training, but three (3) or more officers are simultaneously absent due to FMLA, Military Leave, Sick Leave, Workers' Compensation Leave, or other extended leave, only the Bureau Commander may authorize vacation or training leave, up to the normal total of three (3) officers off at any given time. Exceptions may be granted by the Bureau Commander based on operational needs, special circumstances, or staffing considerations.*

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**REFERENCES:**

General Order 15.2 – Patrol Briefings

General Order 18.3 – Bicycle Unit

General Order 18.4 – Marine Unit

**APPROVED:**

**[DIGITAL SIGNATURE ON FILE]**

**12/05/2025**

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**Jason Fields, Chief of Police  
Fort Myers Police Department**

**Date**