



# Herndon Police Department GENERAL ORDERS

## Operations Section

304

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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### I. POLICY

The department recognizes the importance of community engagement to promote active citizen and police partnerships, foster interactive communication, and support crime prevention efforts that enhance awareness and deters crime. Effective community engagement supports the department's core mission and commitment to ensure the safety and protection of the community.

### II. PURPOSE AND GOALS

A. The Herndon Police Department is committed to engaging the community through:

1. Activities and programs that support crime prevention and community involvement by working with citizens, businesses, and others towards the common goal of interactive partnerships.
2. Maintaining or improving practices that impact police/community relations.
3. Emphasizing to department members the merits of participating in crime prevention efforts and sharing the responsibility to achieve established objectives.
4. Educating the public, citizens, and businesses through planned programs designed to reduce risk and provide practical safety advice.
5. Publicizing department objectives, community concerns, and solutions to keep citizens informed.
6. Establishing alliances with formal community groups to maintain the flow of information between citizens and the department.
7. Analyzing and reporting criminal activity to focus active enforcement efforts.
8. Coordinating community events and programs and encouraging department/citizen participation.



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### III. PARTNERSHIPS

- A. Operational efforts that engage the cooperation of citizens, ascertain community concerns, assess crime risks and trends, and develop prevention programs are necessary to building and sustaining partnerships that align with community policing principles. The department actively seeks to build and sustain community partnerships through outreach and routine operations.
- B. Patrol supervisors are responsible for actively monitoring issues or concerns reported in the community. Supervisors must strive to become familiar with community businesses, neighborhood groups, and citizens to understand or identify issues or concerns they may have and to assess crime risks. Supervisors must ensure that issues and concerns are addressed and coordinate interactive strategies and/or prevention programs as appropriate.
- C. Officers who become aware of concerns or issues voiced by the community shall work towards resolution, if possible, and document the concern or issue in an incident report and classify it as a "District Concern". This information along with actions taken must be reviewed by a supervisor for follow-up or effective resolution. The status of the incident shall be listed as "active" until concerns or issues are resolved.
  - 1. District Concerns are classified as follows:
    - a. District Concern (Officer) – documents the **self-initiated** activities of an officer who encounters non-criminal activity or community concerns, such as zoning violations, residential overcrowding, unregistered business operations, or other events that are not specifically governed under Virginia or town criminal codes.
    - b. District Concern (Citizen) – documents incidents **reported** by a citizen that are non-criminal but have the potential to create problems requiring intervention from either police or other town departments.
    - c. Criminal Intel – documents reported incidents that may involve criminal violations.



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### D. Responsibilities

#### 1. Patrol Officers

- a. Officers are empowered to identify, address, and resolve issues or concerns in the most efficient manner and become familiar with residents and business owners.
- b. Officers must seek to become involved with communities, businesses and homeowners' associations, neighborhood watch groups, and others in the town to foster interactive and ongoing communication. This may include attending neighborhood meetings, speaking publicly at open business gatherings, contributing to social media alerts, and facilitating community events.
- c. Officers must act as community liaisons and refer public inquiries to appropriate officials. Officers must maintain an awareness of the various services provided by other town departments to ensure that they are prepared to accurately direct inquiries.
- d. Officers must document any district concern that comes to their attention in an incident report. Any follow-up activity shall be documented in a supplemental report to include details of the action taken to resolve the concern.

#### 2. Supervisors

- a. Routine summaries of events, crime statistics, and trends are distributed to department personnel from the crime analyst. These summaries support supervisors' efforts to monitor activities for proper disposition and coordinate needed efforts or strategies.
- b. Supervisors must keep their chain of command apprised of reported issues, potential concerns, or any information that would assist the department in building and strengthening community partnerships.



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### 3. Lieutenants

Field Operations lieutenants must keep division commanders informed of all district concerns that are being addressed and discuss any proposed strategies. The Field Operations commander will keep the Chief of Police informed of ongoing programs and efforts as they occur.

## IV. INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION

The department will foster interactive communication through public information outreach, social media, and other effective means to alert the public to important information and events or solicit their help when appropriate. Social media continues to be the most efficient method to interact with the public and groups in real-time and maintain communication with committed stakeholders and partners.

## V. CRIME PREVENTION EFFORTS

Effective crime prevention efforts are built upon an understanding of crimes, trends, and problems occurring in the town and the development and continuation of programs and efforts to address them. Crime prevention efforts will be focused on a review of crime statistics, supervisors' recommendations, and programs and outreach events designed to invite the community's involvement.

### A. Statistics

Reliable and meaningful statistics are critical to the department's mission to identify the types and severity of crimes occurring, both current and historical. The crime analyst will prepare and disseminate department-wide a quarterly statistical analysis of crime activity that details overall crime statistics to provide an in-depth perspective of incidents, calls for service, police activity, and district concerns.

### B. Supervisors' Recommendations

The Field Operations commander will review criminal activity and district concerns and work with supervisors to develop and implement appropriate prevention programs based on input received.



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C. Programs and Outreach

The department is committed to the development, implementation, and continuation of crime prevention programs that offer practical awareness and education, build rapport with the community, and aid in the elimination or reduction of risks and criminal incidents. Department members will be selected or assigned to coordinate programs or events identified to support or promote the department's mission, such as:

1. Activities and programs to include National Night Out and other events and activities that educate and promote interactive partnerships.
2. Educational prevention presentations on specific topics for citizens, businesses, and community groups.

VI. ADDITIONAL SERVICES

A. Ride-Along

The department offers a ride-along program that allows citizens, if approved, an opportunity to accompany patrol officers during their tour of duty. Ride-along applicants must be at least 18 years old, must meet certain requirements as provided on the application, and must submit an application and consent form for approval (HP 950 – Application for Ride-Along Program, and HP 951 (Adult) or HP951J (Juvenile) - Ride-Along Program Waiver Form). Final approval or denial of the application will be solely at the discretion of the Field Operations Division commander.