



<b>PROGRAMS</b>		<b>1401.00</b>		
		<b>VOLUNTEERS IN POLICING (VIP) PROGRAM</b>		
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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. These policies are intended for internal management guidance only, and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The Punta Gorda Police Department reserves the exclusive right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. Changes to or exceptions from these policies may only be granted by the Chief of Police.

**SCOPE**

This procedure shall apply to all Punta Gorda Police Department Members. Members shall include all employees and volunteers.

## DISCUSSION

The achievement of the goals of the Punta Gorda Police Department is best served by the active participation of citizens in the community. To this end, the Punta Gorda Police Department accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels of the Punta Gorda Police Department and within all appropriate programs and activities. All agency personnel are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles in which volunteers might serve and to assist in recruitment of volunteers from the community.

## DEFINITIONS

1. **VIP Program:** The Punta Gorda Police Department “Volunteers In Policing” Program.
2. **Volunteer:** Anyone who, without compensation or the expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the Punta Gorda Police Department. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the agency prior to performance of any tasks. Volunteers are considered members of the agency, however; unless specifically required by law, volunteers shall not be considered “employees” of the agency.

## PROCEDURE

### I. VIP PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND POSITIONS:

- A. The organization for the VIP Program is as follows (Refer to the attached table of organization):
  1. Program Administrator
  2. Support Unit Deputy Coordinator
  3. Marine Unit Deputy Coordinator
  4. Patrol Unit Deputy Coordinator
  5. Bicycle Unit Deputy Coordinator
  6. Support Services Admin Coordinator
  7. Administrative Coordinator
    - a. Training Unit Assistant

B. Volunteer Coordinators General Functions and Duties: Refer to Position Job Descriptions for more detail.

1. Attends quarterly Coordinator meetings.
2. Interview and approve all new volunteers assigned to their unit.
3. Conducts and documents all training for assigned volunteers in conjunction with the Training Assistant.
4. Prepares a monthly report of the unit's activities for the Administrative Coordinator.
5. Prepares and distributes monthly schedules for their unit.
6. Provides guidance and leadership for all assigned personnel.
7. Reports all accidents, injuries, or issues to the Watch Commander, assigned Coordinator and Program Administrator.
8. Assists with preparations for the department accreditation.
9. Establish a back-up to handle local duties when the unit coordinator is unavailable or out of town.
10. When notified that a volunteer's CJIS certification is expiring, follow through to determine that the volunteer has completed the training and that a copy of the certification certificate is provided to the Administration Coordinator.
11. Ensures all assigned personnel (volunteers) are properly trained and have current certificates as required.
12. Set up training for new volunteers.
13. All Coordinators and Deputy Coordinators shall follow the established chain of command when reporting any and all issues relating to the Volunteers in Policing Program.
14. Maintain a current CJIS certification.

C. Program Administrator:

1. The Program Administrator is accountable to the Support Services Division Commander.
2. The Program Administrator shall:

- a. Provide guidance and assistance to volunteers and supervisors consistent with department policy and guidelines. Coordinate manpower requests from police administration for special events and volunteer scheduling with the unit Coordinators. Prepare and submit monthly and fiscal year reports to the Chief of Police outlining VIP program manpower hourly reports, activities, recognition events, recruiting and promotions.
- b. Attend monthly department leadership meetings.
- c. Support the department by ensuring that all Special Events are adequately staffed by volunteers.
- d. Prepare, assemble, and maintain volunteer personnel files and databases. Assist in maintaining departmental guidelines for unit defined training requirements of all volunteer personnel and order, maintain, and monitor inventory on all departmental issued uniforms and equipment including the radios.
- e. In conjunction with the Support Unit Deputy Coordinator, process incoming volunteer applications and interview prospective volunteers. Review and screen volunteer applicants and initiate background checks on new applicants, review the results and process on board applicants to ensure all volunteer units have proper manpower requirements for scheduling. Notify appropriate coordinators for assignment approval. Submit prospective applicants for final on board approval to the Support Services Division Commander.
- f. Review and approve new volunteer applicants after processing by the Support Unit Deputy Coordinator.
- g. Assist Unit Coordinators with program duties, recognition events, recruiting, promotions and all volunteer functions.
- h. Work in conjunction with the Administration Coordinator to maintain volunteer personnel files.
- i. Assists in notification to City Human Resources of Marine Unit personnel changes for certifications and driver's license information.
- j. Monitor, supervise and when needed, perform duties of any units in the Volunteers on Patrol.
- k. Reviews all daily reports when submitted for each Volunteers on Patrol Unit. Upon his approval and review submits the Unit daily report to the Support Services Division Commander for approval.

#### D. Administrative Coordinator

1. The Administrative Coordinator shall report to the Program Administrator.
2. The Administrative Coordinator shall:
  - a. Maintain the Volunteer Contact List.
  - b. File and/or scan all documents into volunteer personnel files.
  - c. Assist Program Administrator with clerical tasks.
  - d. Assist Program Administrator with completion of the monthly, annual and fiscal reports to the Chief of Police.
  - e. Assist the Program Administrator with revising Job Description forms as needed.
  - f. Process all exit forms and documentation for volunteers leaving the program.
  - g. Create forms as needed to help with the daily flow of information throughout the VIP program.
  - h. Monitors and updates all documents for active certifications on all volunteers including Marine Certification, CJIS Certification, Blood Borne Pathogen Certifications, First Aid and CPR Certification.
  - i. Assists in notification to City Hall Personnel of Marine Unit personnel changes for certifications and driver's license information.
  - j. Assumes Program Administrator function when they are unavailable.

E. Training Assistant

1. The Training Assistant will assist the Program Administrator and Administrative Coordinator by facilitating all training of the volunteers (CJIS, Blood borne Pathogen, Phase I through Phase V Training, Annual Refresher Training). Responsibilities include:
  - a. Set up of classrooms, instructors, and associated documentation required to support the training class.
  - b. Notifying all volunteer personnel of the upcoming training class.
  - c. Updating all training documentation to reflect the training class attendance (Personnel files, RMS, monthly time reporting processes).

- d. Complete training entries for all refresher classes for each unit of the VIP Program, entering all participants and scanning agendas, class materials, etc in the volunteer's personnel files, as well as RMS.

F. Support Unit Deputy Coordinator

- 1. Shall report to the Program Administrator.
- 2. The Support Unit Deputy Coordinator shall:
  - a. Perform duties of Support Units Volunteer.
  - b. Oversee the following support unit functions:
    - i. Records
    - ii. Do the Right Thing Program
    - iii. Pension Board
    - iv. Community Services
  - c. Maintains a report for monthly hours performed by the support unit volunteers.
  - d. Coordinate with the Training Assistant all training for volunteers assigned to the Support Unit.
  - e. Set up and maintain monthly scheduling/staffing of reception desk, as well as any support activities.
  - f. Assist Records Administrative Personnel in assigning clerical tasks.
  - g. Maintain Records front desk and additional training manuals. Update all manuals as needed.
  - h. Coordinate community services volunteers for special events.

G. Marine Unit Deputy Coordinator

- 1. The Marine Unit Deputy Coordinator shall report to the Program Administrator.
- 2. The Marine Unit Deputy Coordinator shall:
  - a. Perform duties of a Marine Volunteer.
  - b. Review report for monthly hours performed by the marine volunteers.

- c. Maintain monthly schedules for marine volunteers and provide schedule and updates to Program Administrator in a timely manner.
- d. Ensure proper maintenance and maintain proper documents and equipment for the volunteer vessel.
- e. Interface with the Punta Gorda Police Department Marine Officer for training and procedural matters.
- f. Performs an initial proficiency check on all new marine volunteers.
- g. Reviews the proficiency of each volunteer throughout the year.
- h. Coordinate volunteers for special events.
- i. Interview prospective new volunteers for the Marine unit.
- j. Provide signed completed documents to Administration Coordinator to be recorded in the volunteers personnel file.
- k. Keeps the Program Administrator aware of Marine accidents, injuries or any other issues that may need their attention or coordination.
- l. Coordinate with the Training Assistant that all volunteers are properly trained prior to being scheduled for patrols.

H. Patrol Unit Deputy Coordinator

- 1. The Patrol Unit Deputy Coordinator shall report to the Program Administrator.
- 2. The Patrol Unit Deputy Coordinator shall:
  - a. Performs duties of Volunteers on Patrol.
  - b. Review monthly hours performed by the VOP volunteers.
  - c. Maintain monthly schedules for Volunteers on Patrol and provides schedule and updates to the Program Administrator and Administration Coordinator in a timely manner.
  - d. Ensures proper maintenance and maintains proper documents for all equipment in the vehicles.
  - e. Review the proficiency of each volunteer throughout the year.

- f. Coordinates volunteers for special events.
- g. Keep the Program Administrator aware of VOP accidents, injuries or any other issue that may need their attention or coordinator.
- h. Coordinate with the Training Assistant that all volunteers are properly trained prior to being scheduled for patrols.

I. Bike Unit Deputy Coordinator

- 1. The Bike Unit Deputy Coordinator shall report to the Program Administrator.
- 2. The Bike Unit Deputy Coordinator shall:
  - a. Perform Volunteer Bike Patrol Unit duties.
  - b. Maintain and review monthly hours performed by the Bike Patrol volunteers.
  - c. Establishes and maintains monthly schedules for Volunteer Bike Patrol and provides schedule and updates to the Program Administrator and Administration Coordinator in a timely manner.
  - d. Ensures proper maintenance and maintains proper documents for all equipment on the bikes.
  - e. Review the Proficiency of each volunteer throughout the year.
  - f. Coordinates volunteers for special events.
  - g. Keep the Program Administrator aware of Volunteer Bike Patrol accidents, injuries or any other issue that may need their attention or coordinator.
  - h. Coordinate with the Training Assistant that all volunteers are properly trained prior to being scheduled for patrols.

J. Support Services Admin Coordinator

- 1. Reports to the Program Administrator as well as to the Support Services Captain. Assists with activities related to the Professional Services Section, the Administrative Services Section, the Communications Section, the Community Services section and the Volunteer section
- 2. Assists the Support Services Captain with the planning and implementation of special agency projects.
- 3. Ensures that the Volunteer Program is conforming to all accreditation standards.

## II. ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER

- A. **Employees as Volunteers:** The Punta Gorda Police Department does not accept the services of employees as volunteers. Family members of employees are allowed to volunteer with the agency. When family members are enrolled as volunteers, they will not be placed under the direct supervision of other members of their family who are employees.
- B. **Service at the Discretion of the Agency:** The Punta Gorda Police Department accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the agency. The Punta Gorda Police Department may at any time, for any reason, decide to discontinue a volunteer's relationship with the department.
- C. **Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities:** Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to the department. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the department.
- D. **Scope of Volunteer Involvement:** Volunteers may be utilized in all programs and activities of the department appropriate to volunteerism. Volunteers should not however be utilized to displace any paid employees from their positions.
- E. **Authority and Latitude:** Volunteers have no sworn law enforcement powers. Volunteers shall direct their activities to those duties outlined in their position description.
- F. **Training:** Successfully complete initial familiarization and training programs as applicable. Attend annual refresher training as applicable.

## III. VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

- A. **Maintenance of Records**
  - 1. A system of records shall be maintained pertaining to each volunteer within the department including dates of service, positions held, duties performed, and evaluation of work, training records, and awards received. Volunteers and appropriate staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the Program Administrator in a timely and accurate fashion.
  - 2. Volunteer personnel records shall be accorded the same confidentiality as department personnel records.
- B. **Representation of the Agency:** Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the department as specifically indicated within their position descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications. Volunteers shall not be permitted to volunteer for another

law enforcement agency at the same time they are a current member with the Punta Gorda Police Department Volunteers in Policing Program, unless authorized by the Chief of Police.

C. Confidentiality

1. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves specific department personnel or other persons or involves overall department business.
2. Failure to maintain strict confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the department or other corrective action.

D. Worksite: If required, an appropriate worksite shall be established prior to the enrollment of any volunteer. The worksite shall contain necessary facilities, equipment and space to enable the volunteer to effectively perform his/her duties.

E. Dress Code and Appearance

1. Refer to [SOP 309.01 – Personnel Attire; Dress](#) for specific uniform guidelines.
2. As representatives of the department, volunteers, like agency personnel, are responsible for presenting a good image to members of the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Volunteers shall take care to present a neat, orderly and presentable appearance to the public. Hairstyles, facial hair, make-up, cosmetics, jewelry, and similar appearance factors will be displayed in a manner which does not interfere with the safety and productivity of the employee or their co-workers.
3. All volunteer uniforms will clearly distinguish them from sworn members.
4. The usage of tobacco products is regulated in [SOP 307.00 – Smoke-Free Workplace](#).

F. Timesheets

1. Individual volunteers are responsible for the accurate completion and timely submission of time sheets; if applicable.
2. Volunteers are expected to be able to contribute a minimum of twelve (12) hours per month.

G. Any injury sustained, no matter how minor, while functioning in the role of a volunteer shall be reported immediately to the on-duty Watch Commander. The Watch Commander shall make notification to the Program Administrator and Support Services Division Commander and complete notice of injury paperwork.

#### IV. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

##### A. Position Descriptions

1. Volunteers, just as paid staff, require a clear, complete and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position they are expected to fill. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a position description must be developed for each volunteer position. This position will be given to each accepted volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Position descriptions should be reviewed and updated at least once every two (2) years, or whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially.
2. All position descriptions shall include a description of the purpose and duties of the position, a designated supervisor and worksite, a timeframe for the performance of the duties, and a listing of the position qualifications. The Volunteer Coordinators are available to assist department personnel with the development of volunteer position descriptions.

- B. Staff Request for Volunteers: Requests for volunteers shall be submitted in writing by interested staff, complete with a draft position description and a requested timeframe. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting duties and by advance notice. The Chief of Police, through the Volunteer Coordinator, reserves the right to refuse to recruit or place volunteers until personnel are prepared to make effective use of volunteer resources.

##### C. Recruitment

1. Volunteers shall be recruited by the department on a pro-active basis with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community.
2. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age or cultural group.
3. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific function. No final acceptance of a volunteer shall take place without a specific written volunteer position description for the volunteer.
4. Volunteers shall meet the following minimum qualifications:
  - a. Resident of Charlotte County;
  - b. Valid driver's license;

- c. Be in good physical condition. Those members assigned to Volunteer on Patrol positions must be able to physically write citations or warnings, drive a vehicle, ride a bicycle, operate a boat (as applicable), conduct foot patrols and perform the duties of a traffic control volunteer (as applicable).
  - d. Minimum Age – 18 years old.
  - e. Must possess a high school diploma or GED.
- D. Interviewing: Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers will complete an application and be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for and interest in that position. The interview should determine the qualifications of the volunteer, their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the position, and should answer any questions that the volunteer might have about the position. Interviews will be conducted in person initially with the Program Administrator and/or the Support Unit Deputy Coordinator and then subsequently with the Deputy Coordinator of the unit that meets the volunteer’s desires and abilities.
- E. Background Investigation: All applicants for the position of volunteer will be subject to a background investigation, which includes but is not limited to a driver’s license check criminal history check, fingerprint check, and local records check.
- F. Placement
- 1. In placing a volunteer in a position, attention shall be paid to the interest and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising personnel can be met. No volunteer should be assigned to a “make-work” position and no position should be given to an unqualified or uninterested volunteer.
  - 2. Final assignment of a potential volunteer should not take place without review by appropriate staff with whom the volunteer will be working. The final assignment will be designated as the volunteer’s primary unit.
- G. Acceptance and Appointment
- 1. Service as a volunteer shall begin with an official notice of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer position. Notice may only be given by an authorized representative of the department, normally the Program Administrator.
  - 2. Any screening procedures appropriate for the specific position must be completed, even if the volunteer has already been working with the department.
- H. Reassignment

1. Volunteers who are at any time reassigned to a new position shall be interviewed for the position and shall receive all appropriate orientation and training for that position before they begin work. This will become the volunteer's primary unit.
2. Any screening procedures appropriate for the specific position must be completed, even if the volunteer has already been working with the department.

#### I. Secondary Assignments

1. Volunteers who are interested in volunteering in another unit shall get the approval of their current Deputy Coordinator.
2. Volunteers who are interested in volunteering in another unit will need to be on their existing unit for at least 6 months.
  - a. Volunteers who have a secondary assignment will need to work a minimum of 2 shifts on their primary unit before scheduling their secondary unit.
  - b. If a volunteer wants to change their primary unit they must notify and receive approval from the Program Administrator and their Deputy Coordinator for such a change.

J. Professional Services: Volunteers shall not perform professional services for which certification of licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so. A copy of such certificate or license shall be maintained by the Program Coordinator.

K. Leave of Absence: At the discretion of the Support Services Division Commander and upon recommendation of the Program Administrator, leaves of absence may be granted to volunteers. Any leave of absence granted will be reviewed after six (6) months and a determination made by the Program Administrator, the Deputy Coordinator(s) and the Support Services Division Commander if the volunteer should be released from the program.

### V. VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

A. Orientation: All volunteers shall receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the department, an orientation of the nature and operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited, and a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the position which they are accepting. These orientations shall be provided by the Program Administrator.

#### B. On-the-Job Training

1. Volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their particular volunteer assignment. The

- timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.
2. Each volunteer shall receive specific training concerning duties and responsibilities identified in any role to which they are assigned. This training shall be documented in a training curriculum/outline and shall be maintained in the volunteer's individual file.

C. Staff/Volunteer Involvement in Orientation and Training

1. Staff members with responsibility over delivery of services should have an active role in the design and delivery of both orientation and training of volunteers. Those staff members who will be in a supervisory capacity over volunteers shall have primary responsibility with input from supervisory staff and the Program Administrator for the design and delivery of on-the-job training of volunteers assigned to them.
2. Experienced volunteers should be included in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training.

## VI. VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION

- A. Each volunteer who is accepted to a position within the department must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.
- B. Volunteers and employees are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the department, with each having an equal but complimentary role to play. It is essential to the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.
- C. Volunteers are considered a valuable resource in performing the department's work and Deputy Coordinators are encouraged to seriously consider creative ways in which volunteers might be of service. Volunteers should consult with their Unit Deputy Coordinator if they feel in need of assistance and additional training.
- D. Certain volunteer functions require that affected Police Department employees be involved in all evaluation and work assignments of volunteers with whom they are connected, (i.e. CIS.)
- E. Absenteeism: Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regularly scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from scheduled duty, volunteers should inform their Volunteer Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator as far in advance as possible, so that alternative arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

F. Substitution

1. Volunteers may be encouraged to find a substitute for any upcoming absences that might be filled by another volunteer. Such substitution should only be made following consultation with a supervisor and care should be taken to find a substitute who is qualified for the position. The volunteer should notify their Deputy Coordinator of any substitutions made.
2. Substitutes may only be recruited from those who are currently enrolled as volunteers within the same unit (i.e. Records/Marine/VOP) with the department.

**VII. VOLUNTEER EVALUATION**

A. Standards of Performance

1. The Unit Deputy Coordinator will be responsible to provide appropriate feedback to the volunteer.

B. Dismissal of a Volunteer: Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the department or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. Prior to the dismissal of a volunteer, the Program Administrator shall consult with the Support Services Division Commander.

C. Evaluation of Department Volunteer Utilization: The Program Administrator shall conduct an annual evaluation of the utilization of volunteers by the department and the report shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police via the appropriate chain of command.

**VIII. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION**

A. Volunteer recognition shall be conducted quarterly and annually at a forum as designated by the Chief of Police.

B. All employees and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake ongoing methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition should range from “Thank You” to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in program decision making and implementation.

APPROVED



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**PAMELA R. SMITH, CHIEF OF POLICE**

**STAFF REVIEW DATES:** 01-31-1998, 04-21-2000, 05-28-2002, 11-12-2003, 01-05-2005, 08-07-2007, 01-02-2008, 09-01-2008, 10-20-2009, 07-18-2011, 08-26-2016, 10-28-2014, 11-17-2017, 06-15-2018, 10-15-2019, 10-06-2020, 08-13-2021, 03-07-2024, 02-26-2026

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