



Seattle Police Department Policy Manual



16.240 – Mutual Aid

Original Effective Date: 08/01/2022

Revised Effective Date: 10/22/2024

Revised Effective Date: 05/27/2025

16.240-POL

The Seattle Police Department (SPD) has agreements with outside agencies that govern assistance with public safety operations. This manual section applies to the workflow of official mutual aid requests between SPD and outside agencies and does not alter those agreements.

This manual section is not intended to apply to routine operations such as providing backup to a neighboring agency officer on a traffic stop or investigating an incident that begins in one jurisdiction that happens to cross into another.

1. Classifying Small-Scale Mutual Aid Requests

Small-scale requests cover support between agencies as a part of planned short-term operations. These operations do not involve committing a large number of personnel or significant resources.

2. Classifying Large-Scale Event Requests

Large-scale events are typically planned in advance and cover support between agencies as part of larger planned operations. These operations are longer in duration or require a significant commitment of personnel or other resources.

3. Watch or Unit Commanders Screen Small-Scale Mutual Aid Requests

Patrol watch commanders or specialty/follow up unit commanders with the rank of lieutenant or above screen incoming and outgoing small-scale requests for assistance.

These commanders may authorize sending SPD personnel and resources under their command to assist an outside agency.

- If after screening an incoming request, the watch or unit commander determines that the request rises to the level of a large-scale event, the commander will follow the screening procedure for large-scale events.

4. The Seattle Police Operations Center (SPOC) Screens Large-Scale Requests

Seattle Police Department Policy Manual

Employees receiving a request for assistance from another agency for a planned or large-scale event happening in the future will forward that request to SPOC. SPOC will evaluate the request and coordinate the response.

The Operations Bureau Chief or the Night Duty Captain, if after hours, screens time-sensitive mutual aid requests that arrive outside of SPOC's operating hours.

5. Mutual Aid Requests Must Contain Sufficient Information

When receiving an incoming request for assistance from another agency, the request must include detailed information to accurately determine if SPD can accommodate the request.

When SPD sends an outgoing request for assistance to another agency, SPD will include this same information.

Both incoming and outgoing requests must include the following:

- The nature of the event or situation
- Available and appropriate planning document such as an IAP or Briefing Sheet
- Specific tasks the responding agency is being asked to perform
- Estimated number of personnel requested
- List of other equipment, uniforms, vehicles, or resources requested
- Estimated duration the personnel and/or resources will be needed
- An agreement that the responding agency will notify the requesting agency of any enforcement activity and uses of force during the event and provide any relevant paperwork related to the event.

The responding agency has the right to place any limitations or controls over their personnel as they see fit. A responding agency may withdraw their personnel from mutual aid as they see fit.

6. Only Designated Personnel May Formally Grant or Request Mutual Aid Assistance

The Chief of Police, the Deputy Chief of Police (or designee), the Chief Operating Officer, or any Assistant Chief may formally approve or request large-scale mutual aid assistance on behalf of the department.

In exigent circumstances, if the Chief of Police, the Deputy Chief of Police (or designee), the Chief Operating Officer, and any Assistant Chief are unreachable,

Seattle Police Department Policy Manual

the Night Duty Captain or Incident Commander may give the approval or make the request.

7. SPD Tracks All Mutual Aid Assistance and Requests

Commanders will document all incoming and outgoing mutual aid requests on a Mutual Aid Request Tracking form (form 28.9) and send the form to SPOC.

8. SPD Retains Primary Investigative Responsibility

When other agencies provide enforcement assistance to SPD, SPD personnel will assume primary investigative responsibility.

Whenever an outside agency provides enforcement assistance to the department, SPD officers will complete any citations issued for municipal offenses. The outside agency officer will be listed as a witness.

SPD will investigate force used by SPD officers assisting another jurisdiction while providing mutual aid.

9. SPD Routine Interaction with Washington State Patrol (WSP)

To ensure uniformity in an investigation and to expedite the processing of a suspect, SPD personnel assigned to assist WSP will complete any required reports and citations.

For felony arrests, WSP personnel will work under the direction of an SPD sergeant or above who will ensure that the processing of the arrest and reports are completed expeditiously, to return the WSP Trooper(s) to their duties without undue delay.

The WSP Trooper will be provided with the event number. Records will provide copies of relevant reports to WSP.