

308.3 TPD SAFE PLACE PROGRAM

- I. PURPOSE: To create a protocol by which the program known as TPD SAFE PLACE will be managed at the Tampa Police Department.
- II. DISCUSSION: The TPD SAFE PLACE PROGRAM is a partnership between businesses, government entities, community groups, schools and the Tampa Police Department. The program is designed to foster trust between the community and the Tampa Police Department. In addition it provides a safe place for victims of student bullying and hate crimes to remain in until law enforcement arrival. Businesses, government entities, community groups and schools participating in the TPD SAFE PLACE program have voluntarily agreed to be named a TPD SAFE PLACE where these victims can call 911 and remain inside their building in a “safe place” until law enforcement arrival.

The Tampa Police Department maintains a zero tolerance towards hate crimes and regards the investigation and prosecution of these crimes as serious regardless of the circumstances. In order for the Tampa Police Department to effectively document and investigate hate crimes, community trust must be developed and maintained. The TPD SAFE PLACE program is designed to foster trust and develop stronger community support.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. LGBT Liaison - Sworn employee who acts as a liaison between the department and the LGBT community and oversees the operation of the TPD SAFE PLACE program.
- B. TPD SAFE PLACE Decal - A standardized decal provided by the Tampa Police Department to businesses, government entities, community groups, and schools which have agreed to become members of the TPD SAFE PLACE program.
- C. Hate Crime - A hate crime is any committed or attempted criminal act against another person or another person’s property motivated by prejudice toward the victim based on the race, color, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, homeless status, mental or physical disability (F.S. 775.0863) or advanced age (older than 65) of the victim. (See F.S. 775.085.)
- D. TPD SAFE PLACE Database - A program which provides an updated summary of current TPD SAFE PLACE locations and a means for regularly contacting the designated TPD SAFE PLACE business representative.

IV. PROCEDURE:

- A. The LGBT Liaison will ensure that each business, government entity, community group, and school that participates has been properly trained on calling 911 and that they have agreed to allow victims to remain on property until police arrival. They should also have a room on the premise that can be locked or be willing to lock the front door until police arrive. TPD District Offices and Rich Houses are designated as a dedicated TPD Safe Place. All locations will have to ensure access to a phone (hard line or cell) to call 911. The business and government entity will then receive a standardized TPD SAFE PLACE decal provided by the Tampa Police Department. The LGBT Liaison or a member of the Tampa Police Department will personally apply the TPD SAFE PLACE decal on each premise to reflect participation in the program. The LGBT Liaison will meet with the business owners and organization leaders to verify that each premise claiming to be a TPD SAFE PLACE participant is posted correctly. The decals should ideally be placed 3'- 5' from the ground, at the front entrance or as close as possible. Employees, volunteers, teachers and staff are also instructed to follow their employer's policies and procedures and not engage in any activity that will endanger them or others on the premise. This program is not designed for residential use and the TPD SAFE PLACE decal shall not be affixed to any residence. The LGBT Liaison will ensure that each TPD SAFE PLACE location is in compliance with the program and its regulations on an annual basis.
- B. The School Resource Officer assigned to a participating school will be responsible for ensuring school employees are trained to immediately document and report any allegations of student bullying. Allegations of hate crimes to students or school officials will be reported to the SRO or other law enforcement official for investigation and documentation. The TPD SAFE PLACE program also mandates that the participating school allow the student to remain inside the reporting location, with a responsible and trusted adult, until school officials and/or police arrive. For schools, the TPD SAFE PLACE decals should be placed at the front office, and at the entrance to the student's GSA (Gay/Straight Alliance) room. The application of the decal will be done by the SRO or in the absence of the SRO, the LGBT liaison.
- C. All participating businesses, government entities, community groups, and schools will be maintained in a TPD SAFE PLACE program database. This database will be maintained by the LGBT Liaison.
- D. Officers will understand that businesses, government entities, community groups and schools participating in this program are doing so voluntarily. Officers will treat calls that originate from TPD SAFE PLACE locations in the same manner as any dispatched call. The officer will determine if the reported incident is a hate crime in accordance with SOP 310 and Florida State Statute. If so, a General Offense report will be originated utilizing the Hate Crime bias field in the MRE. Designation of a TPD SAFE PLACE does not create an environment where the

victim or offense is treated with preference or priority by the Tampa Police Department.

Supersedes SOP 308.3, dated 12/21.