

# **Waltham Police Department**

## **CHAPTER 55**

### **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

***General Order #: GO-01***

***Effective Date: 01/2009, 06/2014, 03/2024***

***Accreditation Standard #'s: 45.2.1***

#### **POLICY:**

It shall be the policy of the Waltham Police Department to establish close ties with and respond to the needs of the community. The department shall do all within its power to increase communication with groups having important police problems, or affected by important police problems. We must listen, exchange ideas, and be responsive in order to effectively deal with areas of mutual concern. [45.2.1]

Community relations are, of course, the responsibility of every department member. Every member must perform their duty with the interest of every citizen in mind without showing favoritism or animosity. Every officer must be knowledgeable in human relations and conduct themselves in a manner that enhances mutual respect. It must be remembered that all department members share the responsibility for achieving and maintaining the department's community relations objectives.

The Waltham Police Department is committed to correcting actions, practices, and attitudes that may contribute to community tensions and grievances. All members of the department should attempt to recognize and resolve such problems at the earliest stage so that greater problems in the future may be avoided. To this end, the following procedures shall constitute our plan.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

##### **1. COMMUNITY RELATIONS FUNCTION:**

A well-organized community relations operation can act as an effective means of eliciting public support and can serve to identify problems in the making. It is recognized that each member of the department has the responsibility for promoting community relations. To enhance the attainment of this objective the Chief of Police shall designate a superior officer as the Community Relations Officer. This officer shall report directly to the Chief of Police on matters of community relations. (The job description of the Community Relations Officer is found in Regulation 111.8.)

**a. COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER:**

Through the Community Relations Officer, the department will attempt to establish "grass roots" community support. The Community Relations Officer will:

1. Establish liaison with formal community organizations and other community groups.
2. Develop and review the community relations policies for the department, and if necessary, update those policies.
3. Make every effort to publicize the department's objectives, problems, and successes. This can be achieved by contributing articles to the local papers and, when available, public information segments through local radio, television and social media.
4. Convey information transmitted from citizens organizations to the department.
5. Improve the department's practices that have a bearing on police community relations.
6. Identify any training needs through interviews with citizens representatives, consultations with those involved with internal investigations and conferences with supervisors. These needs will be brought to the attention of the Training Unit.
7. Through community outreach, establish community groups where none exist. This will be achieved with the cooperation of the Office of the Mayor of Waltham, business groups, church groups, social clubs, and other organizations or individuals.
8. Report orally to the Chief of Police, no less than monthly, regarding concerns expressed by the public. Semi-annually, an evaluation of the community relations programs will be included. Such report shall include the following:
  - a. A description of current concerns voiced by the community.
  - b. A description of potential problems that have a bearing on law enforcement activities within the community.
  - c. A statement of recommended actions that address previously identified concerns and problems.

**b. REPORTING TO COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER:**

In order to ensure that information transmitted from citizens or citizens' organizations are conveyed to the department, the Crime Prevention, School Resource Officers and Safety Officers will report to the Community Relations Officer at least four times a year, with updates as needed. In addition, it is the responsibility of every officer to make their immediate supervisors aware of any community relations problems they may identify.

**c. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES:**

Through review of our policies, procedures, practices, complaints, and annual public opinion poll, the Community Relations Officer must be alert to take any opportunity to improve those practices that have a bearing on community relations.