

	HARRISONBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT General Orders	Policy Number: 511
	Chapter: Investigation Operations	Total Pages: 3
	Section: Hate Crimes	Issue Date: 07/02/2021
	Issued By: Kelley Warner, Chief of Police	Effective Date: 07/02/2021
	Replaces: All General Orders Previously Issued Relative to Subject	
VALEAC Standards:		

A. POLICY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide members of this department with guidelines for identifying and investigating incidents and crimes that may be motivated by hatred or other bias. The Harrisonburg Police Department recognizes and places a high priority on the rights of all individuals guaranteed under the state and federal constitution and incorporated in state and federal law.

B. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this policy. Responsibility rests with the supervisor to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated. This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

C. DEFINITIONS

Hate crime - A crime motivated by prejudice based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or disability of the victim. This includes a crime committed for the purpose of restraining a person from exercising rights under the constitutions or laws of the United States and the Commonwealth ([VA Code § 52-8.5](#)).

D. INVESTIGATIONS

Whenever any member of this department receives a report of a suspected hate crime or other activity that reasonably appears to involve a potential hate crime, the following should occur:

- a. Assigned officers should promptly contact the victim, witness or reporting party to investigate the matter further, as circumstances may dictate.
- b. A supervisor should be notified of the circumstances as soon as practicable.
- c. Once the in-progress aspect of any such situation has been stabilized (e.g., treatment of victims or arrest of suspects at the scene), the assigned officers should take reasonable steps to preserve evidence that establishes a possible hate crime.
- d. Based upon available information, officers should take appropriate action to mitigate further injury or damage to potential victims or the community.
- e. Depending on the situation, the assigned officers or supervisor may request assistance from investigators or other resources.
- f. The assigned officers should interview available witnesses, victims and others to determine what circumstances, if any, indicate that the situation may involve a hate crime.
- g. The assigned officers should make reasonable efforts to assist the victim by providing available information on local assistance programs and organizations as required by the Victim and Witness Assistance Policy.
- h. The assigned officers should include all available evidence indicating the likelihood of a hate crime in the relevant reports. All related reports should be clearly marked "Hate Crime."
- i. The assigned officers and supervisor should take reasonable steps to ensure that any such situation does not escalate further and should provide information to the victim regarding legal aid (Emergency Protective Order) through the courts or Commonwealth's Attorney.

E. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

If a hate crime case is assigned to the Criminal Investigation Division, the assigned investigator will be responsible for:

- a. Coordinating further investigation with the Commonwealth's Attorney and other appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- b. Maintaining contact with the victim and other involved individuals, as needed.
- c. Maintaining statistical data and tracking of suspected hate crimes, as indicated or required by state law ([VA Code § 52-8.5](#)).

F. PREVENTION AND PREPARATION

While it is recognized that not all crime can be prevented, this department is committed to taking a proactive approach to preventing and preparing for likely hate crimes by:

- a. Making an affirmative effort to establish contact with persons and groups within the community who are likely targets of hate crimes.
- b. Educating community and civic groups about hate crime laws.

G. TRAINING

All employees of this department should receive basic training on hate crime recognition and investigation ([6 VAC 20-30-30](#)).