

	HARRISONBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT General Orders	Policy Number: 400
	Chapter: Field Operations	Total Pages: 5
	Section: Patrol	Issue Date: 01/04/2023
	Issued By: Kelley Warner, Chief of Police	Effective Date: 01/04/2023
	Replaces: All General Orders Previously Issued Relative to Subject	
VALEAC Standards: ADM.02.03, OPR.01.01 (a), OPR.01.01 (b), OPR.01.07 (a), OPR.01.07 (b), OPR.01.07 (c), OPR.01.07 (d), OPR.01.07 (e), OPR.01.07 (f)		

A. POLICY AND PURPOSE

The Harrisonburg Police Department provides patrol services 24 hours a day, seven days a week utilizing available resources to enhance public safety and foster cooperative relationships within the community.

The patrol function, through the patrol officer, is an essential element in society's efforts to suppress crime and enforce the law. The patrol officer must be a highly trained professional, competent to fill the many roles required by the community. Patrol officers respond to calls for assistance and reports of criminal activity, act as a deterrent to crime, enforce state and local laws, identify community needs, provide support and assistance to the community, and respond to emergencies.

All other elements of the department exist to assist the patrol officer in carrying out the objectives of the Patrol Division.

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. FUNCTION

Patrol will generally be conducted by uniformed officers in clearly marked/unmarked law enforcement vehicles in assigned jurisdictional areas of Harrisonburg. Patrol services include, but are not limited to:

- a. **Response to calls-** The preliminary investigation of complaints and response to requests for service should be given priority according to the seriousness of the situation and the availability of resources. Follow-up investigation of these incidents should be conducted, as required, according to the same criteria.
 1. Routine- Incidents that have low propensity for violence and where there are no known life-threatening circumstances. Normal driving behaviors are to be utilized.
 2. Emergency- Incidents that include the imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm. Lights and sirens are typically utilized in accordance with the provisions of [VA Code § 46.2-920](#).
- b. **Proactive patrol-** Although the patrol officer's work is often dictated by requests for service, a considerable portion of the officer's workday is normally available for proactive patrol. To make productive use of the available time, officers should plan their patrol to focus on specific crime and traffic problems within their sector or area of assignment. Officers are also encouraged to make frequent contact with persons in their areas, to utilize information provided at rollcall, and maintain an awareness of known criminals and their activities.
 1. It is essential that patrol officers know the physical characteristics of their areas of responsibility as well as the current crime problems in those areas. Additionally, they should become acquainted with residents and business people within the districts, to get to know their habits and idiosyncrasies and to investigate any unusual conduct. Effective patrol officers should be skilled in the detection of criminal activities and eager to conduct their own investigations and then relay information to others within the Department.
- c. **Community Involvement-** By carrying out community-oriented policing and problem-solving activities, including the application of resources to improve or resolve specific problems or situations, Patrol officers can impact members of the public in a positive way. Officers should always search for ways to involve the community in improving their own neighborhoods; this can be accomplished by increasing the quality and quantity of community contacts, interacting with neighborhood organizations and stakeholders, and maintaining an open channel of communications with other city departments, community resources, and the Department's Community Resource Unit (CRU), who in-turn can keep the Patrol officer apprised of activities, trends, and quality of life issues within each community.

a. **PATROL ASSIGNMENT**

Patrol assignments should include a system that provides for:

- a. Assignment to operational shifts
- b. Shift rotation, if any
- c. Assignment to beats, if any
- d. Beat rotation, if any
- e. Continuous coverage during shift changes if the Department operates on a shift schedule.
- f. Providing information to oncoming shifts of previous shifts' activities

Officers assigned in these positions shall work shifts, times and assignments based on the needs of the community and agency, as directed by the Operations Bureau Commander in consultation with Patrol Division Commanders and unit supervisors.

D. PATROL DIVISION

The Patrol Division consists of patrol officers, supervisors and commanders, the number of which shall be determined by the Chief of Police. The Patrol Supervisors shall maintain the Division's manpower among the various shifts in such a manner as to provide adequate police patrol coverage throughout the city on a 24-hour basis.

- a. Newer officers who are in field training will be assigned to the Patrol Division of the Operations Bureau unless otherwise dictated by the Chief of Police.
- b. The reassignment of an officer from one division to another or within the divisions or squads will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police, based on requests, vacancies, and the needs of the department. The Chief of Police will make these assignments in consultation with the affected bureau and division commanders.
- c. Employees of the department who are assigned to the Patrol Division will be distributed among four squads and work 12-hour shifts. The Daylight Shift will extend from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the Night Shift will extend from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Each squad will work 7 out of 14 days during a two-week period. Squads will provide continuous coverage during their respective shift changes.
- d. The Patrol Division Commanders will determine the number of officers assigned to each squad. Squad supervisors, in consultation with the Patrol Division Commanders, will assign officers to geographic areas, taking into consideration required levels of service, requests from officers, the need for expertise, special training, or other needs of the squad or department.
- e. The City of Harrisonburg is divided geographically into patrol districts to which officers are assigned to perform their assigned duties. The Operations Bureau Commander, Patrol Division Commanders, and squad supervisors, with assistance from the Crime Analyst, shall monitor the number of calls for service, response times and other factors as determined by the Chief of Police, to ensure that area boundaries result in reasonable workloads and acceptable standards of responsibility for each patrol officer. District boundaries will be periodically reviewed and revised if necessary to ensure that patrol officers are appropriately distributed throughout the city at all hours.

E. BRIEFINGS

All bureaus and specialized units will conduct regular briefings to discuss, disseminate and exchange information among Department employees, work groups and other organizations. All briefings will be led by a supervisor; however, all members of the department are encouraged to participate in briefings to share information.

Briefing should include, but is not limited to:

- a. Providing officers with information regarding daily activities, with particular attention given to changes in the status of:
 1. Wanted persons
 2. Crime patterns
 3. Suspect descriptions
 4. Intelligence reports and photographs
 5. Community issues affecting law enforcement
 6. Major investigations

- b. Notifying employees of changes in schedules and assignments
- c. Reviewing recent incidents for situational awareness and training purposes
- d. Providing training on a variety of subjects
- e. Conducting periodic personnel inspections

Supervisors should also ensure that all employees are informed about any recent policy changes.

a. INFORMATION SHARING

The employee conducting briefings is responsible for the preparation of the materials necessary for a constructive briefing.

To the extent feasible, all information relevant to the mission of the Department should be shared among all bureaus and specialized units on a timely basis. Employees should be provided with opportunities on a regular basis to share information during the daily briefings and to attend briefings of other bureaus or specialized units.

Additionally, information should be shared with outside agencies and the public in conformance with department policies and applicable laws. Employees are encouraged to share information with other units and bureaus.

b. TRAINING

Briefing training should incorporate short segments on a variety of subjects or topics and may include:

- a. Review and discussion of new or updated policies.
- b. Presentation and discussion of the proper application of existing policy to routine daily activities
- c. Presentation and discussion of the proper application of existing policy to unusual activities
- d. Review of recent incidents for training purposes

F. CROWDS, EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

Officers may encounter gatherings of people, including, but not limited to, civil demonstrations, public displays, parades, sporting events and civic, social, and business events. Officers should monitor such events as time permits in an effort to keep the peace and protect the safety and rights of those present. A patrol supervisor should be notified when it becomes reasonably foreseeable that such an event may require increased monitoring, contact or intervention.

Officers responding to an event or gathering that warrants law enforcement involvement should carefully balance the speech and association rights of those present with applicable public safety concerns before taking enforcement action.

Generally, officers should consider seeking compliance through advisements and warnings for minor violations and should reserve greater enforcement options for more serious violations or when voluntary compliance with the law is not achieved.

Officers are encouraged to contact organizers or responsible persons to seek voluntary compliance that may address relevant public safety concerns.

G. ALTERNATIVES TO ARREST

a. Informal Handling of Criminal Matters

1. Police officers often deal with situations where the interests of all people concerned may better be served by a referral to a social institution or a crisis/professional agency. Persons can be referred to these agencies when in the judgment of the officer, a better solution to the problem will be achieved. (ie. Restorative Justice)

b. Use of Warnings as an Alternative to Arrest

The use of a warning can sometimes provide a satisfactory solution to a problem and may enhance the public perception of the Department. Normally, the use of a warning occurs in traffic offenses, but occasionally may be applied to qualified misdemeanor offenses. In determining if a warning should be issued the officer should consider:

1. The seriousness of the offense
2. The likelihood that the violator will heed the warning
3. The reputation of the violator, i.e. known repeat offender, previous warnings, etc.
4. Less than Probable Cause