



SYKESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Patrol Operations

General Order 6-11

Effective: 08/02/17

Authorized By: *Michael A. Spaulding* Chief of Police

I. PURPOSE

To provide the procedures for patrol operations.

II. POLICY

The Sykesville Police Department recognizes that the patrol function is the most visible aspect of law enforcement and the primary point of contact with the public. Patrol Officers are expected to serve the public in a professional manner as safely and efficiently as can be reasonably expected.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Preliminary Investigations by Patrol Officers

1. Frequently the most important factor in solving a crime is the information supplied by a victim or witness to the first responding officer. The first responding patrol officer will generally conduct the investigation of most crimes and will be responsible for the call. The need for investigative personnel or evidence technicians will be based upon the approval of a supervisor, once notified. In the case of all death investigations, a supervisor will be notified by phone. Patrol officers will continue to conduct the investigation at the direction of the supervisor. In the case of other serious, unusual or complex crimes, the supervisor and assigned officer will confer to determine if a criminal investigator is needed for the preliminary investigation. A supervisor will respond to all homicide, suicide, rape, and armed robbery crime scenes, and assist in conducting the preliminary investigation.
2. Preliminary investigations begin when the officer arrives at the scene of an incident, first makes contact with the complainant, or becomes aware that a crime has been or is being committed. The preliminary investigation continues until the investigation is concluded, or the investigation is reassigned to another officer or investigator. The preliminary investigation usually includes some or all of the following:
 - a. Providing medical attention to injured persons
 - b. Protecting the crime scene to prevent evidence from being lost or contaminated

- c. Determining whether a crime has been committed and if so, the exact nature of the offense
- d. Determining the identity of the suspect(s) and arresting them when appropriate
- e. Providing information to the Dispatch and other units regarding descriptions, method and direction of travel, and any other relevant information concerning suspects and/or suspect vehicles
- f. Identifying all witnesses
- g. Interviewing victims, witnesses and suspects to determine in detail the exact circumstances of the offense
- h. Arranging for evidence collection
- i. Taking written statements, when possible and appropriate, from victim(s), witnesses, and suspects
- j. Accurately and completely recording all pertinent information in the proper format
- k. Referring the complainant to the State's Attorney or District Court Commissioner for review of the case when charges will be sought and responsibility for pursuing prosecution rests with the complainant
- l. Any other action which may aid in resolving the situation, solving the crime, or as directed by supervision

B. Follow-Up Investigations by Patrol Officers

1. Follow-up investigations may include interviews with victims and witnesses, interrogation of suspects, determining the exact circumstances of the crime, recovery of stolen property, identification and apprehension of the offender, determining if other crimes may have been committed by the suspect, consulting with the State's Attorney regarding charges to be brought, and preparing the case for court.
2. Incident reports shall be reviewed by a supervisor for accuracy and completeness and approved within the Interact Records Management System. The reports may be returned to the patrol officer for corrections or follow-up investigation based upon certain factors. As a general rule, Patrol officers are responsible for follow up-investigations.

3. The patrol officer will submit follow-up reports as directed by policy to their Group Supervisor.
 - a. The Group Supervisor will review the follow-up report and decide whether the investigation remains open or is closed.
 - b. If the Group Supervisor closes the case, the proper disposition code will then be indicated in the RMS.
 - c. The report and any supplements will then be printed out and placed in a file folder by the Administrative Assistant.

C. Field Interviews

1. During the course of their duties, patrol officers often encounter persons in suspicious or unusual circumstances. Making an investigative stop, conducting a field interview and recording a person's identity, descriptions, vehicles, times and locations, and circumstances of the situation may be beneficial to other patrol officers for various reasons, including, follow up-investigations and other patrol activities. This information may also be useful in criminal investigations for current and/or future cases. This information shall be recorded on a Call For Service in the Interact RMS and forwarded to all members of the Department for informational purposes. In some cases, this information should be forwarded to surrounding agencies as well.
2. An officer may not stop a person for the sole purpose of completing a field interview. The officer should have reasonable articulable suspicion that a criminal act is being, has been, or is about to be committed prior to detaining the individual and completing a field interview. The standard for reasonable suspicion is substantially less than the requirement of probable cause. The reasonable suspicion must be based on objective circumstances which lead the officer to suspect possible criminal activity and possible involvement of the person on which the field interview was conducted. This standard of reasonable suspicion complies with the requirements of the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which prohibits unreasonable seizures.
3. Since the requirements of reasonable suspicion to stop must be based upon objective grounds, officers should specifically record these objective grounds on the Call for Service in the RMS. Phrases such as "he was acting suspicious" are not sufficient. Only the specific conduct of the person which contributed to the officer's reasonable suspicion should be noted.

4. When officers make an investigative stop based on reasonable articulable suspicion, and have reason to believe the subject of the stop may be armed, the officer will conduct a "frisk" or "pat down" search for weapons. Anytime such a search is conducted and Incident Report shall be completed by the searching officer pursuant to Article 27, Section 36D.
5. The Group Supervisor will review the report and forward to the Chief through the chain of command.

D. Informant Use by Patrol Officers

1. Although use of informants is most often done by criminal investigators, patrol officers may also find the need and opportunity to use informants.
2. An Informant is a person who provides information to a law enforcement officer. Patrol officers are likely to develop a number of informants through routine day to day activities. Generally, these informants are not paid, do not require or desire anonymity, and therefore, do not come under special procedure requirements.
3. A confidential informant is a person who cannot or does not desire to have their identity known. Should an officer develop a confidential informant, coordination through the Group Supervisor must be accomplished to satisfy requirements in accordance with established procedures.

E. Response Procedures

1. Level of Response

A call for service will be evaluated as to the seriousness of the situation and the dispatched response will be governed by the urgency.

2. Emergency Response

a. An emergency response will indicate an immediate response by patrol officers to a given situation. When officers are dispatched to an emergency call they will immediately proceed directly and in a safe manner to the call by the most expedient route, and under normal circumstances will have their emergency lights and siren activated to facilitate and expedite their response.

b. Maryland law requires that emergency vehicles be equipped with siren to constitute an emergency vehicle. This section does not relieve the driver of an emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the streets or highways.

- c. Officers shall NOT proceed through stop signs and/or red stop signals without first coming to a stop, and then proceeding with caution.
- d. The Police Department shall provide an immediate response to calls involving a life threatening situation. Examples include:
 - (1) Officer needs assistance
 - (2) Homicide
 - (3) Felonies in progress or violence where a victim has been seriously injured
 - (4) Personal injury auto collision
 - (5) Any life-threatening medical conditions
 - (6) Any attempted suicide in progress
 - (7) Any violent crime in progress
 - (8) Any hold-up alarm or possible armed robbery in progress
 - (9) Any crime or suspected crime in progress where an immediate response by the Police Department is likely to produce an apprehension.

3. Non-Emergency Calls For Service

- a. Non-emergency calls may require an expedited response to a given situation. When officers are dispatched to a non-emergency call which requires an expedited response, they shall immediately proceed directly and safely to the call by the most expeditious route without the use of emergency equipment. However, if, based on the nature of the call, the officer's personal knowledge of the situation, the officer's location or traffic conditions, or any other mitigating circumstance, the officer feels an immediate response can best be provided by responding with the use of emergency equipment, they are authorized to do so. Concurrence shall be obtained from the on-duty supervisor, if available, or the MSP Duty officer, if dispatched by the Maryland State Police.
- b. Non-emergency calls requiring a routine response by an officer will be answered in a timely manner. Officers will respond within

the posted speed limit and will obey all traffic signals so as not to keep victims and/or complainants waiting for unreasonable lengths of time.

4. Upgrading Level of Response

- a. On duty supervisors or the responding unit may upgrade the response if, in their judgment, circumstances require an increased level of response. The responding unit should notify the dispatcher as soon as practical when they have elected to upgrade a response. Supervisors or the MSP Duty officer are encouraged to suggest a response upgrade based on available information.
- b. If a patrol unit happens upon a situation or, while investigating a situation, determines it is necessary to make an emergency response, they will advise the dispatcher as soon as practical that they are making an emergency response.

F. Alarms

1. Patrol personnel shall respond to alarms as expeditiously as reasonably possible and when encountering cases of false alarms take steps to ensure the chance for a repeated false alarm is reduced.
2. False alarms include any response to an alarm, regardless of the cause, that is not in response to an actual emergency situation and/or perceived or actual criminal activity.

For the purpose of Maryland Law and this order, a "false alarm" includes:

- a. Negligently or accidentally activated signals
- b. Signals resulting from faulty, malfunctioning and improperly installed or maintained equipment
- c. Signals deliberately activated to summon police in a non-emergency situation
- d. Activated due to normal weather conditions
- e. Activated by an animal
- f. False alarms do not include:
 - (1) Signals activated by unusually severe weather conditions or other causes beyond the control of the alarm user or alarm

system contractor, to include an act of God (an unforeseeable or inevitable event), blizzards, earthquakes, or high intensity wind.

- (2) Signals that are activated for testing purposes when a law enforcement agency has been given advance notice of such testing or activation caused by a law enforcement agency.
- (3) An alarm system that is activated a second time within a 12 hour period when the premises is unoccupied will not be deemed a false alarm if:
 - i. Access to the building is provided to the alarm system contractor, and
 - ii. An alarm system contractor or employee of an alarm system contractor responds.
- (4) If access to the building is not provided to the alarm system contractor, and the contractor does not respond to an alarm system that is activated a second time within 12 hours when the premises are unoccupied, each subsequent alarm will be counted as a false alarm.

- g. Upon receipt of an alarm from an alarm company, the Emergency Communications Center shall immediately dispatch a unit to the scene. The dispatcher shall also verify that an emergency number is being contacted. In the event the alarm is received by panel, or by a third party, the dispatcher will make every reasonable effort to contact an emergency number before the officer returns to service.
- h. In the event of a false alarm, the patrol officer will notify the Emergency Communications Center via radio with the appropriate code.

3. Hold-Up/Panic Alarms

- a. Upon notification by the Emergency Communications Center that a "hold-up/Panic" alarm has been activated, the responding officer will respond by turning off emergency lights and siren near the scene, and taking up a tactically advantageous position where the entrance/exits of the establishment can be observed.
- b. The responding officer shall notify the Emergency Communications Center of his/her position. Emergency Communications Center will then make a telephone call to the establishment to ascertain the condition or circumstances.

- c. An employee of the establishment where the alarm is sounding will be instructed to come outside and make contact with the responding officer, and notify the officer of the condition or circumstances regarding the alarm. Prior to the employee making contact with the officer, a full description and name of the employee will be forwarded to the officer via the radio.
- d. If no employee responds it will then be assumed that the alarm is valid and a hold-up is in progress.
- e. Upon determination of an actual robbery, the on-scene officer shall advise the Emergency Communications Center of all necessary information to include type of assistance needed at the scene, a lookout for suspects to include physical descriptions, type of weapons displayed, vehicles, direction and method of travel. This information shall be relayed by the Emergency Communications Center to all Police field units, the Maryland State Police, and other area law enforcement agencies that could reasonably be expected to come in contact with the suspects.
- f. The Emergency Communications Center shall notify the on duty patrol supervisor who will:
 - (1) Establish and maintain radio contact with field units.
 - (2) Assign additional back up units as necessary.
 - (3) Authorize a general broadcast to other law enforcement agencies.
 - (4) Request helicopter as needed.
 - (5) Notify the Chief.
 - (6) Have an investigator respond to the scene.
 - (7) Coordinate with the field supervisor for the set-up of a perimeter and command post.
 - (8) If a hostage situation exists, set up a command post.
 - (9) Notify the F.B.I. when a banking institution is involved.
- g. The responding officer's responsibilities include:

- (1) Only officers specifically assigned to respond to the scene shall respond. Sirens and emergency lights should not be used within close proximity of the scene.
- (2) Back up units shall be assigned to key locations by the on duty supervisor.
- (3) If it cannot be verified whether the suspects have left the scene, or that the alarm is in fact false, the units on the scene will not take offensive action unless instructed to by the on-scene supervisor or the command post. This is not intended to prevent officers from defending themselves or others in immediate danger.
- (4) When the responding officer has been contacted by an employee at the scene, and verified that there is no robbery in progress and none has occurred previously, the officer will notify the Emergency Communications Center with the appropriate clearance code.

4. Burglary and Security Alarms

- a. Upon notification by the Emergency Communications Center that a Burglar/Security Alarm has been activated the responding officer shall proceed directly to the location of the alarm without delay (not using siren and emergency lights), and take a position of tactical advantage with the building in view, observing signs of movement and/or forcible entry, while waiting for back up units.
- b. Once in position, the responding officer shall notify the Emergency Communications Center of their position and await back up units. Emergency Communications Center personnel shall make every reasonable effort to notify the business or residence owner and have them respond to the scene.
- c. After back up units arrive, a check of the outer perimeter of the premises shall be conducted looking for any signs of forcible entry (remembering persons inside darkened areas have an optical advantage).
- d. When the building owner or their representative arrives at the scene a check of the interior shall be made to the satisfaction of the officers on the scene and the owner or representative.
- e. When a check of the area does not reveal evidence of a burglary the owner or their representative will secure the premises.

- f. The officer receiving the radio assignment will be responsible for notifying the Emergency Communications Center of the disposition and proper clearance code, and entering the same in the Interact RMS.
- g. In the event an entry, forced or otherwise has been made, the Emergency Communications Center will be notified. The Emergency Communications Center or on duty supervisor shall request the services of a K 9 unit.

G. Markings for Patrol Vehicles

- 1. Vehicles utilized for patrol are conspicuously marked. No alterations to existing markings, additional markings, window stickers or bumper stickers will be permitted without the written permission of the Chief.

H. Patrol Vehicle Equipment

- 1. Required Operational Equipment

Every marked patrol vehicle will be equipped with the following items before assuming patrol:

- a. First aid kit
- b. (1) blanket
- c. Fire extinguisher
- d. Minimum of (12) flares
- e. 100 ft. measuring tape or measuring wheel
- f. spare tire
- g. tire iron
- h. clipboard
- i. tire jack
- j. PPE equipment
- k. AED

Any of the items above shall be replenished/replaced as used.

2. Non-Issued Equipment

- a. There will be no non-issued equipment installed in or on Police Department vehicles without written approval of the Chief.
- b. Any officer wishing to install non-issued equipment shall submit in writing, requesting permission to install the item and giving a description of the item. Included in the request shall be the method of installation.
- c. Supervisors will endorse the request, recommending approval or disapproval and if the installation of the item would be advantageous to the officer and the Police Department.
- d. The Chief shall review and approve or deny the request.
- e. Non-issued equipment and accessories authorized by the Chief will be purchased by the requesting officer and installed by a qualified individual/company at the Officer's expense.
- f. If in the opinion of the Chief the equipment or modification would be beneficial to the agency, the Chief can authorize the purchase and installation for all departmental vehicles.
- g. The Sykesville Police Department will not accept any claim for damage or loss of non-issued equipment.
- h. Supervisors shall inspect vehicles and equipment as provided in General Order 2-18 and will ensure that all vehicles are standardized.
- i. Any infractions involving the installation, use, or removal of non-issued equipment shall be sufficient cause for immediate removal of the equipment at the expense of the officer. Personnel in violation of this section shall be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to revocation of the privilege of a take home vehicle.

I. Use of Safety Restraints

1. The Sykesville Police Department has adopted a policy for all employees regarding passenger restraints. The policy has recommended when any department vehicle is in operation for the purpose of town business, the

operator and/or occupants are encouraged to use the passenger restraints, i.e., seat belts, shoulder harness, etc.

2. All departmental personnel who operate a vehicle owned, leased or rented by the Town or Police Department are required to instruct all passengers to use the passenger restraining devices, in accordance with the Maryland Transportation Article. Vehicles shall not be set in motion until all occupants are belted in.
3. The driver of the vehicle is responsible for ensuring compliance by all occupants of the vehicle they are operating. Approved child safety restraints shall be used for all children of age, size, or weight for which such restraints are prescribed by law.
4. No person shall modify, remove, deactivate or otherwise tamper with vehicle safety belts except for vehicle maintenance and repair and not without the express permission of the Chief.
5. Personnel who discover an inoperable restraint system shall report the defect to the appropriate supervisor. Prompt action will be taken to replace or repair the system.

J. Death Notifications

1. Within the Town of Sykesville
 - a. Notification will be made in person by a uniformed Officer.
 - b. Notification will be made to either an adult family member or close friend of the family.
 - c. If the religion of the deceased is known and a clergyman (Chaplain) can be notified, this should be done.
2. Outside of the Town of Sykesville
 - a. Notification of the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the residence of the next of kin will be made by telephone.
 - b. The agency will be asked to contact the next of kin in person. If they are reluctant or unable to do so, the patrol supervisor should be advised.
 - c. The agency will be asked to recontact the Sykesville Police Department upon notification of the next of kin as to the contact and any special instructions.

- d. The name of the patrol supervisor and telephone number for the Sykesville Police Department shall be provided to the next of kin for any additional information requests.
 - e. No explicit details of a death are to be given over the telephone.
3. Notification requests initiated by other agencies should include a written form of confirmation (i.e., email, letter, etc.)

K. Notification of Proper Authority in Specific and/or Emergency Situations

1. Officers who discover potential or actual hazards will immediately contact the Emergency Communications Center. Information such as location, type of problem, and the urgency of response should be reported. The dispatcher shall then report the hazard to the appropriate authority, state highway department, county roads department, etc.
2. Officers should immediately notify the Emergency Communications Center when a situation is brought to their attention that presents an actual or potential safety hazard to persons or property and is the responsibility of a public utility company. The dispatcher will then notify the appropriate public utility company.

L. Assistance to Family Member(s) at Attended Death Scenes

1. When an officer responds to the scene of a deceased person, and upon investigation, finds that the incident will be classified as an attended death, the officer shall be responsible for:
 - a. Assisting the family with the process of choosing which funeral home will respond and take the body (a decision which is the family's responsibility); and making associated phone calls for the family if necessary
 - b. Assisting the family in making phone calls to other family and/or friends
 - c. Attempting to have another family member, friend, or clergy member, come to the home if there is only one surviving member on the scene; unless the family member is insistent, he/she should not be left at the home alone to deal with the incident
2. The officer shall give any and all care and consideration to the family of the deceased.

3. The officer will not be required to stay at the scene until the funeral home representative arrives; but shall use his/her discretion, taking into consideration staffing level, family needs, etc.

IV. CANCELLATIONS

This General Order cancels and replaces the following policies: General Order 41.2, entitled Patrol Operations, dated December 11, 2001.