



HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
GENERAL ORDER OPS-29
COMMUNITY POLICING
EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 28, 2018

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES
- III. PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGY
- IV. PROGRAMS
- V. RESPONSIBILITIES

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Howard County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) to operate in a manner that promotes collaboration, partnerships, problem solving and trust in carrying out the mission of the Office. Our community includes the general public, as well as those who conduct business at the Howard County Circuit Courthouse. We value the input of those we serve as we continue to improve the services we deliver. It is the responsibility of every HCSO employee to promote positive relations with our community. Our problem-solving approach will apply to internal processes, as well.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- A. Crime Prevention is the responsibility of the total community.
- B. The police and community share ownership, responsibility, and accountability for the prevention for crime.
- C. Police effectiveness is a function of crime control, crime prevention, problem solving, community satisfaction, quality of life, and community engagement.
- D. Mutual trust between the police and the community is essential for effective policing.
- E. Crime prevention must be a flexible, long-term strategy in which the police and community collectively commit to resolving the complex and chronic causes of crime.
- F. Community policing requires the knowledge, access, and mobilization of community resources.
- G. Community Policing can only succeed when top management, police and government officials enthusiastically support its principles and tenets.
- H. Community policing depends on decentralized, community-based participation in decision making.
- I. Community policing allocates resources and services based on analysis, identification, and projection of patterns and trends, rather than incidents.
- J. Community policing requires an investment in training with special attention to problem analysis and problem solving, facilitation, community organization, communication, mediation and conflict resolution, resource identification and use, networking and linkages, and cross-cultural competency.

III. PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGY

The HCSO utilizes the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment) problem solving model as a framework to address issues.

A. Scanning:

1. Identifying recurring problems of concern to the public and the police.
2. Identifying the consequences of the problem for the community and the police.
3. Prioritizing those problems.
4. Developing broad goals.
5. Confirming that the problems exist.
6. Determining how frequently the problem occurs and how long it has been taking place.
7. Selecting problems for closer examination.

B. Analysis:

1. Identifying and understanding the events and conditions that precede and accompany the problem.
2. Identifying relevant data to be collected.
3. Researching what is known about the problem type.
4. Taking inventory of how the problem is currently addressed and the strengths and limitations of the current response.
5. Narrowing the scope of the problem as specifically as possible.
6. Identifying a variety of resources that may be of assistance in developing a deeper understanding of the problem.
7. Developing a working hypothesis about why the problem is occurring.

C. Response:

1. Brainstorming for new interventions.
2. Searching for what other communities with similar problems have done.
3. Choosing among the alternative interventions.
4. Outlining a response plan and identifying responsible parties.
5. Stating the specific objectives for the response plan.
6. Carrying out the planned activities.

D. Assessment:

1. Determining whether the plan was implemented (a process evaluation).
2. Collecting pre- and post-response qualitative and quantitative data.
3. Determining whether broad goals and specific objectives were attained.
4. Identifying any new strategies needed to augment the original plan.
5. Conducting ongoing assessment to ensure continued effectiveness.

IV. PROGRAMS

Every employee is responsible for promoting positive relationships with our community and are encouraged to offer suggestions to improve the services we provide. When dealing with individual incidents, employees should look for underlying causes that could prevent a recurrence of the problem.

Complaints or suggestions for improvement, from the community and/or employees, will be seen as an opportunity for improvement.

A. The HCSO will meet regularly with partner organizations to improve the quality of services we provide. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court and individual judges.
2. The State's Attorney's Office
3. The Howard County Department of Corrections
4. The Howard County Department of Police

5. HopeWorks
 6. Grassroots
 7. Other public safety and non-profit organizations
- B. The HCSO will seek training opportunities and partnerships to improve our ability to handle situations in a manner that provides the best outcome. Examples include, but are not limited to:
1. Crisis Intervention Training
 2. Narcan Training
- C. The HCSO will be involved with community organizations to educate them about the role of the Office, to address complaints and community issues and to support community initiatives. Examples include, but are not limited to:
1. NAACP
 2. Special Olympics
 3. TRIAD
 4. Youth groups and activities
- D. The HCSO will be transparent with the community and responsive to inquiries it receives.
1. Citizen inquiries will be responded to in a timely manner.
 2. Media inquiries will be responded to in a timely manner.
 3. Social media, press releases and other forms of communications will be used to inform the community of significant events that the HCSO is involved in.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Every employee is responsible for:
1. Utilizing a problem-solving approach (SARA model) to improve the services we provide and the procedures we use.
 2. Fostering positive relationships with our community.
 3. Offering suggestions for improving HCSO policies and procedures.
- B. Supervisors are responsible for:
1. Ensuring compliance with this policy
 2. Identifying recurring issues that could be resolved through a problem-solving approach
 3. Ensuring that employees are fostering respectful relationships with the community.
- C. Administrative Command are responsible for:
1. Coordinating HCSO community outreach efforts.
 2. Annual compilation of HCSO community policing activities.
 3. Preparation of the annual Community Policing Program report and submission to the Police Standards and Training Commission.

Authority:


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