



GENERAL ORDER OPS-37 TASK FORCES

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 31, 2006

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

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I. POLICY

The Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) shall utilize Task Force formation and/or multi-jurisdictional participation to respond appropriately to a serious crime; series of crimes which threaten the safety and security of Howard County residents; or address non-criminal incidents or quality of life issues identified by the Chief of Police.¹

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Within this written directive, an **Internal Task Force** shall refer to a workgroup established under the control and command of the HCPD, generally consisting primarily of HCPD personnel.
- B. Within this written directive, a **Short Term External Task Force** shall refer to a short-term assignment of HCPD personnel to a workgroup established in a collaborative effort with a surrounding law enforcement agency, at a targeted localized problem that has a direct impact on Howard County, where the HCPD may or may not have control and command.
- C. Within this written directive, a **Long Term External Task Force** shall refer to the long term assignment of HCPD personnel to an off site work group established under the control and command of an outside agency (County, State, or Federal law enforcement or criminal justice agency) specific to an on going program for an extended amount of time. The Task Force will help to promote the sharing of intelligence and investigative information between law enforcement entities in the region.
- D. Within this written directive, a **Task Force Commander** (TFC) shall refer to the HCPD supervisor, generally a Commissioned Officer, designated by the Deputy Chief of Police, Operations Command (OPS Deputy Chief). The TFC will report directly to the OPS Deputy Chief, or in his absence, the Chief of Police, unless otherwise directed. If persons of equal rank are utilized, one person shall be appointed the Task Force Commander and the others will be under his direction.

III. INTERNAL TASK FORCE - PERSONNEL STRUCTURE

- A. A Task Force shall be managed by a TFC. If the nature of the problem requires extended shifts, consideration should be given to additional supervision.
- B. Investigators will be assigned based on the recommendation of the TFC and the OPS Deputy Chief.
- C. Any support personnel needed (K-9, Tactical Section, etc.) may be included in the Task Force, as deemed necessary by the TFC, with the approval of the OPS Deputy Chief.

¹ CALEA 46.3.2

- D. All personnel assigned to the Task Force will coordinate their efforts and report directly to the TFC, or his designee.

IV. INTERNAL TASK FORCE - SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

- A. The initial case investigator, assigned to investigate the incidents for which the Task Force was activated, shall be a member of the Task Force.
- B. Those officers assigned to an Internal Task Force shall be selected after consultation among all the Bureau, District, and/or Division Commanders affected and the TFC.
- C. Factors considered in the selection of personnel include, but are not limited to, the following criteria:
 - 1. Satisfactory completion of probation
 - 2. Length of police experience
 - 3. Length of employment with HCPD
 - 4. Present and prior assignments within the HCPD
 - 5. Training
 - 6. Special expertise or skill (including foreign language skills)
 - 7. Dedication to the police mission
 - 8. Performance evaluations
- D. Officers selected for assignment to an Internal Task Force should be volunteers. However, if needed to accomplish the mission of the Task Force, qualified personnel can be assigned as needed.
- E. The TFC or the OPS Deputy Chief shall resolve any conflicts experienced by officers being assigned to the Task Force.

V. INTERNAL TASK FORCE - ACTIVATION PROCEDURES

- A. An Internal Task Force may be activated to investigate non-criminal activity or crimes, which may pose a threat to the community at large. These types of crimes shall include, but are not limited to, murder, rape, robbery and burglary.
- B. Any request to activate a Task Force must be submitted in writing, through the OPS Deputy Chief, to the Chief of Police.
- C. The Chief of Police shall approve the activation of any Internal Task Force.
- D. Each Internal Task Force shall develop an operations plan, approved by the OPS Deputy Chief, that includes at a minimum, provisions for the following:
 - 1. Identifying the purpose for the Task Force
 - 2. Defining authorities and responsibilities
 - 3. Establishing accountability
 - 4. Identifying available resources
 - 5. The desired result of the operation
 - 6. Evaluating the results of the operation and the need for continued efforts
 - 7. Assignment of Task Force personnel
 - 8. Identification of the target of the operation, as applicable
 - 9. Any needed contingency plans
- E. The Task Force shall cooperate with and coordinate efforts with other jurisdictions, which may become involved in the investigation for which the Task Force was activated.
- F. The Personnel Section shall issue a Personnel Order, which will temporarily transfer those persons involved.

- G. Upon the activation of the Task Force all personnel involved shall be relieved of their normal assignments and will report to the TFC.
- H. The TFC shall brief the OPS Deputy Chief daily at the regularly scheduled Operations briefing, or at other scheduled times.
- I. The Chief of Police will receive, at least weekly, updates from the Task Force and the OPS Deputy Chief. Recommendations for continuing, ending or modifying the Task Force will be included.
- J. The Task Force will be active for a period of time as deemed appropriate for the task assigned. The OPS Deputy Chief and the Chief of Police must approve extensions. Upon termination of the Task Force, all personnel assigned shall return to their normal assignments pursuant to a Personnel Order issued by the HCPD Personnel Section.

VI. SHORT AND LONG TERM EXTERNAL TASK FORCE PROCEDURES

- A. Only the Chief of Police may authorize Short and Long Term External Task Force participation. If either of these types of Task Forces is used, a written directive (Memorandum of Understanding, policy, Standard Operating Procedure or other written agreement) shall govern their activities, to include:
 - 1. Identifying the purpose of the Task Force and/or assigned HCPD personnel²
 - 2. Defining the authority, responsibilities, and all applicable written agreements³
 - 3. Establishing accountability for the Task Force and/or assigned HCPD personnel
 - 4. Identifying all resources available/provided to the Task Force
 - 5. Coordinated media activities
 - 6. Evaluating results of Task Force participation and any continued necessity⁴
- B. Long Term External Task Force members shall stay in contact with their normal chain of command. Both the member and his HCPD supervisor shall maintain appropriate regular contact with one another while assigned to the Task Force.⁵
- C. HCPD officers operating under the direction of supervisors from an outside agency shall continue to be accountable to their respective HCPD supervisor and abide by all HCPD policies and procedures in addition to the rules and regulations of the Task Force or sponsoring agency. Should a policy and/or procedure conflict with HCPD directives; the HCPD officer shall obtain immediate guidance from his HCPD supervisor.⁶

VII. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY⁷

The Chief of Police may authorize the formation of an Internal Task Force or the assignment of resources to a Short or Long Term External Task Force, and he is ultimately responsible for clearly identifying the purpose and defining the authority and responsibilities of participants. The Chief of Police is also responsible for ensuring that all applicable written agreements governing the activity of a Task Force are properly executed.⁸

- A. The OPS Deputy Chief shall ensure the commitment of HCPD resources to any Task Force will have minimal impact on the delivery of police services to the citizens of Howard County and the completion of all required evaluations.

² CALEA 42.2.5 a

³ CALEA 42.2.5 b

⁴ CALEA 42.2.5 c

⁵ CALEA 11.2.1

⁶ CALEA 11.2.1

⁷ CALEA 42.2.5 b

⁸ CALEA 42.2.5 a, b

- B. If needed, the OPS Deputy Chief shall be responsible for requesting personnel or other resources from external agencies to support an HCPD Task Force, upon the approval of the Chief of Police. The OPS Deputy Chief, or his designee, shall ensure the development and execution of any needed written agreements with supporting agencies (other County Departments, State's Attorney's Office, State and Federal Agencies). The Research and Planning Section shall assist with written agreements (i.e. Memorandums of Understanding or Agreement, etc.) as needed.
- C. The Internal TFC shall have the authority and responsibility for the following:
1. To direct and supervise any Internal Task Force, to establish the accountability of its members, and is responsible for its actions.
 2. For identifying and securing all available resources that can aid the Task Force in completing its mission, whereas it will have priority over all other cases that officers maybe assigned.
 3. To obtain or requisition any equipment, supplies or materials needed. The OPS Deputy Chief must approve any large or unusual expenses for the Task Force in advance. The OPS Deputy Chief shall provide guidelines, in advance, to the Task Force Commander to clarify "large", based on the Task Force mission.
 4. To determine the facilities for use by an Internal Task Force during its operation after consultation with the OPS Deputy Chief.
 5. To recommend additions, reductions or changes in the personnel initially assigned, once the Task Force has been implemented and is in operation. The OPS Deputy Chief shall approve any changes.
 6. To evaluate the progress and/or results of the Task Force and determine whether it shall continue or cease.
 7. The TFC or his designee will maintain a written log of major Task Force activities and decisions. This will provide updated information as well as a historical record.
 8. If the Task Force requires extended shifts, the TFC, or his designee, will ensure that oncoming personnel are briefed on the current status of the investigation.
 9. The TFC may institute appropriate tracking mechanisms in regard to the utilization of HCPD resources and overtime.
 10. The strength report shall be completed, on a daily basis, by one of the supervisors assigned to the Task Force. The report shall ensure that the work hours for Task Force members are properly submitted to his assigned Time Keeper or the Personnel Section, as determined by the TFC on a case-by-case basis.
- D. The Short Term External TFC shall have the authority and responsibility for the following:⁹
1. Initial coordination with the host agency
 2. Proper execution of written agreements and a copy obtained for HCPD files
 3. Appropriate contact information and notification procedures are established
 4. Submit required paperwork on time to include all appropriate forms for tracking overtime reimbursement, if applicable
 5. Monitor the use of overtime to avoid the use of unnecessary expenditures

⁹ CALEA 42.2.5 b

6. Obtain and copy the appropriate paperwork generated by the assignment (i.e. Federal Deputizing) and ensure it is kept in the member's bureau file.
7. Ensuring that the officer's work hours are properly submitted to their assigned timekeeper and may institute appropriate tracking mechanisms in regard to the utilization of HCPD resources and overtime.
8. Ensuring policy compliance and collect "proofs of compliance" as appropriate for Accreditation purposes.
9. Shall provide at least a weekly briefing to the OPS Deputy Chief.

VIII. EVALUATION¹⁰

A. INTERNAL AND SHORT TERM TASK FORCE EVALUATION

1. The TFC shall submit a written evaluation (After Action Report) of the Task Force participation to the Chief of Police, through the OPS Deputy Chief, within thirty (30) days of the termination of the Task Force.
2. Evaluations shall include the performance of the individual members of the Task Force as well as the overall performance of the Task Force. The TFC shall ensure that each member's regular supervisor is provided summary information on their performance on the Task Force.
3. Evaluations shall include constructive comments, if necessary, on how to improve future Task Force operations.
4. The evaluation should include a group critique and allow involved parties to review any written evaluation prior to final submission, which shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police for review.
5. Upon the submission of the written evaluation, the OPS Deputy Chief shall meet with the Chief of Police and all involved Bureau, District and Division Commanders to critique the participation.

B. LONG TERM TASK FORCE EVALUATION

Task Force participation shall require periodic evaluation. At least annually, the OPS Deputy Chief, or his designee, shall conduct an evaluation of the progress and/or results of participating in the Task Force to determine whether participation shall continue or cease.

- C.** Copies of all Task Force evaluations will be forwarded to the Research and Planning Section for archival and Accreditation purposes.

IX. CANCELLATION

This General Order cancels and replaces General Order OPS-37 Task Forces, dated October 15, 2005.

AUTHORITY:



William J. McMahon
Chief of Police

¹⁰ CALEA 42.2.5 c