



GENERAL ORDER OPS-51 WATCH COMMANDERS DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

EFFECTIVE MAY 24, 2015

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
- III. NOTIFICATIONS
- IV. INSPECTIONS
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I. POLICY

The Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) shall clearly assign appropriate authority, responsibility and accountability to Watch Commanders to effectively manage patrol field operations.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Prior to each shift, the oncoming Watch Commander will prepare for the deployment of members in accordance with established staffing requirements as well as other operational needs. Specifically, Watch Commanders shall:¹
 - 1. Check the scheduled patrol strength for their appropriate district, including court obligations and check with the Duty Officer for sick leave and other personnel-related issues.
 - 2. Prepare appropriate officer beat assignments.²
 - 3. Review the briefing book and briefing sheets.
 - 4. Develop, review, and/or approve the staffing lineup to ensure that it reflects the proper deployment of patrol officers.
 - 5. Communicate with the Watch Commander(s) who is being relieved to identify any problems and concerns that may affect the oncoming shift.
 - 6. When needs exist and manpower permits, each Watch Commander will initiate assignments for special details or enforcement activities.
 - 7. Print out an accurate accounting of all officer vehicle assignments from the scheduling system.
 - 8. Ensure that inspections of officers, including their vehicles, weapons and voice mail are being completed by squad supervisors consistent with existing written directives.³
 - 9. Conduct shift briefings, at a minimum, on the first day of each shift rotation, to include:⁴
 - a. Information regarding criminal activity and other daily patrol activity information from the briefing book with particular attention given to unusual situations, potential and actual police hazards, changes in the status of wanted persons, stolen vehicles, major investigations, and information regarding relevant community-based initiatives.

¹ CALEA 81.2.5b

² CALEA 41.1.1 d

³ CALEA 53.1.1

⁴ CALEA 41.1.2

- b. Notifying officers of changes in schedules and assignments.
 - c. Publish the shift line up, to include beat number and four-digit ID, on Sharepoint at the start of each shift. and discuss any important elements at briefing.⁵
 - d. When necessary, review new policies, procedures, orders and directives to promote their importance and ensure compliance with the electronic signature process to maintain accountability.
 - e. Evaluate officer readiness to assume patrol.
10. Limit briefing to ensure that the officers depart for their beat assignments without unnecessary delay. Most briefings should be conducted in fifteen minutes or less.
 11. Conduct a formal inspection of assigned officers at least once each month.⁶
 12. Conduct "Roll Call Training" (RCT) when necessary. Ensure that completed RCT forms (HCPD #1627) are submitted to the Education and Training Division.⁷
- B. During the shift, Watch Commanders shall devote their energies to official business of HCPD operations. Watch Commanders will ensure that operational efficiency is maintained and will initiate appropriate action when deficiencies are detected. Watch Commanders will also be responsible for the direction and coordination of HCPD members. Specifically, Watch Commanders shall:
1. Monitor calls for service and respond to the scene of major incidents or events and, if appropriate, assume command. If a Bureau or District Commander arrives on the scene, the Watch Commander shall relinquish command consistent with General Order OPS-27, Incident Command System.
 2. Closely monitor traffic contacts assume responsibility for pursuits, consistent with HCPD policy.
 3. Ensure that policies, procedures, orders and other directives are properly carried out by HCPD members.
 4. Ensure complaints against personnel are properly recorded and investigated or forwarded in accordance with HCPD procedures.
 5. Ensure the timely reporting, endorsement and a thorough investigation is initiated for any use of force incident or accidental weapon discharge in accordance with HCPD procedures (see OPS-11, Use of Force).
 6. Complete administrative assignments as assigned or required.
 7. Ensure that completed reports from the previous shift are reviewed and signed by a supervisor and forwarded as appropriate.
 8. Review significant police reports and forward copies as necessary. These copies may represent reports that contain information that will support accreditation files and should therefore be forwarded to Research and Planning.

⁵ CALEA 81.2.4c, 81.2.5a & 81.2.5b

⁶ CALEA 53.1.1b

⁷ CALEA 33.5.2

9. Coordinate the completion of Public Information Office (PIO) Briefing Sheets (#1624), when required, consistent with General Order ADM-14, Media Relations and Public Affairs. Final responsibility for the proper completion of PIO Briefing Sheets rests with the Watch Commander.
10. Ensure completion of the Watch Commander's Report for each shift summarizing events, incidents and arrests (e.g. Part I crimes, resources, etc.). Personnel issues and any other problems and concerns which are detected, will not be listed on the report, but shall be brought to the attention of the appropriate District Commander.
11. Provide written comments, suggestions and proposals relative to improving operational efficiency to the appropriate District Commander consistent with General Order OPS-27, Incident Command System.
12. Review, sign and forward any Paid or Compensatory Overtime Request Forms (HCPD #1111) that are submitted during the shift.
13. Evaluate the performance of supervisors and complete performance reviews as assigned.
 - a. Review monthly platoon performance and assist supervisors in making improvements in areas as needed.
 - b. Ensure completion of follow-up investigations being conducted by patrol officers.
 - c. Review officer evaluations that have been completed by the supervisor and assist him by providing guidance and training.
14. Direct on duty, non-patrol members to accomplish operational tasks, when appropriate.
15. Review the scheduled strength of the next shift including unscheduled leave notifications and evaluate the need to obtain additional staffing. Make appropriate arrangements to assist the next Watch Commander as often as possible.
16. Maintain strength allocations as directed by the Operations Command and grant only the authorized amount of leave as determined by the District Commander.
17. During an absence, assign a supervisor to maintain the Watch Commander's administrative responsibilities.
18. Monitor the status of all Peace Orders/Ex Partes that need to be served.
19. Watch Commanders shall review Hits to Wants notifications to determine any immediate action required to locate the subject of an open HCPD Warrant consistent with General Order OPS-20, NCIC Guidelines. The Watch Commander may make off-duty contact with the Warrant Fugitive Section (WFS) Supervisor, as needed. The Watch Commander, based on the totality of the circumstances, may defer immediate action until the next working day for the WFS.

III. NOTIFICATIONS

When incidents or events occur that require or warrant notifications, the Watch Commander will ensure that immediate action is taken. Notifications shall be swiftly made to the proper Commanders, the Public Information Officer and the Chief of Police consistent with all established policies and procedures.

IV. INSPECTIONS⁸

- A. **DAILY:** The Watch Commander will perform the following:
1. An inspection of the temporary detention areas consistent with General Order OPS-73, Temporary Detention Procedures.
 2. Review shift activity with supervisors for major incidents, properly classified calls, and compliance with the "NR" system.
 3. Will make cursory inspections of the exterior of the building and parking lot lights.
- B. **WEEKLY:** The Watch Commander will perform an informal inspection of each assigned officer's appearance in order to ensure compliance with General Order ADM-13, Uniform and Professional Appearance.
- C. **MONTHLY:** The Watch Commander will prepare a monthly report for the District Commander which summarizes platoon activities, crime trends and personnel issues. This report will be due to the District Commander by the seventh (7th) day of the following month. The following inspections will be performed monthly by each Watch Commander and noted on the Watch Commander's Inspection Log:
1. Randomly review felony cases and those involving incidents of runaways, domestic violence, missing persons, burglary, and vehicle theft to ensure proper follow-up, reporting, and notification.
 2. Reviews all Hate Bias Incident (HBI) reports to ensure proper follow-up, reporting and notification.
 3. Randomly review vehicle inspections to ensure compliance with HCPD procedures.
 4. Inspect the follow-up logs and monitor late reports consistent with General Order ADM-11, Departmental Reporting System.
 5. Conduct a formal inspection of each patrol officer.
 6. Review and submit the AED Safety Inspection forms to the Deputy District Commander.
 7. Ballistic shields shall be inspected for operational readiness.⁹
 8. Review Internal Affairs Division cases and HBI listings to ensure timely action consistent with applicable policies and procedures. Provide updates as appropriate.
- D. **QUARTERLY:** The Watch Commander and/or Division Commander will inspect any Electronic Control Devices (ECD) issued within their command on a quarterly basis to ensure that all recorded discharges have been properly reported.
- E. Any facility or building issues will be reported, via county e-mail or telephone, to the appropriate organizational component (Quartermaster, Support Services, etc.). Issues requiring immediate attention will be resolved by contacting the appropriate on-call resource.


⁸ CALEA 53.1.1

⁹ CALEA 17.5.3 & 46.1.8

V. **CANCELLATION**

This General Order cancels and replaces General Order OPS-51, Watch Commanders Duties and Responsibilities, dated November 1, 2006.

AUTHORITY:



Gary L. Gardner
Chief of Police