



Newport News Police Department - Operational Manual

OPS-540 - COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION

Amends/Supersedes: OPS-540 (09/03/2013)

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I. GENERAL

The Department will notify affected community areas when incidents occur that are repeat, ongoing situations, or when any crime is committed that presents a clear and immediate danger to City residents.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Initial Notification

1. Depending on the offense, the lead Commander, or designee, will coordinate the community notification process with the Public Information Office (PIO). [54.1.1(d)]
2. After consultation with the investigating team and PIO, it is at the lead Commander's discretion concerning the level of information detail released. The information released may be limited to the basics required by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act to avoid jeopardizing a successful investigation conclusion or endangering victim or witness safety.

B. Notification of Neighborhood Watch Groups/Neighborhoods [41.2.4; 45.2.1(a)]

1. It is the responsibility of the Bureau/Precinct/Division Commander in charge of the incident to ensure each affected Neighborhood Watch Group's chairperson(s) and the Neighborhood Watch Coalition President are notified by telephone or personal contact as soon as possible after the decision has been made for broad dissemination of the information. In addition, the PIO will alert the news media, as necessary.
2. When beneficial to the successful conclusion of an investigation or the safety of residents, the Department's social media sites, community e-mail distribution lists, and/or televised media may be used as resources for information release.
3. A media release may be used to target affected persons, businesses or areas. Information for these alerts will be provided by the investigative team. All requests for crime-related notices will be approved by the lead Commander or designated Lieutenant.
4. When additional/updated information becomes available, the lead Commander will notify his counterpart (Precinct Captain or Criminal Investigations Division Commander) and the PIO for updated release of information to the community, as appropriate.

C. The lead Commander will determine whether handbills, circulars, posters, etc., are needed, and will authorize their distribution to area businesses/facilities, (i.e., convenience stores, barber shops, rental offices, social centers, libraries, schools).

D. The Supervisor of the School Resource Officers Unit, or designee, is responsible for contacting the Newport News Public Schools when serious on-going situations could affect the safety of children going to and from or during school. The information will be distributed at the school system's

discretion. The PIO will coordinate media releases with school administration media relations staff regarding school-related incidents. [54.1.1(b)]

- E. The Department may establish rewards in cases involving serious crimes. The reward will follow guidelines set by the Peninsula Crime Line Board of Directors or the Department may offer its own reward independent of any other program.
- F. When serious community crime or public safety issues arise; the Department will take the lead in mobilizing the community response. [45.2.1(c)]
 - 1. The lead Commander and investigating team will organize and conduct a police-sponsored community meeting dealing with a serious crime.
 - 2. The Precinct Captain, or designee, is responsible for ensuring area community groups are notified in order to arrange police-sponsored community meetings. Appropriate civic leaders and housing authorities will be notified as appropriate.
 - 3. The Community & Youth Outreach Division will maintain up to date lists to facilitate such notifications.
- G. When notifications are made as set out, the lead Commander, or designee, shall ensure the Communications Division, the Information Desk, Precincts and substations receive the notification. [12.1.4]
- H. When media alerts, are made as set out, the PIO shall ensure an announcement copy of the announcement is available Department-wide (i.e. electronically, or some other means). [12.1.4]
- I. The PIO will ensure Communications Division, Information Desk, and other appropriate Department areas receive copies of the Crime of the Week or other wanted subject notifications. [12.1.4]

Steven R. Drew
Chief of Police