



POLICY & PROCEDURE

PORTAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **VOLUNTEERS IN POLICING**

SCOPE: All Department Personnel
DISTRIBUTION: Policy & Procedures Manual

REFERENCE:

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to set standards for the recruitment and utilization of citizen volunteers serving to assist regular full-time sworn law enforcement personnel.

This Policy & Procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. PROCEDURE
- III. LEADERSHIP
- IV. MEMBERSHIP
- V. AUTHORITY
- VI. UNIFORM / SAFETY
- VII. TRAINING
- VIII. RECOGNITION
- IX. CCW
- X. DUTIES

I. POLICY

A. It is the policy of the City of Portage Police Department to encourage citizen

involvement in volunteer service to the community. Further, to utilize citizen volunteers to augment sworn and support staff in tasks that regular full-time personnel may not readily accomplish. The need for volunteers may be due to the demands of day to day service priorities or used in the event of an overwhelming/catastrophic event.

II. PROCEDURE

- A. The Portage Police Department shall attempt to maintain a standing organized volunteer group of civilian personnel. The size and capability of this organized group shall fluctuate but will ideally remain at between five to twenty-five members. This organization shall be patterned after the IACP "Volunteers in Police Service" or "V.I.P.S." program.

III. LEADERSHIP

- A. The program shall be under the administrative guidance of the chief or designee. The chief or designee shall oversee initial training and on-going familiarization with police procedures.
- B. The program shall be coordinated by regular full-time sworn law enforcement officers who have demonstrated an interest in leadership and the volunteer program in general. The Program Coordinator or Coordinator(s) shall be selected by their expressed interest in the position, a willingness themselves to volunteer time, and the approval of the chief or designee
- C. Citizen volunteers may assume certain levels of leadership contributing to the development and deployment of their own volunteer unit.
- D. Unit Structure
 - 1. The composition of the citizen volunteers collectively shall be referred to as "VIPS or volunteers in Policing". This unit shall have one or more citizen volunteer(s) serving as over-all unit leader(s). The Unit Leader(s) normally oversees all volunteer member activity under the advisement of the chief or designee. In the Unit Leader's absence, a squad leader(s) may guide the unit. In the absence of any squad leader a volunteer may be selected per event based upon special skills such as leadership ability and any specialized skills pertinent to the event.
 - 2. The VIPS will be further divided into squads when deployed. This is for purposes of an ideal supervisory "span of control". Squads shall not consist of more than seven members each. Volunteer Squad Leaders shall report to the Unit Leader.
 - 3. Members with special skills such as business, media, mortuary care, photography, etc. maybe placed into an administrative squad.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

- A. A member may be any individual with an interest in serving the City of Portage who is eighteen years old or older.
- B. A background check shall be conducted checking for repetitive (more than one misdemeanor) or recent (less than five years) criminal history, and that the applicant is clear of any sex offense convictions or domestic abuse convictions. Findings of minor criminal history shall be evaluated on a case by case basis. A criminal conviction within the past five years shall stand as grounds for disqualification of the applicant along with any sex offender registry and domestic violence conviction(s).
- C. Volunteers need not live within the City of Portage to serve. Persons who have an interest in the community such as work-related attachment, family attachment or some other service entity connected with the city may apply and serve. Persons residing in the general area of a thirty mile radius of the City of Portage may serve as a VIP. The chief or designee may consider people who live outside of a 30 mile radius on a case by case basis.
- D. Conduct unbecoming an organized police volunteer, either on or off duty, may serve as grounds for that individual's disassociation with the program.
- E. Additional Requirements
 - 1. Graduated from a "Citizen Police Academy" program that is offered through the City of Portage or another credible law enforcement agency.
 - 2. Applicants who are currently students in a college level curriculum designated as a Police Science, Law Enforcement or Criminal Justice career field degree program as long as they remain within that curriculum with intent to graduate with that degree. Likewise, persons who have graduated from college with degrees in these law enforcement programs may serve as volunteers.
 - 3. Persons who hold a certificate of completion from a recognized police certification academy regardless of any service on a police department.
 - 4. Persons who have served as a sworn law enforcement officer on a police agency and have left the career field for another occupation provided that their police service time was honorable and their departure from the police agency was considered to be in good standing.
 - 5. Persons who have honorably retired from a law enforcement agency in good standing.
 - 6. Persons who work as support staff by this or any other recognized law

enforcement agency.

V. AUTHORITY

- A. VIPS shall agree to serve the community without pay.
- B. They are to augment the regular City of Portage Police sworn or full-time support staff as needed. The VIPS are not designated in any way to replace full time employees in any capacity. Their assignment is entirely support.
- C. VIPS have no law enforcement authority beyond that of a citizen.
- D. VIPS are issued a City of Portage picture identification card that is clearly marked "Volunteer". The identification may be shown to assure a person with whom they are in contact that they are in fact assisting the City of Portage as an organized volunteer. Should a volunteer present themselves by statement or display of credential as sworn police officer such false identification may be grounds for dismissal from the program and or criminal prosecution.
- E. VIPS may stand as persons representing the civilian (presence) of the City of Portage Police Department in areas where posting a sworn officer would be difficult or impossible due to higher priorities requiring full time sworn persons elsewhere.
- F. While representing the police department, the volunteers may persuade, suggest, guide, motion, direct and vocalize a request to comply with a given need.
- G. Volunteers may not "order" a citizen to comply.
- H. They may not "arrest" an individual.
- I. They may serve as a qualified witness and trained observer in making a complaint about behavior they have seen. As a trained observer, they may call upon a sworn on-duty officer to take such action as necessary to address conduct they have witnessed based upon violation of law.
- J. During periods of disaster
 1. Volunteers may be called upon to secure areas, close roadways, assist with an evacuation or provide guidance and information to citizens.
 2. They may register "spontaneous" or "walk-on" volunteers for structured aid to the community.
 3. Volunteers may make door to door notification of a disaster or pending evacuation.

4. Volunteers may canvas areas in search of special need persons or disaster victims.

5. Volunteers may search for lost/missing persons.

VI. UNIFORM / SAFETY

A. Members of the VIP program shall wear a uniform designating them as a law enforcement volunteer. Such uniform shall be markedly different from those worn by regular full-time law enforcement officers so that they are not mistaken for armed, sworn police. A shirt with an embroidered insignia recognizable as a volunteer may be either issued by the Police Department or approved by the Chief of Police. Additional clothing, jackets, windbreakers, coats, hats and pants will need to be approved by the Chief of Police and may be supplied by either volunteer's themselves or alumni efforts.

B. Volunteers shall be provided with a safety vest along. Each volunteer will be properly trained on safety measures. Volunteers will be instructed on the appropriate footwear, pants, shirts and clothing that provide appropriate protection at a disaster or field search site.

C. Volunteers who are not dressed for the level of activity for which they are required will be asked to go to their home and to return with appropriate attire. In some circumstances VIPS may be furnished with department rain gear.

D. Volunteers will be made aware of the need to hydrate on any extended duty regardless of weather.

E. Volunteers will not wear any clothing identifying them as a VIP or a police volunteer while consuming, or after having consumed alcohol. Tobacco use shall be out of view of the public. Use of illegal or misuse of legal prescription drugs will be grounds for immediate removal of the volunteer from service.

VII. TRAINING

A. Beyond training already received in the Citizen Police Academy, College course, Police Academy or personal experiences as a law enforcement officer, volunteers will be offered in-house training once a month, excluding the months during the Citizens Police Academy.

B. Training shall cover communications, disaster training, searches and all manner of police familiarization topics.

VIII. RECOGNITION

A. Volunteers may be recognized for their services in the same manner as full-time sworn officers and support staff.

B. Volunteers who have regularly demonstrated attendance at the majority of

yearly community events, special call ups, training, etc., shall upon completion of three years of such service be recognized.

- C. After the initial three years recognition of service, VIPS will thereafter be recognized for every subsequent 5 years of service.

IX. CONCEALED CARRY

- A. The City of Portage recognizes lawful, licensed concealed carry of firearms along with open carry of firearms as prescribed by law.
- B. Carrying a concealed or open carry weapon is prohibited practice for any volunteer while representing the department in the capacity of a VIP. It is noted that the presence of a firearm upon the person of an individual acting specifically in the interests of the City of Portage presents individual safety and civil liability matters of concern. In view of these concerns, a person wishing to serve as a Volunteer for the City of Portage and its Police Department must agree to do so unarmed while acting on a Volunteer assignment.
- C. The presence of a firearm, either by open carry or by concealed carry along with recognizable items associated with police service such as the traffic vest may erroneously alert an observer to an assumption that the individual carrying the firearm is a trained police officer sworn to uphold the law.
- D. At no time may any City of Portage Police Volunteer imply, insinuate or openly state that they are a sworn police officer while serving as a volunteer on or off duty. Impersonation of a police officer at any time shall result in dismissal from the Volunteers in Police Service Program and/or potential criminal charges.

X. DUTIES ASSIGNED TO VIPS

- A. Volunteers may help answer phones or help with clerical duties. They may help maintain equipment. They may perform any manner of support service provided the conduct is legal, moral, ethical and does not replace a regular police officer's duties.

Examples of duties assigned to the Volunteers in Policing are as listed, but not limited to the following:

- Disaster Relief Operations
- Emergency Traffic Control Operations
- Clerical Duties within the Police Department
- Squad Maintenance Duties
- Parade Route Duties

- Special Ceremonial Duties
- Lost Person Field Operations
- Front Desk Assistance
- Fire, Crime Scene, Special Incident duties
- Public Relations, Open House presence
- Incident Command (perimeter) or Emergency Operation Center (runner) duties.
- Sex Offender notification distribution duties.
- May conduct traffic observation or surveys

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Chief of Police

This Policy & Procedure cancels and supersedes any and all written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

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