

PORT HURON POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURAL ORDER

			ORDER NO: 16-07
SUBJECT: Volunteers in Police (VIP) Program			
EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2, 2003	DISTRIBUTION: A	REVIEWED: REVISIED:	Annual
REQUIREMENTS: None			
ISSUED BY: Chief Joseph A. Platzer		FORMS: Waiver	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish guidelines for the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Port Huron Police Department (PHPD) to sponsor a citizen volunteer program to utilize interested members of the community, who should be graduates of the PHPD Citizen Police Academy. Volunteers are a valuable asset and an important part of our department. Volunteers can help increase police responsiveness, service delivery, information input, and new program opportunities. In addition, volunteers can bring new skills and expertise to the job and prompt new enthusiasm. It is the policy of the department to use qualified volunteers for specified tasks and duties that can create efficiencies for the department and improve services to the community. Volunteers are intended to supplement and support, rather than supplant, sworn officers and civilian personnel.

III. DEFINITION

Volunteer in Police Service (VIPS): VIPS are non-sworn volunteer citizens who perform service for the department without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered. Volunteers may include citizen police academy graduates, unpaid chaplains, interns, persons providing unpaid administrative support, and youth involved in the department's Law Enforcement Explorer post.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

- A. Must be at least 18 years of age.
- B. Should be a graduate of the Citizen Police Academy (CPA).
- C. Must be of good moral character with little or no formal contact with the criminal

justice system and be willing to submit to a background investigation.

- D. Successfully pass the background investigation.
- E. The final decision on whether a person will/will not be a volunteer lies with the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

V. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

A. Administration

- 1. The Administrative Lieutenant, with assistance from the Community Service Officer, shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. Recruiting, selecting and training qualified volunteers for various positions.
 - b. Maintaining employment records for each volunteer.
 - c. Maintaining the volunteer handbook; which outlines expectations, policies, and responsibilities for all volunteers.
 - d. Maintaining a record of volunteer schedules and work hours.
 - e. Completion and dissemination as appropriate of all necessary paperwork and information.
 - f. Planning periodic recognition events.
 - g. Administering discipline when warranted with approval of the Captain or Chief of Police.
- 2. All requests for volunteers shall be routed through the Administrative Lieutenant and/or the Community Service Officer.

B. Recruitment

- 1. Volunteers shall be recruited from graduates of the Citizens Police Academy, which follows the department's equal opportunity, non-discriminatory employment guidelines. A primary qualification for participation in the application process shall be an interest in and an ability to assist the department in serving the public.

C. Screening

- 1. All prospective volunteers shall complete the volunteer application/interest form.
- 2. A documented background investigation shall be completed on each

volunteer applicant and shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- a. Traffic and criminal record
- b. Employment
- c. References
- d. Possesses the physical ability for the task at hand

D. Selection and placement

1. Upon their selection, applicants shall receive a confirmation letter or email prior to their start of service.
2. All volunteers shall receive a copy of the volunteer handbook and code of conduct.
3. All volunteers shall be required to sign a volunteer waiver.
4. Volunteers shall be placed only in job assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities, and the needs of the agency.

E. Program Description

1. Volunteers shall be provided with a comprehensive written position description detailing their duties and shall be used only in accordance with this description.
2. Volunteers shall not work without a written job description or outside the limits of job responsibilities specified in the job description.
3. Position descriptions shall be reviewed annually by the Administrative Lieutenant to ensure that they accurately reflect the volunteer's duties and responsibilities. The review will be forwarded to the Chief of Police through official channels.
4. Program duties are described as:
 - a. Citizens on Patrol (COP).
 - b. Special events/Traffic details (parades or other outdoor events).
 - c. Clerical assistance in the Records and/or Administrative Lieutenant / Community Service Division.
 - d. Providing assistance to any other department needs as approved/determined by the Chief of Police.

F. Training

1. Volunteers should be graduates of the Citizens' Police Academy, which provides a basic orientation of the department, acquainting volunteers with the department's personnel, mission statement, and philosophy.
2. Volunteers shall receive position-specific training to ensure they have adequate knowledge and skills to complete tasks required by the position as well as a review of pertaining policies and procedures that have a direct impact on their work assignments.
3. If at all possible, monthly meetings will be held by the Administrative Lieutenant and/or the Community Service Officer where specific instruction is given to VIPS to enhance communication, discuss future events, and to receive periodic training as necessary.
4. Volunteer training shall reinforce to volunteers that they are non-sworn citizens affiliated with the department and have no legal authority, beyond that of a normal citizen, to enforce the law or make arrests. They shall not intentionally, or by omission, represent themselves as sworn officers or other full-time members of the department. They shall always represent themselves as volunteers. Therefore, volunteers are never to be assigned to duties requiring sworn officer status.
5. The volunteers shall comply with the rules of conduct and with all orders and directives, either oral or written, issued by the department.
6. No volunteer shall ever have in their possession or in a vehicle used at or in an event a handgun, shotgun, rifle, taser, or any other weapon/firearm while assisting the department as a volunteer. This is regardless of the volunteers concealed weapon permit or open carry laws.
7. Volunteers shall perform all duties impartially, without favor or affection or ill will and without regard to ethnicity, gender, gender preference, age, marital status, height, weight, physical or mental disability, status, race, religion, political belief or aspiration. All citizens will be treated equally with courtesy, consideration, and dignity. All volunteers and employees are expected to display patience, politeness, truthfulness, and command of temper.

G. Fitness for duty

1. No volunteer on duty or off duty shall use illegal drugs at any time. Nor shall a volunteer use any controlled or prescribed drugs without a doctor's permission, or in excess of the prescribed dosage.
2. No volunteer shall report to work or be on duty when his or her judgment or physical condition has been impaired by alcohol, medication, other substances, illness, or injury. No volunteer shall report to work or be on duty with the odor of intoxicants on their breath regardless of impairment levels.
3. No volunteer shall operate a city owned vehicle or equipment if they have consumed alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or controlled substances. Tobacco products in any form are prohibited at the Municipal Office Center building and in all department owned vehicles.
4. Volunteers shall immediately report to the Administrative Lieutenant and/or on-duty supervisor any changes in status that may affect their ability to fulfil their duties. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Driver's licenses
 - b. Medical condition
 - c. Arrests / Traffic citations
 - d. Criminal Investigations

H. Dress Code - Uniform

1. Volunteers shall conform to the department approved dress consistent with their duty assignment. Uniforms authorized for volunteers shall be readily distinguishable from those worn by sworn officers.
2. The volunteers shall always be neat and clean in person and dress; their clothing clean and well pressed. The VIP uniform consists of a blue polo or t-shirt with a city seal on the front left side and Port Huron Police Department patches with the "volunteer" rocker over top of the patch on both sleeves. The rocker shall be sewn at least one inch below the shoulder seam of the garment and the patches shall be sewn 3/8 inch below the rocker. The shirt is to be worn with khaki pants or shorts depending on the weather. Volunteers will be allowed the option of purchasing a blue coat with the same department identification as the shirt.
3. Volunteers shall not be allowed to wear uniform apparel other than that listed without obtaining prior approval from the Chief.
4. No volunteer shall wear his or her uniform or identifiable parts of that uniform while off duty. Uniforms are to be worn during performance of the

volunteer's duty **only**. Under no circumstances shall a volunteer wear their volunteer uniform when not "on duty" for a police department assigned function.

5. Volunteers shall be required to return any issued uniform/clothing or agency gear at the termination of service.

I. Confidentiality

1. With appropriate security clearance, volunteers may have access to confidential information such as criminal histories or investigative files. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or departmental policy, all police information shall be considered confidential. Only that information specifically identified and approved by authorized personnel shall be released. Confidential information will be given only to persons who have a need and a right to know as determined by departmental policy and supervisory personnel.
2. Each volunteer shall sign a non-disclosure agreement. Subsequent disclosure of any confidential information, verbally, in writing or by any other means, shall be grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.
3. Volunteers shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any article for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or other periodical, release or divulge any information concerning the activities of the agency, or maintain that they represent the agency in such matters without permission from the Administrative Lieutenant, Captain, or Chief of Police.

J. Property and equipment

1. Volunteers shall be issued an identification card that must be worn at all times while on duty. In representing the Port Huron Police Department, it is imperative that all personnel be cautious in the use or display of any credentials. The following are three particular instances where department volunteers **shall not** use their police identification cards:
 - a. As a second form of identification.
 - b. To identify your association with the police department when not participating in a department sanctioned function or event.
 - c. While engaged in contact with any other law enforcement personnel or entity outside your official capacity.

Any usage of police department identification other than what is within the

scope of your particular volunteer duties may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the volunteer program.

2. Any fixed and portable equipment issued by the agency shall be for official and authorized use only.
3. Any property or equipment issued to a volunteer shall remain the property of the department and shall be returned at the termination of service.
4. Vehicle Usage -Volunteers who are required to drive a city-owned vehicle, their own vehicle or the vehicle of a third party must:
 - a. Possess a valid driver's license.
 - b. Possess liability insurance coverage on their vehicle which meets the minimum requirements set forth by Michigan law.

K. Prohibited conduct

1. Political Involvement
 - a. The Department has a responsibility to strictly preserve the **apolitical nature of the police force**. In order to preserve that non-partisan reputation and to promote efficiency, integrity, and maintain discipline all police volunteers are prohibited from interfering or using the influence of their position for political reasons. They are also expressly prohibited from using their position in any photographs, videos, movements for the nomination or election of any candidates for political or public office, solicitation for political purposes or influencing public opinion on political issues.
2. Fraternalization (Organized Crime/Illegal Occupation)
 - a. Volunteers shall avoid regular or continuous associations or dealings with persons who they know, or should know, are racketeers, sexual offenders, gamblers, suspected felons, persons under criminal investigation or indictment, or who have a reputation in the community for present involvement in felonious or criminal behavior except where unavoidable because of other familial relationships of the members. To knowingly enter or frequent a house or place where illegal activities are being conducted or failing to report such activities to the proper authority is prohibited.
3. Personal Conduct / Integrity
 - a. The public demands that the integrity of police volunteers be above

reproach. Police volunteers; therefore, must avoid any conduct that might compromise integrity and thus undercut the public confidence in a law enforcement agency. At no time shall an employee accept any gifts, money, valuables, services, subscriptions, favors, gratuities or any other form of compensation or consideration that could be interpreted as seeking to cause the volunteer to refrain from performing official responsibilities honestly and within the law. Volunteers must behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to their agencies or themselves. The character and conduct of police volunteers while on and off duty must always be exemplary, thus maintaining a position of respect in the community in which they live and serve. Members shall refrain, when possible, from engaging in controversies or attempting to take police action. Such circumstances shall be called to the attention of the duty command officer, who will have disinterested officers investigate and take the necessary action. Gossiping about a member of the department, VIPS, city officials, etc., concerning their personal character or conduct is expressly prohibited.

L. Disciplinary Procedures / Termination

1. A volunteer may be removed from the volunteer program at the discretion of the Chief of Police. Termination of volunteers shall not be subject to due process consideration and volunteers shall have no property interests in their continued employment.

M. Evaluation

1. An evaluation of the overall volunteer program shall be conducted on an annual basis. The evaluation will be forwarded to the Chief of Police through official channels.

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