

YORK-POQUOSON SHERIFF'S OFFICE	GENERAL ORDERS
SUBJECT: Community Relations	NUMBER: GO 2-18
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16

17 **POLICY**

18

19 The premise of community relations is based on the principle that law enforcement is an integral

20 element of the community. Community relations are manifested by positive interaction between

21 the community and the Sheriff's Office and represent unity and common purpose. While the

22 primary responsibility for enforcement of the law lies with the people, the complexities of

23 modern society and the inability of the people to cope with crime has required the creation of a

24 law enforcement service. The Sheriff's Office represents only a portion of the total resources

25 committed to the public to achieve this goal.

26

27 A citizen's encounter with the Sheriff's Office can be both a frightening and an emotional

28 experience. Under these circumstances, the risk of misunderstanding is great. The minimizing

29 of this risk is a challenge to every member of the Sheriff's Office. Accordingly, the York-

30 Poquoson Sheriff's Office is committed to establishing close ties and responsiveness to the

31 citizens of York County and the City of Poquoson.

32 The Sheriff's Office must strive to establish a climate in which a deputy may perform his/ her

33 duties with acceptance, understanding, and approval of the public. Recognition of individual

34 dignity is vital in a free system of law. Just as all persons are subject to the law, all persons have

35 a right to dignified treatment under the law; and the protection of this right is a duty, which is

36 binding on every member of the Sheriff's Office.

37

38 Deputies must treat citizens with respect and be constantly mindful of those who they are dealing
39 with are individuals with human emotions and needs. Such conduct is not an additional duty
40 imposed on a deputy's primary responsibilities but it is inherent to them.

41
42 The Sheriff's Office conducts numerous public information, crime prevention, and DARE
43 programs to educate the public, to eliminate specific crime problems, and to foster positive
44 community relations.

45
46 In addition, the Sheriff's Office cooperates in developing new programs in those areas where the
47 relationship with any group, or public as a whole, may be improved. In dealing with citizens,
48 each deputy must attempt to make his contact one that inspires respect and generates cooperation
49 and public approval. While entitled to personal beliefs, a deputy cannot allow individual feelings
50 or prejudices to enter into public contacts.

51

52 **PURPOSE**

53

54 The purpose of this order is to establish community relations policies for the York-Poquoson
55 Sheriff's Office as a whole, and to provide for their maintenance and revision.

56

57 **PROCEDURES**

58

- 59 • Every Sheriff's Office employee has an individual responsibility for promoting
60 community relations.
- 61 • Each member shall assist the Sheriff with identifying and addressing problems arising
62 between the Sheriff's Office and all segments of the county population by:
 - 63 ○ Establishing formal relationships with community groups;
 - 64 ○ Identifying issues and responding to them before they become problems; and
 - 65 ○ Develop programs, which increase community understanding and confidence.
- 66
- 67 • Crime Prevention and DARE deputies are assigned primary responsibility by the Sheriff
68 for the community relations function and will be the primary contact points for
69 developing and coordinating Sheriff's Office community relations programs.
- 70
- 71 • Responsiveness to the community
 - 72 ○ The Sheriff's Office's task is governed by law and policies, formulated to guide
73 enforcement of the law; it must also include consideration of the public will.
 - 74 ○ Responsiveness must be embraced at all levels within the Sheriff's Office by a
75 willingness to listen and develop a genuine concern for the problems.
 - 76 ○ The identification of community needs must become an integral part of the mission of
77 the Sheriff's Office.
- 78
- 79 • Interpersonal communication
 - 80 ○ Each employee must be aware of the law enforcement needs of the community and of
81 his assigned area of responsibility.

- 82 ○ Guided by policy, all personnel must tailor their performance to the attainment of the
83 Sheriff's Offices community relations objectives, and to the resolution of crime
84 problems within the area he/she serves.
- 85 ○ The Sheriff's Office shall provide programs to encourage productive dialogue with
86 the public and to ensure that the unity of law enforcement and the people is preserved.
87
- 88 ● Community relations activities
- 89 ○ All contacts, official and unofficial, between a Sheriff's Office employee and citizens,
90 in any grouping in our community, constitute a vital part of the Sheriff's Office's
91 community relations program.
- 92 ○ Ideally, all such contacts would contribute to the development of positive images
93 toward the Sheriff's Office and its employees and activities.
- 94 ○ A wide variety of planned community relations activities are undertaken by the
95 Sheriff's Office as a means of increasing public support, dialogue, understanding, and
96 the development of the Sheriff's overall community relations policies.
- 97 ○ Activities include, but are not limited to:
- 98 ○ Formal participation and liaison with civic, social, business or other public and
99 community groups.
- 100 ▪ Sheriff's Office personnel routinely interact with homeowner's associations, civic
101 clubs, participate on committees with business owners, school and government
102 officials, child abuse teams, and regional law enforcement groups, including the
103 local criminal justice training academy.
- 104
- 105 ○ Presentation of programs to community groups and organizations addressing crime
106 prevention, or other selected Sheriff's Office programs, objectives, activities or
107 successes.
- 108 ○ Pre-planned media releases in support of Sheriff's Office programs.
- 109 ○ Determining citizen satisfaction with law enforcement services can be based upon
110 feedback received from group activities, review of inquiries and complaints made,
111 and through the conduct of follow-up surveys and interviews, individually or with
112 groups.
- 113
- 114 ○ [Surveys for citizens](#)
- 115 ○ Will be made available on-line via the Sheriff's Office Web page.
- 116 ○ Surveys may be conducted, on-line, in person, by mail or telephone, and may be
117 combined with other law enforcement related matters, such as the Sheriff's citizen
118 academy.
- 119 ○ Survey of citizen attitudes and opinions should be conducted with respect to:
- 120 ▪ Sheriff's Office performance,
- 121 ▪ Overall employee competence,
- 122 ▪ A deputy's attitude and behavior toward citizens,
- 123 ▪ Overall safety and security concerns within the county as a whole, and
- 124 ▪ Recommendations and suggestions for improvement.
- 125

- 126 ○ Community input concerning Sheriff's Office practices, programs and training, as
127 well as recommendations will be considered in the development of future agency
128 policies.
129
- 130 ● Statistical Information
 - 131 ○ Statistical information may include but is not limited to the following:
 - 132 ▪ UCR / IBR Statistical summary for each calendar year.
 - 133 ▪ Yearly summation of calls for service, traffic summons issued, and civil papers
134 served.
 - 135
 - 136 ● Problems, tension, grievances
 - 137 ○ The York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office is committed to correcting specific actions,
138 practices, and attitudes that may contribute to community problems, tensions, or
139 grievances.
 - 140 ○ By recognizing such problems at an early stage, preventive action can be taken by the
141 Sheriff that might well prevent greater problems in the future.
 - 142 ○ All employees who receive or hear about community concerns regarding law
143 enforcement activities or services shall pass this information to their first line
144 supervisor who shall in turn pass the information to their division commanders.
 - 145 ○ Depending on the severity or urgency of the problem, supervisory or managerial
146 personnel should forward this information to the Chief Deputy, who will, in turn,
147 ensure that the Sheriff is informed.
 - 148 ○ Complaints against Sheriff's Office personnel/staff should follow the process outlined
149 in [RR 1-9, Complaints/Internal Affairs](#).
 - 150
 - 151 ● Evaluation
 - 152 ○ Since the Sheriff's Office responsiveness to community needs and concerns must be
153 flexible, evaluation of community relations programs must occur on a semi-annual
154 basis.
 - 155 ○ Evaluation by the Crime Prevention deputies and DARE deputies will consider
156 citizen surveys, complaints, requests, and inquiries.
 - 157 ○ Emphasis and/or activities will be modified, expanded, or reduced as needed based on
158 this semi-annual evaluation.
 - 159 ○ The Crime Prevention and the DARE deputies will meet on a semi-annual basis to
160 discuss the following community relation and communications issues:
 - 161 ▪ Description of current concerns voiced by the community.
 - 162 ▪ Description of potential problems that have a bearing on law enforcement
163 activities within the county.
 - 164 ▪ Recommended actions that address previously identified concerns and problems.
 - 165
 - 166 ○ Following each meeting, an agency report will be generated and forwarded to the
167 Sheriff via the Community Services Division Commander and Chief Deputy on the
168 issues identified above.
 - 169
 - 170 ● Community relations goals

- 171 ○ In seeking to maximize the quality and level of services provided to the community,
172 the York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office has established the following goals:
173 ▪ To support new and existing programs that establishes close ties with the
174 community and help to meet its needs.
175 ▪ To correct actions, practices, and attitudes that may contribute to community
176 tensions and grievances.
177 ▪ To maximize professional law enforcement behavior by having the lowest
178 possible number of instances of misconduct and incompetence such as:
179 ❖ Discourtesy,
180 ❖ Verbal abuse,
181 ❖ Harassment,
182 ❖ Excessive use of force,
183 ❖ Violations of rules and regulations, and
184 ❖ Negligent use of issued equipment.
185
186 ▪ To maximize public esteem, approval, and respect for the Sheriff's Office by
187 maintaining the highest possible number of instances of citizen approval,
188 satisfaction, and commendation.
189
190 • Annual Report
191 ○ The York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office is responsive to community needs and concerns.
192 ○ The agency will prepare an annual report that will be made available to the citizens
193 on an annual basis.
194 ○ The Crime Prevention and DARE deputies prepare an annual report on the agencies
195 activities for the prior year.
196 ○ The Crime Analyst will prepare statistical information as identified above. The Crime
197 Analyst, DARE deputies, and Crime Prevention deputies will generate an Annual
198 Agency Report and forward it to the Sheriff via the Community Services Division
199 Commander and Chief Deputy.
200 ○ Once approved by the Sheriff or his designee, the Annual Report will be posted on
201 the Sheriff's Office Internet Web site and be made available to the Public Information
202 Office for the County of York to be included in the Citizens News mailer.