

WOLFEBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

SOP 2.2

Date Issued: 12/27/2019

Review: 02/24/2021

[Note: This written directive is for the internal governance of the Wolfeboro Police Department and, as provided by RSA 516:36, is not intended and should not be interpreted to establish a higher standard of care in any civil or criminal action than would otherwise be applicable under existing law.]

By Order of:
Dean J. Rondeau, Chief of Police

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Policy The Wolfeboro Police Department seeks to provide responsive service to the public and appropriate support for its patrol officers.

Purpose The intent of this directive is to provide officers with guidance for answering calls and interacting with citizen on a daily basis.

Responsibilities Each division shall ensure that all employees under their command are familiar with this procedure.

Supervisors shall monitor this process and ensure that this procedure is followed.

Action

Officer Discretion

An officer's discretion is an essential function of effective law enforcement. Discretion shall be used in accordance with departmental policy. What is reasonable in terms of appropriate enforcement action or constitutes probable cause varies with each situation. Different facts may justify an investigation, a detention, a search, an arrest or no action at all. Some situations result in a report being written, or in cases of minor offenses or where no violations have been committed a verbal warning or other referral can be made. In each case, an officer must act reasonably within the limits of his or her authority, as defined by statute and judicial interpretation. Whether an officer makes a physical arrest or releases someone on a copy of charges, the officer shall not inhibit the individual's right of access to the courts, which is accomplished by assigning or obtaining a court date.

Community Policing

It is the philosophy of this department that community policing is the method of policing that best serves the Wolfeboro community therefore this agency will strive to build upon the community policing base which has already been established.

The Community Policing strategy recognizes the importance of police commitment to dealing with the underlying conditions that cause crime, in order to reduce or impact crime in neighborhoods.

Officers should solicit active community involvement in defining local problems, and the setting of police priorities in responding to such problems. There must be a working partnership between the police and the community based upon mutual trust and respect.

The creation of neighborhood-based working coalitions that comprehensively attack crime and other problems offer a real opportunity for success. Responses to the crime problem must involve collaborative efforts between the police, other service providers and the community.

Police officers who provide services on the street are one of the most valuable resources of any police department. Community Policing stresses the critical need to facilitate ways for officers to apply creative and effective ways to impact neighborhood problems.

Although there is no single recipe for community policing, everywhere it has been instituted it has involved at the very least getting the officers out of their cruiser to interact on a friendly and informal basis with citizens more frequently and involving the citizens in programs whereby they could assist the Police in making the community safer.

Shifting Resources Closer to the Neighborhoods

If police officers are to have success in dealing with the problems in their neighborhoods, they must have access to the necessary resources. Decentralizing resources shall contribute to an efficient utilization of personnel and increased citizen satisfaction.

Fixed Internal Responsibility and Accountability

The Community Policing strategy needs to be based on the operational foundation of allowing administration, supervisors, and police officers to be creative in seeking solutions to neighborhood problems. Success in this process is based on police personnel accepting a sense of ownership for these problems and doing everything possible to help solve them.

Benefits of Community Policing

1. Community Policing adds a proactive element to the reactive role of policing. Officers should be an influence on the young people of the community and help them develop into responsible, law-abiding citizens.
2. Community Policing augments the traditional police approach and provides the community a full spectrum of police services from the quick response only patrol can provide, to the personal touch that only human interaction can provide.
3. Community Policing provides community members with the means to help themselves as well as to assist the police officer in providing services.

Peace Officer's Role

1. Community Policing begins with the beat officer. Peace officers should get to know the residents and business owners on their beats by becoming a part of the community.
2. Officers should be active when not on call and conduct visits to the residents and businesses in the community.
3. Officers should be aware of and have ready access to the social service agencies available to provide assistance for residents in the community.
4. Officers are encouraged to identify all community leaders and to attend community meetings to include Neighborhood Watch meetings.
5. Officers should be familiar with their neighborhoods so as to spot when things are out of the ordinary, such as unfamiliar vehicles or individuals in the area.
6. Officers should initiate action to identify, analyze, and develop solutions for the causes of the problems in their assigned community.
7. Officers should solicit information and ideas from community members and provide telephone numbers for supplying this information.
8. Officers must take action to prevent crime.
9. Officers must be accountable for their actions.
10. Officers must engage in teamwork and in structured problem solving to meet the Department's mission of a safer Wolfeboro.

Preliminary Investigation

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Preliminary Investigation Case Management

1. Patrol officers shall pursue preliminary investigations to the full extent of their available time and investigative training. In most minor property crimes, patrol personnel shall assume responsibility of the crime scene and conduct any on-scene and follow-up investigation that may be necessary.
2. The preliminary investigation shall, whenever practicable, be completed by the end of the shift or before scheduled days off. The supervisor of the shift shall review, approve as appropriate, and forward the preliminary investigative report to the detective if needed.
3. In exceptional instances, when circumstances prevent the timely completion of the report, the supervisor shall ensure that a draft report of the incident is completed, thereby ensuring that administration and the detective division is aware of the incident and has the necessary information to initiate a follow-up investigation if warranted.

Bias Based Profiling

The Academy shall provide training on bias-based profiling to include, but not limited to, field contacts, traffic stops, search issues, seizures, interviews, cultural diversity, discrimination and community support.

Supervisors shall monitor employee's actions and shall forward any complaint to the Captain/Executive Officer alleging that an employee targeted a citizen based on bias-based profiling in accordance with "Disciplinary Process".

The Captain/Executive Officer shall conduct an internal investigation if an officer is alleged to have targeted a person due to bias.

Biased based profiling, the selection of individuals for law enforcement attention based solely on a common trait of a particular group, is prohibited.

All sworn employees shall exercise their authority in a manner that does not unlawfully discriminate against individuals based solely on race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, cultural group or any other identifiable groups to which the person may belong.

All sworn employees shall exercise their authority based on conduct, behavior or specific information, reasonable articulable suspicion or probable cause.

Request Major Crime when:

A death resulted from the criminal act of another person;

A person has received an unexplained violent injury that has resulted in or may result in death;

A person received an injury that is likely to result in death because of the criminal act of another;

A police officer involved shooting regardless of the seriousness of the injuries.

Major Crime should not be summoned when it is evident that the death resulted from natural causes, suicide, or an accident. In such cases, the officer shall notify the medical examiner, which shall determine if Major Crime investigators are needed.

Mountain Bike Patrols

The Department shall use all available resources, such as Mountain Bike, to meet the challenges of community-oriented policing and to reduce crime and its impact on the community through the use of Mountain Bike patrols.

Mountain Bike patrol officers shall concentrate on problems specified by area.

Mountain Bike assignments shall be operated by one officer, but officer may be assigned to patrol at the supervisor's discretion.

Mountain Bike patrol officers will be assigned to regular patrol areas and are encouraged to establish relationships with the members of the community.

Reporting Hazardous Conditions

The officer shall report any immediate hazard to persons or property to Communications for immediate action.

Upon notification of an immediate hazard, Communications shall contact the appropriate department via telephone for action.

Upon observing or responding to a potentially hazardous condition, the officer shall identify the hazard and if necessary complete an incident report.