

FREDERICK POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

Section 13: Community Involvement
Topic: COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER
Approved: 01/07/19
Review: Annually in January by Special Operations Division Commander
Supersedes: GO 1302 dated 01/16/18

Order Number: 1302
Issued by: Chief of Police

.01 PURPOSE:

To define the functions and responsibilities of the Community Relations Officer.

.02 CROSS-REF:

.03 DISCUSSION:

Police functions and organizations are instruments created by society to preserve order and security. Both society and police organizations benefit from a relationship of mutual understanding and good will. The contacts between individual officers with community members are the most important elements of such a relationship. The Department has designated a Community Relations Officer (CRO) position to ensure that the relationship is positively developed and maintained.

.04 POLICY:

The Frederick Police Department will actively engage in efforts to continually improve its relations with the community it serves. While all personnel are responsible for achieving the Department's community involvement objectives, the CRO's primary goal is to coordinate the Department's community relations efforts; to create and maintain a climate of cooperation and trust and to gather and respond to information about citizens' concerns.

The Special Operations Commander is designated the Community Relations Officer.

.05 DEFINITIONS:

.10 FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER:

1. The CRO reports directly to the Chief of Police in matters relating to police-community relations.
2. In its broadest sense, the mission of the CRO is to do everything possible to keep channels of communication open between the Police Department and the public, and to assure that developing or potential problems are addressed constructively. Specific functions of the CRO include, but are not limited to:
 - A. Assisting in the formulation of policy concerning police/community relations in general, and relations with alienated groups in particular;
 - B. Bringing to the attention of the Chief of Police and other police personnel any actual or potential problems in police/community relations;
 - C. Monitoring, evaluating, and interpreting information from the community and conveying it to the Chief of Police and other appropriate personnel;
 - D. Continually evaluating Department policies affecting community relations and recommending constructive changes for improvement;

- E. Publicizing agency community relations objectives, successes and problems by use of press conferences, press releases, and public information meetings as necessary, and approved by the chain of command;
- F. Assisting in providing seminars, workshops, and other educational presentations for public and private organizations;
- G. Arranging speakers for neighborhood organizations, public and private agencies, schools, businesses, and other groups;
- H. Expediting the flow of information between the Department and concerned citizens;
- I. Answering inquiries concerning Department operations and procedures;
- J. Identifying training needs through interviews with citizen representatives, consultations with those involved in internal investigations, and conferences with supervisors;
- K. Serving as a mediator or negotiator between the Department and citizen groups when problems arise, or as assigned;
- L. Assisting crime prevention officers in identifying areas where Neighborhood Watch groups could be established or where other crime prevention activities could be helpful;
- M. Acting as the personal representative of, or special assistant to, the Chief of Police for community relations;
- N. Performing special functions pertaining to community relations at the direction of the Chief of Police;
- O. Assisting in the establishment of community groups where they are needed;
- P. Establishing liaison with formal community organizations and other community groups; and,
- Q. Instructing police personnel in the Community Relations function, stressing that all personnel are responsible for achieving the Department's community involvement objectives.

.20 REPORTING:

At the Bi-Monthly Command Staff Meeting, Division Commanders will inform the Chief of Police of the following:

1. A description of current concerns voiced by the community and by community groups;
2. A description of potential problems that have a bearing on law enforcement activities within the community;
3. Recommended actions that address previously identified concerns and problems; and,
4. Progress toward addressing previously identified concerns and problems.

.25 COLLECTION/DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION:

1. All employees have an obligation to transmit relevant information concerning the community relations function to the CRO. This would include, but not be limited to, copies of Racial, Religious, and Ethnic incidents, calls for service that may be civil in nature which the CRO may be able to assist, i.e., neighbor disputes, requests for community presentations, seminars, and any other information which may affect police/community relations. The CRO will use all collected, relevant information in the formulation of his reports to the Chief of Police.
2. The CRO will maintain a working relationship with all units of the Department and will forward any information dealing with community relations that requires their attention. This may be accomplished by oral or written discussions with Division Commanders or Supervisors, Daily Bulletin entries, Department Intelligence Forms, Beat Checks, Roll Call training, etc.

.27 COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER NOTIFICATION:

The CRO is to be notified in the event of any situation that, if not addressed immediately, may adversely affect police/community relations. For current, ongoing situations, the on-scene supervisor or command officer will determine if the necessity exists for the CRO to respond to the scene and what his responsibilities will be upon his arrival.

.30 PROGRAM EVALUATION:

In a broad sense, every aspect of the Department's functioning impacts upon community relations. For that reason, it would be both impossible and undesirable to concentrate all relevant programs under the control of the CRO. The effective functioning of that position, however, demands that the CRO be aware of a broad range of Department activities. Liaison with both general and specialized operational components is essential. Both the CRO and the other personnel have the duty to insure that liaison is continual, cooperative, and effective. It is the ongoing responsibility of the CRO to informally monitor each of the Department's programs significantly affecting community relations and to keep the Chief of Police informed. The report will be written and submitted during the month of July. The report will include, but not be limited to, for each program an assessment of the following:

1. Does the need for which the program was designed still exist?
2. Is the program making adequate progress in meeting the need?
3. Has the program had notable successes or failures?
4. Does the program's impact justify the resources devoted to it?
5. Are additional resources needed, and if so, what kinds?
6. What is the reception of the program by affected elements of the community?
7. How might the program be modified, changed, or replaced to meet continuing needs more effectively?
8. How do other elements of the Department interact with the program, either positively or negatively?