



# Volunteers in Policing Policy



## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This policy provide a directive that establishes and describes the Poteet Police Volunteer in Policing Program including their role and scope of authority.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Poteet Police Department utilizes volunteer personnel to perform a wide variety of departmental and community service assignments to support the day to day operations of the Department, assist the agency, and to benefit the citizens of Poteet.

Poteet Police Department Volunteers do not carry firearms and have no powers of arrest beyond those of any private person. Volunteers do not carry firearms or weapons of any kind, and are prohibited from contacting, detaining, or arresting suspicious person(s) and/or criminals.

## **VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS AND SELECTION**

- a) Application
- b) Character Reference
- c) Oral Interview
- d) Fingerprint Check
- e) Criminal History Check
- f) Complete and Sign a “Volunteer Participation Agreement”

## **TRAINING**

Due to the nature and variety of Volunteer assignments, the agency recognizes that special training is necessary to provide Volunteers with the knowledge, skill, and ability to perform their duties in a safe, competent, and professional manner. All Volunteers must attend a program which provides an overview of the Department and Law Enforcement processes, as well as specific information about the Volunteer roles and assignments.

Volunteer training may include but is not limited to the following areas:

- a) Mission Statement
- b) Police Department policy and procedures
- c) Crime Prevention
- d) Records and front counter duties
- e) Radio procedures and communication
- f) Traffic control
- g) Personal safety

h) Volunteer patrol procedures

## **UNIFORMS AND IDENTIFICATION**

Police Volunteers must be recognizable to the public to be effective. Therefore, police volunteers are required to wear an authorized polo or long sleeve shirt while serving in that capacity.

## **VOLUNTEER DUTIES**

Police Volunteers perform a variety of tasks within the police mission including, but not limited to; clerical work, handicap parking checks, parade or special event assistance. Volunteers shall not be involved in enforcement activities that will bring them in contact with suspects or violators. Volunteers duty assignments exist in most unit with the department.

## **SUPERVISOR OF VOLUNTEERS**

Police Volunteers report to the VIP Coordinator and coordinate their work schedule and assignments through him or her. The VIP Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining rosters, assignments and work schedules for all volunteers. However, Volunteers will report to the Police Sergeant, Lieutenant and Chief of Police.

## **VIP COORDINATOR**

The Police Secretary is the designated VIP Coordinator and will be responsible for all Volunteer's In Policing, their assignments and work schedules.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Volunteers are generally expected to work a minimum of 6 hours and no more than 12 hours each month. The volunteer will be provided a time sheet on which they will document the days and hours worked. Time sheets will be reviewed monthly by the VIP Coordinator. Any volunteer that is associated with the Poteet Police Department Association and volunteers for their sponsored activities or event will not get credit for VIP hours. VIP's must earn their credit by performing police related functions and duties.

# **LEGAL/LABOR/PERSONNEL ISSUES**

## **DEFINITION/ROLE OF VOLUNTEER**

Volunteers are individuals who perform services without pay ("voluntary service"). Voluntary service shall include service performed by any authorized volunteer who receives no remuneration other than work assignment-related expenses. Volunteers are "at will" staff with no employee "rights" and are not represented by employee associations.

Volunteers will augment, not replace, paid staff positions. As such, volunteers will be treated as members of the Poteet Police Department team in order to enhance services provided to the community.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

As a volunteer in the Poteet Police Department, he/she may be exposed daily to sensitive and confidential information, which if divulged, could jeopardize someone's life or freedom. This may result in civil or criminal liability for the volunteer and the Police Department. Therefore, the Poteet Police Department must be assured that every employee and volunteer is trustworthy.

Each Division and/or Program will determine which volunteer positions would allow access to confidential information; and/or whether it is appropriate for volunteers to have access to confidential information. All Volunteers will complete a statement of confidentiality. While it is impossible to list everything that could be sensitive, the following topics should always be considered confidential:

- On-going criminal investigations
- Personnel investigations
- Personnel records or any information in them
- Criminal history records
- Civilian or criminal lawsuits in which the Department is a party
- Personal information about any Department employee
- Internal Department phone numbers that are not listed in the public telephone directory

## **RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES**

Volunteers who experience difficulties associated with their job duties should follow the chain-of-command complaint procedure utilized by paid staff. The volunteer should notify his/her immediate supervisor of the complaint. If the response is unsatisfactory or if the issue is the supervisor, the volunteer should notify the next level supervisor. Supervisors, as well as volunteers, may contact Human Resources for techniques in managing or resolving the complaint. If resolution is not possible, the volunteer may be given the options of selecting an alternate volunteer position or terminating from the volunteer position.

## **CHAIN OF COMMAND**

All VIP's will report to the VIP Coordinator, then to the Investigations Lieutenant, and ultimately the Chief of Police.

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT INTERNS**

The Poteet Police Department from time to time may utilize the assistance of Interns. Interns are not affiliated with the VIP Program. The Intern Program is administered by the Police Personnel. Should a Department Intern express a desire to continue volunteering once their internship expires, they may do so by contacting the VIP Coordinator. The VIP Coordinator will facilitate the transfer of the intern into the VIP Program. This procedure must be followed in order for the intern to become an authorized Department Volunteer.

## **EVALUATION/FEEDBACK SESSIONS**

There is no formal evaluation or disciplinary process for volunteers within the Poteet Police Department. However, like employees, volunteers also like to know where they stand in regard to their skills and progress. Feedback sessions should be a two-way street: a chance for the agency to critique the volunteer, and a chance for the volunteer to share concerns and suggestions on ways to improve the organization.

By offering a periodic feedback session for volunteers, the Chief of Police or Lieutenant adds credibility to the department and makes a statement that volunteers are held as accountable as paid staff. During these meetings, the Chief of Police/Lieutenant can detect signs of burnout or needs for new challenges, and can work with the volunteer to make adjustments in the volunteer's assignment, if needed.

Feedback sessions are a great time to recognize and thank volunteers for their contributions to the Department.

## **VOLUNTEER TERMINATION**

Volunteers, like paid employees, terminate their relationship with organizations through resignation or dismissal. The reasons for resignation vary.

If termination is at the request of a supervisor, it is recommended that accurate records and documents be kept. Records may deal with any grievance procedures or to document a volunteer's past work record with the Department. Any and all discussions regarding the termination of volunteers will be brought to the attention and reviewed by the Lieutenant and VIP Coordinator.

## **EXIT INTERVIEW**

Whenever possible, conduct an exit interview with a volunteer leaving the Department. A great deal of information can be gained which can serve other purposes:

- Tracking retention
- Recognizing and thanking volunteers
- Locating problems within a particular Division/Unit/Section or aspect of the organization

- Detecting any recruitment problems
- Providing closure to the relationship