

CHAPTER 45

CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

DISCUSSION: Standards in this chapter relate to crime prevention and community relations. It is understood that all members of the Hattiesburg Police Department are responsible for achieving crime prevention and community relation goals.

Crime prevention duties might include speaking to various groups on crime prevention methods, distributing literature, staffing information booths, alerting victims on how best to avoid future victimization, developing crime prevention materials for use by the media, and/or developing or maintaining liaison with neighborhood groups.

Community Relations was formulated with the intent of identifying and addressing problems arising between law enforcement and the service population. By establishing links with the community, we can learn of issues and respond to them before they become problems and serve a dual function by developing programs that increase the community's understanding of the activities and role of law enforcement, increase public confidence and lessen obstacles to implementing new programs and approaches that could fail for want of public understanding and/or support.

45.1 CRIME PREVENTION

45.1.1 Crime Prevention Function

The Hattiesburg Police Department crime prevention function provides the following:

- A. Crime prevention and Community Relations is a task performed by the Community Relations Division. Incident reports generated by the Hattiesburg Police Department are used to identify those business and residential areas with ongoing crime problems. Crime Analysis Unit will compile and disseminate this information to the Community Relations Division upon request. These areas will then be targeted for crime prevention programs.
- B. Crime Prevention Programs
 - 1. The Community Relations Division Office will respond to requests from public presentations and solicit opportunities to make public presentations to interested groups. The following programs will be developed, but not limited to the following:
 - (a) Self protection seminars
 - (b) Consumer fraud prevention
 - (c) Child safety (stranger danger, bicycle safety, 911 procedures, etc.)

- (d) Drug awareness
 - (e) Gang resistance education
 - (f) Neighborhood watch
- 2. Crime prevention programs not only affect neighborhoods but also affect the business community as well. Programs offered for businesses may cover such area as: Commercial armed robbery, shoplifting, security checks, etc. Upon request the Crime Prevention Officer or his/her designee will speak on such subjects and establish programs to fit the needs of the business community.
- 3. All Crime Prevention programs will be evaluated at least annually by the Community Relations Division Supervisor to ensure the program goals are being met and the community needs are being served.

45.1.2 Neighborhood Watch Groups

- A. A listing of citizen groups is maintained by the Community Relations Division so that pertinent crime information may be disseminated. The listing will be used to update programs already in place or address special situations which may arise.
- B. Speaking to residents concerning neighborhood programs pertaining to vandalism, burglary, home security surveys, etc., is encouraged and will have a positive effect on the prevention of crime in, and the enhancement of, the City of Hattiesburg.
- C. Liaison with Community Groups
 - 1. Communication between the Hattiesburg Police Department and the citizens of the City of Hattiesburg are of utmost importance to this department
 - 2. Incorporated into the plans and programs are the interest of the citizens, business community, local civic organizations, schools and churches.
 - 3. The inter-action of the community and this Department plays a large part in the development of programs to reduce or eliminate crime, enriching the quality of life in the City of Hattiesburg.

45.1.3 Construction of Residential and Commercial Buildings

- A. A Hattiesburg Police Department representative attends the City of Hattiesburg Site Planning Committee meeting weekly to discuss new construction or renovation of residential and commercial buildings. The Police Department representative provides input when feasible into security and traffic concerns.

- B. The department, upon request, will provide assistance to other City departments, City commissions, or private individuals in implementing current crime techniques into building codes, zoning revisions, and to provide security recommendations upon request to private and commercial construction.

45.2 COMMUNITY RELATIONS

45.2.1 Policy

- A. It is the policy of the Hattiesburg Police Department to involve all Department personnel in a city-wide community relations effort. This includes working to establish an attitude that the police are an integral part of the community, that citizen participation and interaction with the policies necessary to achieve a condition within the community where the normal application of law enforcement may prevail.
- B. The Hattiesburg Police Department, through established programs, will identify law enforcement policies and procedures to its citizens and the media for the enrichment of the entire community. The department is committed to correcting actions, practices and attitudes which may contribute to community tensions and grievances.
- C. It is also the policy of the department that the function of community relations is the shared responsibility of each and every member of the department.

45.2.2 Community Relations Function

The community relations function provides the following at a minimum:

- A. Establish and maintain liaison with formal and informal community and civic organizations including, but not limited to the following;
 - 1. American Association of Retired Persons
 - 2. Kiwanis
 - 3. Boy Scouts
 - 4. Boys and Girls Club
 - 5. Area Development partnership
 - 6. Neighborhood Watch Groups
- B. Community relations function is shared by all members of the Hattiesburg Police Department. Every member of the Department is therefore responsible for promoting good community relations to meet the goals of the Department and the needs of the public.

- C. Publicize department goals, objectives, plans and programs through the news media, city newsletters, cable television, and neighborhood watch groups.
Respond to individual citizen and/or community groups problems, and/or concerns with the police department. After the identification and verification of a problem, the department is committed to correcting actions, practices, and attitudes that may have contributed to community relations.
- D. The Hattiesburg Police Department will strive to correct any actions, practices, or attitudes within the Department that may have a detrimental effect on the community through training, policy changes, or when appropriate, discipline.

F. Identifying Training Needs

The Community Relations Division Commander shall make training recommendations to the Chief of Police when such training is indicated as a result of;

1. Interviews with citizen representatives.
2. Conferences with supervisor or as indicated, at staff meetings.
3. As a result of annual review and evaluation of community relations issues and practices.