Rockville City Police Department
GENERAL ORDER

Subject **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**		Procedure **G.O. # 3 - 5**
Authorizing Signature	**Effective** **02-26-10**	**Total Pages** **4**

I. POLICY

A. Community relations are based upon the principle that in a democratic society the police are an integral and indivisible element of the public they serve. Community relations are manifested by positive interaction between the people and the police and represent their unity and common purpose.

B. The Department must strive for the establishment of a climate in which officers may perform their duties with the acceptance, understanding, and approval of the public. Additionally, the willing and practiced participation of the people in enforcing the law is essential for the preservation of peace in the community.

C. In dealing with people, each officer must attempt to make their contact one which inspires respect for themselves as individuals and professionals, and one which generates the cooperation and approval of the public. While entitled to their personal beliefs, an officer cannot allow their individual feelings or prejudices to enter into public contacts. However, since an officer's prejudices may be subconsciously manifested, it is incumbent upon them to strive for the elimination of attitudes that might impair their impartiality and effectiveness.

D. The Rockville City Police Department is committed to establishing close ties with and responding to the needs of the community. Any actions, practices or attitudes that contribute unnecessarily to community tensions and grievances will be reviewed for changes.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to provide guidance to members of the Rockville City Police Department in establishing close ties with and responding to the needs of the community.

III. COMMUNITY RELATIONS FUNCTION

A. Through the general discharge of their law enforcement duties and through proactive interaction with citizens and community groups, each employee shall strive to achieve the Department's community relations' objective.

B. Although each officer is responsible for promoting community relations, the Community Services Officer has the primary responsibility for day-to-day community relations operations.

C. The Chief of Police will maintain overall responsibility for the Department's community relations

programs.

D. One function of the Community Services Officer will be to respond proactively and reactively to community needs in a community relations context. The Community Services Officer will coordinate Department, public, and community relations activities by maintaining open lines of communication with the community. The Community Services Officer will establish direct contact with community action and support groups, and initiate Departmental programs responsive to community law enforcement needs.

IV. COMMUNITY POLICING STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

A. The Community Services Officer shall attempt to establish liaison with formal community organizations and other community groups by encouraging members of the Department to become involved in these groups. The Community Services Officer will encourage these groups to invite officers to functions and make presentations to these groups. The Community Services Officer will invite these groups to become involved with this Department.

B. The policy of this Department shall be to:

1. Encourage all officers to become involved and to work with community organizations in a cooperative manner.

2. Encourage community groups and organizations to call upon this Department to make presentations.

3. Invite the community groups and organizations and all members of the community to become involved with this Department.

C. The Department will publicize objectives, problems, and successes as a part of an annual report and will utilize the media to keep the community informed about highlights during the year.

D. Department members and particularly the Community Services Officer will be encouraged to convey information transmitted from citizens' organizations to the Department.

E. The Department will be sensitive to improving Department practices bearing on police-community relations. Input from community groups will be analyzed and implemented, as feasible, to develop policies and practices to meet this objective.

F. Training needs will be identified through the following. These training needs will be documented and forwarded to the Training Committee Chairperson.

1. Input from citizen representatives.

2. Consultations and feedback with command staff.

3. Command personnel involved in internal investigations.
4. Training instructors.

G. The Community Services Officer is responsible for helping communities to establish Neighborhood Watch groups. This program will enlist the active participation of citizens in the communities to work in cooperation with law enforcement officials to deter crime in the communities.

H. Since Departmental responsiveness to community needs and concerns must be flexible, the Community Services Officer and/or the designated community liaisons will prepare and submit to the Chief of Police a report at least quarterly, which evaluates community relations efforts.

1. These reports will be reviewed by the Chief of Police and distributed to the command staff.

2. Each report will include:

a. A description of current concerns as voiced by the community.

b. A description of potential problems that have a bearing on law enforcement activities within the community.

c. A statement of recommended actions that address previously identified concerns and problems.

d. A statement of progress made toward addressing previously identified concerns and problems.

I. The Community Services Officer will evaluate all community relations programs tri-annually.

1. These evaluations will be conducted to determine if community needs are being met or if new programs need to be developed.

2. A written report of this evaluation will be forwarded to the Chief of Police by January 1st.

V. PROBLEMS, TENSION, GRIEVANCES

A. The Rockville City Police Department is committed to correcting action, practices, and attitudes, which may contribute to community problems, tensions, or grievances. By recognizing such problems at an early stage, preventive action can be taken by the Department, which might prevent greater problems in the future.

B. All Departmental employees who receive or become aware of concerns expressed regarding police activities, services, or individuals shall pass this information to their shift supervisor. Depending

on the severity or urgency of the problem, shift supervisors should forward this information to a Watch Commander who will ensure that the Chief of Police is informed of potential problems.

C. One way in which the Department actively seeks out information on potential problems in the community is by conducting surveys of citizen attitudes. The survey requests opinions with respect to:

1. Overall agency performance.

2. Overall competence of agency employees.

3. Officers' attitudes and behavior toward citizens.

4. Concerns over safety and security within the agency's service area as a whole.

5. Concerns over safety and security within the beat where the respondent lives.

6. Recommendations and suggestions for improvements.

D. This survey questionnaire is distributed to a random sampling of residents throughout the City.

VI. COMMUNITY POLICING STRATEGIC PLAN FOR COMMUNITY INPUT IN DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Department policies and procedures will reflect the needs expressed by the community and individual residents. Citizen input always will be encouraged, and suggestions and opinions will be gathered in the following ways:

A. Annual citizen surveys.

B. Participation and membership by Department members in civic organizations.

C. Community meetings attended by members of the Department and the Community Services Officer.

D. Citizen concerns expressed to officers while handling calls for service.

E. Through citizen feedback at Citizen Police Academies.

F. Through citizen feedback from the business community.