

Field Operations

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Policy Statement

This policy provides guidelines on a variety of issues for Sheriff's Office employees who operate in the field. They are intended to foster effective and efficient accomplishment of Sheriff's Office missions in a manner that is consistent with our values of excellence, teamwork and integrity. It is recognized that deviation from these guidelines may at times be necessary, such as for public or officer safety reasons.

Persons Affected

All law enforcement deputy sheriffs.

Directives Affected

Field Operations

Definitions

Major Incidents

For the purposes of this section, "Major Incident" means incidents involving an immediate threat of death or serious assault, suspicious deaths, kidnapping and abductions, injuries caused by or to Sheriff's Office personnel, traffic pursuits, collisions involving a Sheriff's Office vehicle and any other events that could reasonably be considered a high liability risk for the Sheriff's Office.

Officer Safety

Keeping Others Informed

Deputies should keep dispatch, the shift supervisor and other deputies informed of their locations and activities, particularly when responding to calls for service, engaged in law enforcement activities or stepping away from their vehicles.

As incidents progress, deputies should continue to update others on their situation via radio. Examples include:

- a) When making a traffic stop on a known suspended driver, a deputy might broadcast "1 SAM 1, Whatcom. Stopping. Possible criminal traffic, Smith and Guide."
- b) Upon discovering criminal activity, a deputy might broadcast "1 SAM 10, Whatcom. Out with felony drugs suspects" or "1 SAM 1, Whatcom. FSTs" [Field Sobriety Tests].
- c) Before contacting a known suspect, a deputy might broadcast "1 SAM 2, Whatcom. Contacting one for disorderly conduct."

Self-Assignment to Incidents

Deputies should not assign themselves to calls for service or traffic stops using the CAD system, other than priority 5 calls. When a deputy assigns themselves to a priority 5 call they should also advise over the radio that they have assigned themselves to that call.

Deference to High-Risk or High-Priority Activity

Deputies should cease proactive patrol activity and limit radio use when other deputies or officers from other agencies are enroute to or have just arrived at high-risk or high-priority calls, and should not resume such activity until the affected units have the situation under control.

Staying Informed

Voice Mail Briefings

Deputies should check their department voicemail at the start of their assigned shift for any important information from previous shifts or personnel changes.

Email and Mailboxes

During their assigned work weeks, personnel should check their email daily and their assigned station mailbox on a weekly basis.

Shift Meetings and Training

Deputies should be on time for shift meetings and training, and should notify the shift supervisor if they are going to be late.

Future Shift Assignments

Before the end of each shift, deputies should check the following day's shift assignments and note any scheduled shift activities. Supervisors should normally have the following day's shift assignments available at least one hour before the end of each shift.

Managing Resources

Maximizing Time in Patrol Areas

Deputies should proceed directly to their assigned patrol areas at the start of their shifts unless otherwise directed. With the exception of a centralized substation, they should stay in their patrol areas during their shifts, except in emergencies and for routine transportation of persons or evidence.

Deputies should normally coordinate with the shift supervisor before moving to another area for non-emergency purposes.

Strategic Location of Units

Deputies should consider moving to a location that would best allow them to respond to calls for service when other WCSO units are busy on significant calls.

Transit Time

Deputies should minimize the amount of transit time used to find a place to complete activities such as phone calls or reports. They should consider using places such as WCSO satellite offices and fire halls before driving to the Laurel office or the station when taking advantage of such places would use less transit time.

Breaks

No more than two marked Sheriff's Office vehicles should normally be parked at or near the same commercial establishment for the purpose of meal or coffee breaks. No more than four uniformed deputy sheriffs should normally be in the same commercial establishment for purposes of meal or coffee breaks. Breaks during training, special events, unusual occurrences or meetings called by a supervisor are exempted with the understanding that consideration should be given to the location, time of day and number of employees attending.

Overtime

Deputies must have authorization from the current shift supervisor to continue working after their shift ends. If deputies are unable to request such authorization from the supervisor as their shift is ending (e.g. involvement in an in-progress incident), they should make reasonable efforts to do so as soon as practicable thereafter.

Using the Radio and CAD

Deputies should keep all radio traffic and CAD entries and messages brief, succinct and professional.

Emergencies

When a deputy declares "Code 2" or "Code 3", the dispatcher should broadcast the following information: emergency traffic declaration, unit designation, status code, unit location. Example: "Whatcom units, emergency traffic. 1 SAM 2 is Code 3 at Smith and Northwest." Dispatchers may also use alert tones prior to high priority transmissions.

All available units should begin responding to the stated location and assign themselves to the call using CAD. Deputies should refrain from using the primary radio frequency to inform dispatchers they are responding. The supervisor will coordinate the response of other units.

Communications Security

Deputies should consider communication methods other than the radio when there is a specific operational reason to do so, while being mindful of officer safety issues in Section 4 and the need to keep supervisors informed of unit activities.

Minimizing Routine Information Requests

Deputies should check driving/warrant status, vehicle plates and local databases using in-car computers whenever it is possible and safe to do so. Deputies should use contact resources that are in their

possession (e.g. phone numbers for other deputies or agencies) before asking dispatchers to look them up, except during emergencies.

Checking In and Out of Service

Deputies may check in and out of service via CAD or radio.

Checking Out on Portable

Deputies are generally expected to inform dispatch of their location via radio whenever they step away from their vehicles. However, when preparing to engage in routine activities such as report writing, or meal or coffee breaks, they may do so via CAD with no accompanying radio transmission..

Unit Location

It is expected that all personnel equipped with an automated vehicle location (AVL) receiver will leave the unit plugged in and functioning except the following allowed situations:

1. When approaching their personal residences
2. When approaching sensitive locations with sensitive security concerns (e.g. undercover operations or credible threats to personal safety)
3. When conducting surveillance
4. When conducting sensitive follow-up

Deputies should automatically respond via radio with their location when dispatched to a call. Deputies should provide their location at other times when specifically requested to do so (“1 SAM 20, 1 SAM 1. Location”).

Prompting Dispatchers

Deputies should prompt dispatchers as often as possible (e.g. “1 SAM 1, Whatcom. Security Check.”). This allows dispatchers to pull up the proper CAD input mask before deputies begin providing detailed information.

Clearing Calls

If clearing a call using the CAD system, deputies should advise dispatch over the radio that they are clear and give the disposition codes of the call they just cleared. Example: “1 SAM 1, Whatcom. Clear, R-Robert .”

Managing Workload

The primary duties of deputy sheriffs assigned to patrol functions are to respond to emergencies and calls for service. Deputies should investigate all incidents thoroughly and with due diligence. Deputies are also expected to proactively seek out and deter criminal activity, and take appropriate enforcement action.

Deputies are responsible for prioritizing and completing work assigned to them in an efficient and effective manner, consistent with established guidelines and supervisory direction.

Whenever practical, deputies should complete investigations and associated reports before moving on to the next call for service or conducting proactive enforcement.

Calls for Service

Deputies should begin working all calls for service as soon as possible after receiving them and should report any expected delays to the shift supervisor. When deputies clear one call, they should check to see if other calls are holding and prioritize their workload.

Deputies Assigned to a Specific Area

Deputies assigned to a specific area have primary responsibility for calls for service in that area. They should conduct proactive patrol in that area when time and resources allow.

Deputies Assigned to be At Large

Deputies assigned to be at-large should monitor calls for service that are received by the dispatch center. If a call is received for an area in which the assigned deputy is busy and the at-large deputy is available, the at-large deputy should handle the call if doing so would contribute to the effective and efficient use of shift resources.

At-large deputies should seek to conduct proactive patrols in areas in which emerging crime trends or known problems have been identified.

Reports

Deputies should advise the shift supervisor at the beginning of their shifts if they are holding a significant number of reports.

Deputies should complete reports associated with custodial arrests and threats to public safety before the end of their shifts. Deputies should not leave such reports or other paperwork at the Laurel substation without notifying their supervisor. Each supervisor should attempt to retrieve reports from the Laurel substation at least once during their shifts.

Deputies should ensure that all reports are completed and turned in by the end of their work week. If they anticipate holding reports over their weekends, deputies should consult with the shift supervisor.

Follow-up investigations

Deputies should advise the shift supervisor if they plan to work on follow-up that will take a significant amount of time, involve other deputies, or likely result in an arrest.

Proactive Patrol

Proactive patrol includes, but is not limited to, traffic enforcement, security checks, PC attempts, warrant arrests, field interviews/social contacts and focused patrol in high-crime areas.

Deputies should notify and coordinate with the shift supervisor when intending to work jointly with other deputies on a specific proactive task.

Shift Supervisors

General Responsibilities

In addition to following the Patrol Operations guidelines, Shift Supervisors have additional responsibilities.

Monitoring and Prioritizing Calls for Service

Shift Supervisors should stay informed as to the status of calls for service. This can be accomplished by monitoring radio transmissions, reviewing CAD entries, or communicating with dispatch. Supervisors will provide direction on the prioritization of calls for service when appropriate. The Supervisor must balance the need to immediately handle a call against the geographic proximity of the assigned deputy to the call, the need to complete follow up investigations, and the possibility that the assigned deputy may not complete the call before the end of their shift.

Compliance with Patrol Operations Guidelines

Shift Supervisors should monitor the activity of deputies assigned to their shift to ensure that these Patrol Operations guidelines are being followed. Supervisors should monitor CAD and radio transmissions, and periodically communicate with deputies either one-on-one, or during shift briefings.

Assisting with Calls for Service

Shift Supervisors should respond to and assist deputies with calls for service involving a major crime, or when additional resources are needed to handle calls requiring an immediate response. In addition, once Supervisors have completed their other assigned duties, they should handle routine calls for service that will not require an extensive investigation or follow-up.

Directing Proactive Patrol Activity

Shift Supervisors should periodically coordinate and supervise proactive activities when shift staffing and call load allows. Examples of proactive activities include warrant sweeps, PC attempts, working targeted patrol areas, or traffic emphasis patrols.

Coordinating with Other Agencies

Shift Supervisors should be aware of any activity involving an outside law enforcement agency that would reasonably affect the Sheriff's Office. Request for mutual aid from the Sheriff's Office or from other agencies must be authorized by the supervisor, unless there is an obvious and immediate need to provide assistance to another law enforcement officer. When providing or requesting mutual aid from another agency, supervisors must ensure that deputies are working within the scope of their authority, and that Sheriff's Office policies and procedures are being followed.

Responding to Major Incidents

Shift Supervisors should respond to the scene of a major incident if possible. Supervisors will coordinate the investigation, notify the Duty Staff Officer, and arrange for additional resources as needed.

Reviewing Case Reports

Shift Supervisors should review case reports as soon as possible so that any corrections can be made in a timely manner. If a Supervisor is unable to review an in-custody or other major report before the end of their shift, they will notify the on-coming Shift Supervisor and request that they review the report.

Incident Briefings

With regard to major incidents, shift supervisors are responsible for communicating important information to Sheriff's Office command personnel. Supervisors will utilize appropriate methods for distributing this information in a timely and efficient manner.

Voicemail Briefings

Shift Supervisors should record a voicemail briefing when there is new information about important incidents handled during the shift, or other information that may affect the on-coming shift. This briefing, when necessary, should be recorded about one hour before the next shift comes into service.

Shift Brief Reports

Shift Supervisors will distribute a Shift Briefing Report to all personnel working their shift the following day. The Shift Brief Report will include the roster and assigned areas for the next shift, information about extra patrol requests, and other information of interest to patrol deputies. The Shift Brief Report is normally distributed via email at least one hour before the end of the current shift.

Shift Meetings and Training

Shift Supervisors should schedule periodic meetings with their assigned squad members. These meetings can be utilized to provide updated information on activities of interest to the deputies, to review or debrief recent incidents, or to provide training. Supervisors will need to balance the need to hold scheduled shift briefings against current call load, and workload (holding paper) keeping in mind the impact on all shifts.

Shift Supervisor Debrief

When necessary, shift supervisors should exchange information with the on-coming supervisor about activity occurring during their shift.

Personnel

Sergeants have several administrative responsibilities in the area of personnel management.

Supervisor observation logs

Supervisors are responsible for regularly documenting observations related to employee performance.

Monitoring employee workload

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring the workload of their employees e.g. posted PC statements, holding reports, reports returned for revision, sex offender verifications and follow up.

Time-Off Requests

Deputies requesting time-off will normally submit their requests to their Squad Sergeant. If their Squad Sergeant will not be available before the requested time-off, the request can be submitted to the Administrative Sergeant, or the appropriate Lieutenant. Sergeants will review the time-off request and confirm that approval of the request will not bring shift staffing below the required minimum.

Vacation change requests must be submitted to the Administrative Sergeant for review.

Timesheets

Sergeants are responsible for reviewing the timesheets of deputies assigned to their shift. Timesheets are due by 0800 on the Sunday following the work week. However, Supervisors should check for timesheets periodically during their work week, and review and approve them as soon as possible.

Acting Sergeants are not required to review timesheets.

Call-Outs

Shift Supervisors are responsible for calling out or notifying Sheriff's Office personnel as needed or required. If the Supervisor is unable to make a request or notification, they can request that a deputy or dispatcher complete the request or notification.

Duty Staff Officer

The Duty Staff Officer is available after regular business hours. During normal business hours, Command Staff notifications should be made to the appropriate division Lieutenant.

The Shift Supervisor should complete any required Duty Staff Office (DSO) notifications during their shift. The Supervisor can also contact the DSO when additional direction or clarification is needed.

Detectives

Shift Supervisors should contact the Detective Sergeant or Investigations Lieutenant when investigative assistance with a major crime is needed from the Detective Division. It is the responsibility of the Detective Sergeant or Investigations Lieutenant to determine who will be assigned to assist with the investigation.

Drug Recognition Expert

Shift Supervisors should contact a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) when a local agency or WSP dispatch inquires as to the availability of a Sheriff's Office DRE, or when a DRE is needed for a Sheriff's Office investigation. If a DRE is available to respond, they will coordinate with the requesting officer directly.

Crime Scene Investigators

Shift Supervisors should contact the Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) supervisor when an immediate call-out is needed for a major crime. It is the responsibility of the CSI supervisor to determine who will be assigned to assist with the investigation.

K-9 Deputy

Shift Supervisors should contact a K-9 deputy when a local agency inquires as to the availability of a Sheriff's Office K-9, or when a K-9 is needed for a Sheriff's Office investigation. Before a Sheriff's Office K-9 deputy is contacted, the Shift Supervisors should confirm that probable cause for arrest exists for the fleeing suspect, and that the use of a Sheriff's Office K-9 would be within WCSO policy, and that a K-9 team from another local agency is unavailable.

Resident Deputy

Shift Supervisors should contact the appropriate Resident Deputy when an in-progress incident is occurring in their respective areas, and the Resident Deputy(s) is off-duty. Supervisors may use discretion as to the need to immediately respond to minor incidents. The Shift Supervisor may also choose to assign a patrol deputy to respond and assist with the incident.

Road Use Investigator

Shift Supervisors should notify the on-duty Road Use Investigator when a collision involving a Sheriff's Office vehicle occurs, when any collision involving a fatality or critical injury occurs on a County roadway, when a collision results in extensive damage to County road infrastructure, or when there is obvious County liability exposure resulting from a collision.

When a Sheriff's Office vehicle collision does not result in injury, and when the damage is minor and non-reportable, the Road Use Investigator may choose not to respond to the scene of the collision, but rather complete the investigation during their normal duty hours.

Search and Rescue Coordinator

Shift Supervisors should contact a Search and Rescue (SAR) Coordinator when the need to locate a missing child, vulnerable adult, person in distress, or a person missing in the back-country of Whatcom County will require an extensive search that regular patrol resources cannot accomplish.

Supervisors will also contact a SAR Coordinator when a request for assistance from the Washington State Department of Emergency Management is received. Requests for assistance from other agencies must first be evaluated by the Supervisor to ensure that a SAR response is appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the SAR Coordinator to arrange for the appropriate resources to respond. This may include a request for assistance from Sheriff's Office personnel.

Special Weapons and Tactics Team/Crisis Negotiation Team

Shift Supervisors should utilize the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) Threat Assessment form when determining if a SWAT response is appropriate. Even if the threat assessment is low, the

Supervisor can still request a SWAT response. All SWAT responses must be approved by the Duty Staff Officer or SRU Commander.

If a SWAT response is authorized, the DSO, SRU Commander, SWAT Team Leader, or a SWAT Assistant Team Leader will be responsible for coordinating the response, including support from the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT). The Shift Supervisor or senior deputy at the scene will continue to be the incident commander until relieved by a Staff Officer or other Shift Supervisor. The SRU Commander or Team Leader will supervise the SWAT response, but the Shift Supervisor or Staff Officer will continue to coordinate other resources in support of the SWAT mission.

Shift Supervisors should contact the CNT supervisor directly when an immediate call-out is needed for crisis negotiation assistance, and patrol resources are adequate to provide tactical support for the incident. It is the responsibility of the CNT supervisor to determine who will be assigned to assist with the incident.

Reference

Forms

None.

References

None.

Related Directives

Location	Section	Title
BLEIS Operations Manual	DI-002-R1	CAD System Beat Patterns and Protocols
Rules and Regulations Manual	Chapter 21 Chapter 39	Patrol Functions Communications

Revision History

Effective Date	Revision No.	Affected Section(s)
April 20, 2011	1.0	New
January 23, 2013	1.1	4.1, 7.5
November 25, 2019	2.0	Definitions Self Assignment to Incidents Voicemail Briefings Using the Radio and CAD Responding with Unit Location Adding Written Comments to Call Record Clearing Calls Managing Workload Call Load Distribution Shift Supervisors (New Section)

Standards

Source	Reference	Title/Subject
N/A		