

	Operational General Order	11.11 Special Operations	ORIGINATOR/REVIEW Chief's Staff
	SUBJECT Virginia Beach Police Department General Order Chapter 11 - Patrol operations		DISTRIBUTION ALL
	CALEA: 41.1.4, 11.1.1		
BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE POLICE CHIEF: PwN			

Purpose

To establish a bureau under the Operations Division that has primary responsibilities for specialized traffic enforcement, maintaining and deploying a rapid response team of highly trained police officers capable of handling unusual occurrences, and conducting specialized law enforcement activities as required. Special Operations shall also serve as a source that may be called upon should calls for service overwhelm normal precinct operations.

Policy (CALEA 11.1.1)

Special Operations shall be primarily responsible for the Department's specialty units and the coordination of traffic services as described in Chapter 12 of the Virginia Beach Police Department General Orders

Specific components of Special Operations shall supplement other operations in a variety of diversified situations. The responsibility for handling the scene may vary according to the type of incident, primarily depending upon whether the special operational component was deployed to supplement regular patrol operations (i.e., police helicopters assisting in a search) or deployed to completely handle a situation (i.e., a SWAT/crisis negotiator call-out to handle a hostage situation). Situations meeting the requirements of General Order 13.01, National Incident Management System (NIMS) - Incident Command System (ICS) shall be handled in accordance with ICS/NIMS protocol.

The commanding officer of Special Operations will serve as the Department's representative/coordinator to the deputy emergency services coordinator and Emergency Management Operations.

A number of specialty units shall be contained within Special Operations. These units shall include

- A. Aviation Unit - Helicopter Operations
- B. Bomb Squad
- C. Canine Unit
- D. Crisis Negotiation Team
- E. Dive Unit

- F. Fatal Crash Unit
- G. Marine Unit
- H. Motor Carrier Safety Unit/Environmental Crimes
- I. Motorcycle Unit
- J. Mounted Patrol Unit
- K. Traffic Safety Unit
- L. SWAT Team

These units perform assigned special patrol duties on a day-to-day basis; however, conditions may dictate specialized assignments in areas requiring services for which the units were designed.

Selection of personnel to serve in Special Operations shall be conducted in accordance with General Order 2.04 (Selection.)

Specialized and in-service training for personnel serving in Special Operations shall be conducted in accordance with General Order 3.05 (Specialized Training.)

Aviation Unit – Manned and Unmanned Aircraft

The Aviation Unit consists of two MD530F model helicopters and several unmanned aircraft system (UAS) platforms to perform a variety of missions. These missions may place unit members in the role of support or as the primary element. Aside from proactive patrols, the helicopters provide an higher altitude perspective to improve police response times, enhance patrol functions, and increase officer and citizen safety related to a variety of calls for service or incidents.

The UAS, or drones, fundamentally serve the same purpose, just in a smaller platform, operating at closer proximities and lower altitudes. Similar to the helicopters, the drones are utilized in diverse scenarios including, but not limited to planned/unplanned events, tactical operations, post-severe weather assessments, and crime scene and serious/fatality crash investigations. All aviation assets are available to support other city departments and our regional partners through mutual aid agreements.

Helicopter Landing Site Guidelines

The ultimate responsibility for selecting a landing site rests with the pilot in command (PIC) of the aircraft; however, there may be occasions when public safety personnel on the ground will be required to assist the pilot in the landing site selection.

The Fire Department and EMS are well-versed in landing zone operations and under normal circumstances will assume responsibility for selecting a safe landing site. If Fire/EMS personnel are not available, and/or the pilot requests assistance in landing, police personnel must be prepared to assume this task. The following points must be considered to ensure safety for the aircraft and crew as well persons on the ground:

- A. The size of the landing zone should be at least 60-foot square during daytime operations and at least 100-foot square during nighttime. It is always preferable to find a large open area that exceeds these measurements.
- B. The landing zone should be clear of people, vehicles, and obstructions such as trees, poles, and wires. The ground should be free of loose objects and debris that could cause injury to ground personnel or damage to the aircraft due to the rotor down wash.
- C. Ideally, and if time permits, nighttime landing zones should be marked with flares, one at each corner of the landing zone. The flares should be secured so they will not be blown away. If this isn't possible, a constant light (flashlights, headlights, spotlights, etc.) should be used to illuminate the landing area.
- D. Ensure that any lighting used to define the landing zone is not pointed upward as this may affect the pilot's vision. To this point, lighting which emits a strobe effect should be avoided
- E. All personnel should be kept a minimum of 100 feet away from the marked landing zone
- F. The safety of persons on the ground, as well as safety and security of the aircraft and crew, is vital. Once the aircraft is on the ground, one member of the public safety ground group should stay close to the aircraft to monitor activity around it and provide security.
- G. The landing zone and surrounding perimeter must be maintained at all times, free of moving vehicles or non-public safety personnel, until the aircraft lifts off and is completely away from the area

Ground support personnel must observe the following safety procedures when assisting with helicopter operations:

- A. Never approach the helicopter while the rotor blades are still moving – let the crew exit the aircraft and move to you.
- B. If you have to approach the aircraft while the rotor blades are moving, approach from the front or sides of the aircraft and maintain a low profile (bend or crouch over). Never approach from the rear of the aircraft due to the moving tail rotor.
- C. Protect your eyes from blowing dirt and debris caused by the rotor down wash and remove loose headgear or uniform items.
- D. Maintain constant monitoring of the area and be alert for people and animals attempting to approach the aircraft.

Bomb Squad

The Virginia Beach Police Department Bomb Squad is responsible for the safe resolution of situations involving suspect items or packages and improvised explosive devices. The ultimate goal of the Bomb Squad is to resolve situations while limiting hazards to citizens and police personnel and to properly dispose of explosive devices located and recovered in the City of Virginia Beach. Only FBI Hazardous Devices School graduates certified as Hazardous Devices Technicians (Bomb Technicians) are authorized to handle explosives and conduct render safe procedures.

Canine (K-9) Unit

The Virginia Beach Police Department utilizes police Canine Teams in support of the patrol and investigative functions. Canine Teams may be used in a variety of situations in accordance with General Order 11.14 (Utilization of Canine Teams.)

Crisis Negotiation Team

The Crisis Negotiation Team shall be utilized in those situations that require resources or action other than normal police operations.

The Crisis Negotiation Team shall be called out at the discretion of the Special Operations Commanding Officer, or designee, for the purpose of negotiating with a barricaded subject(s), an armed suicidal subject, or those subject(s) who are holding a hostage(s) as soon as it is determined that the SWAT team is needed.

The Crisis Negotiation Team will usually work in conjunction with the SWAT Team(s) however; a situation may arise where the use of a negotiator may be prudent without activation of the SWAT Team(s). Either the Crisis Negotiations lieutenant or the SWAT lieutenant may authorize the activation of the Crisis Negotiator without the SWAT Team(s). Should that be feasible, a primary negotiator as well as a Crisis Negotiations supervisor shall be activated.

For additional information concerning the Crisis Negotiation Team, see the Virginia Beach Police Department Hostage Barricade Plan Field Guide and General Order 13.03 (Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team.)

Dive Unit

The Underwater Rescue and Recovery Team was organized for the purpose of providing highly skilled and trained personnel to assist in the recovery of evidence and stolen property. Apart from this primary function, it may serve to assist other agencies in underwater inspection of bridges, pipes, etc., and remove obstructions considered hazardous to public safety.

Members of the Dive Unit are selected from Special Operations personnel and serve on a voluntary basis. Their duties are in addition to routine Special Operations assignments.

Fatal Crash Team (FACT)

The team shall be utilized when motor vehicle crashes have resulted in confirmed fatalities or the injuries to crash victim(s) are believed to be life threatening or a crash that results from a police pursuit.

All crash scenes, where the Fatal Crash Team has been requested, will be treated in accordance with the Virginia Beach Police Department Field Reporting Field Guide (Chapter 4 Crash Investigation and Reporting) and General Order 12.05 (Traffic Crash Investigations.)

Hit and Run Unit

The Hit and Run unit is responsible for investigating hit and run accident cases that are unresolved by responding patrol officers.

Marine Patrol Unit

The Virginia Beach Police Department operates a number of marine units in an effort to provide complete police services to an increasing number of boating enthusiasts. These services shall include boater education, enforcement of the maritime laws, and investigation of all non-commercial maritime crashes and incidents occurring within the city's jurisdiction. Marine Patrol personnel shall be responsible for investigating all non-commercial boating crashes, which occur in their assigned areas, as well as assisting in such tasks as searching for bodies or evidence. Since adverse weather and sea conditions greatly affect the operation of marine units, the operator shall exercise discretion in the services which can be safely performed; however, the operator shall be prepared to justify any refusal to respond to an assigned call.

A Marine Patrol Unit shall respond to all boating crashes assigned to this Department, unless reassigned to another agency.

Marine Patrol units shall identify any underwater obstructions and/or other hazards to navigation while performing routine duties. These shall be immediately passed on to the U.S. Coast Guard with a request they be broadcast over Marine VHF radio and included in the next published Notice to Mariners.

Motor Carrier Safety Unit/Environmental Crimes

The Motor Carrier Safety Unit conducts roadside inspections of commercial motor vehicles to locate and enforce equipment defects, logbook violations, hauling permit violations, overweight vehicles, and hazardous material violations. This unit also responds to Environmental issues and hazardous materials incidents as part of the city's Environmental Crimes Task Force.

Motorcycle Unit

The unit will serve a supportive role in any situation where the furtherance of police objectives can be accomplished by their utilization.

The primary objective of the Motorcycle Unit shall be the reduction of traffic deaths and injuries by the detection and apprehension of traffic law violators through the employment of accepted traffic enforcement practices, including the use of radar, lidar and selective enforcement.

Members of the Motorcycle Unit will be assigned by the unit supervisor to any area in our city where, due to traffic congestion, decreased visibility, and/or highway design, traffic laws cannot be effectively enforced by conventional police vehicles. Additionally, motorcycle officers are available to investigate all types of reportable motor vehicle crashes, provide escorts, special assignments, and any other type of assigned calls for service.

Requests for services of the Motorcycle Unit for special assignments or emergencies must be made by a police department supervisor directly to the motorcycle supervisor, if not available, to any Special Operations supervisor.

Severe weather conditions may curtail the use of the motorcycles. The final decision as to weather conditions rest with the individual rider and/or the supervisor. The motorcycle officer's safety must be the primary concern when evaluating when to ride. In the event motorcycle operations are suspended the motorcycle officer will be assigned to any other duty by his/her supervisor. All Special Operations motorcycle officers will adhere to the operating instructions and conditions as established by the motorcycle supervisor and the Special Operations Commanding Officer.

Mounted Patrol Unit (CALEA 41.1.4)

The Mounted Patrol Unit provides unique support capabilities to accomplish the overall mission of the department. The mounted officer has an advantage over other police personnel in that he/she is situated above ground level and thus as a far greater range of visibility and observation. Additionally, the unit is an ambassador of the police department through positive community involvement, public interaction, and affording citizens the opportunity to have personal contact with the unit aids in bridging the gap between the police department and its citizens.

The Mounted Patrol is a fully operational year-round unit within the Virginia Beach Police Department.

During the months of May through September, the unit's primary function is providing a police presence and supporting the command with the oceanfront operations at the Second Precinct. The remainder of the year is spent patrolling neighborhoods, supplementing precinct personnel with holiday season operations, and continued equine training. Some of the additional duties may include:

- A. Provide patrol support in targeted areas in conjunction with the precincts community relations efforts.
- B. As a ceremonial unit at funerals, the annual police memorial and local parades, etc.
- C. Provide patrol support at special events where crowd management may be needed i.e. concerts, labor disputes, high school football games, civil disorder and VIP security.

- D. Community events such as Christmas Parades, Special Olympics, Equi-Kids, Warrior Heroes Ride and senior facilities.
- E. Provide tours at the Mounted Patrol facility and/or demonstrations for various civic groups and organizations.
- F. Search large areas for lost and/or injured persons, or evidence of a crime.

Requests for the services of the Mounted Patrol Unit for special assignments or emergencies shall be made by a police department supervisor directly to the Mounted Patrol supervisor, or if he/she is not available to any Special Operations supervisor.

Traffic Safety Unit

The Traffic Safety Unit aggressively addresses the detection and apprehension of impaired drivers as well as the enforcement of traffic laws in the City of Virginia Beach. The team utilizes roving and directed patrols as well as planned sobriety checkpoints in the accomplishment of this mission. The team also works to promote traffic safety through a variety of citizen education and prevention programs.

Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team

The Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team is responsible for the resolution of situations requiring other than normal police actions, tactics, or equipment. The demonstrated goal of the unit is to resolve situations while limiting hazards to citizens and police personnel. The team's activities include, but are not limited to, the following missions: drug raids, high risk warrant service, barricaded suspects, hostage situations, armed stakeout, dignitary protection, tactical operations, crowd control duties, and any other specialized operation the team may be called upon to handle. Additional Information regarding the SWAT Team may be located in General Order 13.03 (Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team), the Dignitary Protection Field Guide, Hostage/Barricaded Subject Field Guide, and Search Warrant Execution Field Guide