

# General Order

## Houston Police Department



ISSUE DATE:

March 17, 2014

NO.

600-02

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 600-02, dated November 13, 1997

SUBJECT: BEAT ACCOUNTABILITY

### POLICY

Beat accountability is an officer taking responsibility for identifying *beat problems* and providing police services in an assigned geographic area. Patrol officers shall work together and be accountable for identifying and addressing crime, disorder, and other beat problems occurring in their assigned beats.

Patrol officers shall provide police services including, but not limited to, responding to calls for service, conducting self-initiated activities, preventing crime, maintaining police visibility, and enhancing public safety through traffic enforcement.

Whenever possible, all patrol personnel shall attempt to elicit support and participation from citizens to help facilitate crime prevention efforts in neighborhoods, beats, and districts. Beat accountability necessitates interacting with residents, business owners, community leaders, etc. as a means of acquiring further insight and knowledge about the scope of services needed within an assigned beat, district, or division.

This General Order applies to all employees.

### DEFINITIONS

***Beat Problems.*** Issues or problems occurring in a police beat that may be addressed with police services. Beat problems may include, but are not limited to, crime, disorder, traffic or mobility issues, or community service needs.

***Uncommitted Duty Hours.*** Time available during officers' shifts when they can con-

duct self-initiated activities or be assigned activities by their supervisors.

### 1 PATROL OFFICERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

To facilitate patrol officers' ability to become familiar with and responsive to beat problems in their assigned beats, patrol officers shall:

- a. Cooperate with dispatch personnel and respond to calls for service and events occurring in their assigned beats.
- b. Utilize their shift including *uncommitted duty hours* to identify and respond to beat problems in their assigned beats.
- c. Become familiar with historical trends and patterns of beat problems in their assigned beats.
- d. Develop responses to beat problems. Depending upon the complexity of the problem, officers may need to discuss the proposed action with their immediate supervisor.
- e. Recognize the value and importance of crime prevention and crime reduction strategies, and traffic enforcement as vital tools in addressing public safety concerns in their beat.
- f. Devote some time each day toward addressing beat problems to the extent possible and note such activities on their daily work card.

### 2 PATROL SERGEANTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

To support officers' handling of beat problems, patrol sergeants shall perform the following critical tasks:

- a. Assess how often and how well their officers identify and address beat problems in their assigned beats.
  - b. Regularly check to ensure officers are productively spending *uncommitted duty hours* in their assigned beats unless otherwise assigned.
  - c. When necessary, preempt the assignment of a call for service or event to an officer working on beat problems, provided another officer in the district is available to handle the call or the sergeant requesting the preemption responds to and handles the call.
  - d. Exercise authority to manage resources in response to the most severe beat problems occurring in their area of responsibility.
  - e. Provide their shift commander regular updates regarding the status of beat problems being addressed by their officers.
  - f. Ensure accountability and implementation of crime prevention and crime reduction strategies and traffic enforcement in their area of responsibility.
- d. Routinely meet with the division captain to discuss the nature of beat problems, efforts taken to address those problems, and results obtained whether goals and expectations were met or not.
  - e. Ensure crime prevention and crime reduction strategies and traffic enforcement are implemented during their respective shifts.

#### **4 PATROL CAPTAINS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Patrol captains shall perform the following critical tasks to address beat problems:

- a. Ensure beat problems are being identified within the jurisdictional boundaries of their division.
- b. Balance the allocation of resources in accordance with the severity and complexity of existing beat problems.
- c. Routinely meet with shift lieutenants to discuss beat problems and how they are being addressed.
- d. Ensure implementation of crime prevention and crime reduction strategies and traffic enforcement within the jurisdictional boundaries of their division.
- e. Incorporate in their Crime Strategy presentation accomplishments and results attained from the efforts of their division personnel in addressing specific beat problems.

#### **3 PATROL LIEUTENANTS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Shift lieutenants shall perform the following critical tasks to address beat problems:

- a. Routinely discuss the status of beat problems with their field sergeants.
- b. Ensure beat problems are appropriately prioritized and responded to accordingly.
- c. Coordinate and collaborate with persons and entities as needed to develop and implement responses to pervasive beat problems, when appropriate.

#### **5 RELATED GENERAL ORDER**

600-01, Response Management



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Chief of Police