

Volunteers

336.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines for Plymouth Township Police Department volunteers to supplement and assist department personnel in their duties. Trained volunteers are members who can augment department personnel and help complete various tasks.

336.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Volunteer - An individual who performs a service for the Department without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. This may include unpaid chaplains, unpaid reserve officers, interns, persons providing administrative support, and youth involved in a law enforcement Explorer Post, among others.

336.2 POLICY

The Plymouth Township Police Department shall ensure that volunteers are properly appointed, trained and supervised to carry out specified tasks and duties in order to create an efficient department and improve services to the community.

336.3 ELIGIBILITY

Requirements for participation as a volunteer for the Department may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Residency in the Township of Plymouth Township.
- (b) Being at least 18 years of age for all positions other than Explorer.
- (c) Being at least 14 years of age for Explorer.
- (d) Possession of a valid driver's license if the position requires vehicle operation.
- (e) Possession of liability insurance for any personally owned equipment, vehicles or animals utilized during volunteer work.
- (f) No conviction of a felony, any crime of a sexual nature or against children, any crime related to assault or violence, any crime related to dishonesty, or any crime related to impersonating a law enforcement officer.
- (g) No conviction of a misdemeanor 2 or higher offence within the past 10 years, excluding summary traffic offenses.
- (h) No mental illness or chemical dependency condition that may adversely affect the person's ability to serve in the position.
- (i) Ability to meet physical requirements reasonably appropriate to the assignment.

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- (j) A personal background history and character suitable for a person representing the Department, as validated by a background investigation.

The Chief of Police may allow exceptions to these eligibility requirements based on organizational needs and the qualifications of the individual.

336.4 RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

The Plymouth Township Police Department shall endeavor to recruit and appoint only those applicants who meet the high ethical, moral and professional standards set forth by this department.

336.4.1 RECRUITMENT

Volunteers should be recruited on a continuous and ongoing basis consistent with department policy on equal opportunity, nondiscriminatory employment. A primary qualification for participation in the application process should be an interest in and an ability to assist the Department in serving the public.

Requests for volunteers should be submitted in writing by interested department members to the volunteer coordinator through the requester's immediate supervisor. A complete description of the volunteer's duties and a requested time frame should be included in the request. All department members should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting assignments. The volunteer coordinator may withhold assignment of any volunteer until such time as the requester is prepared to make effective use of volunteer resources.

336.4.2 SELECTION

Volunteer candidates shall successfully complete the following process prior to appointment as a volunteer:

- (a) Submit the appropriate written application.
- (b) Interview with the volunteer coordinator.
- (c) Successfully complete an appropriate-level background investigation.

336.4.3 APPOINTMENT

Service as a volunteer with the Department shall begin with an official notice of acceptance or appointment by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. Notice may only be given by an authorized representative of the Department, who will normally be the volunteer coordinator.

No volunteer should begin any assignment until he/she has been officially accepted for that position and has completed all required screening and paperwork. At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer should complete all required enrollment paperwork and will receive a copy of the position description and agreement of service with the Department.

All volunteers shall receive a copy of the volunteer orientation materials and shall be required to sign a volunteer agreement. Volunteers should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills and abilities and the needs of the Department.

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Volunteers serve at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

336.5 IDENTIFICATION AND UNIFORMS

As representatives of the Department, volunteers are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Uniforms and necessary safety equipment will be provided for each volunteer. Identification symbols worn by volunteers shall be different and distinct from those worn by officers or other members of this department through the inclusion of "Volunteer" on the uniform.

Volunteers will be issued Plymouth Township Police Department identification cards, which must be carried at all times while on-duty. The identification cards will be the standard Plymouth Township Police Department identification cards, except that "Volunteer" or, if applicable, "Fire Police" will be indicated on the cards.

336.6 PERSONNEL WORKING AS VOLUNTEERS

Qualified regular department personnel, when authorized, may also serve as volunteers. However, this department shall not utilize the services of volunteers in such a way that it would violate employment laws or collective bargaining agreements (e.g., a detention officer participating as a volunteer for reduced or no pay). Therefore, the volunteer coordinator should consult with the Human Resources Manager prior to allowing regular department personnel to serve in a volunteer capacity (29 CFR 553.30).

336.7 VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The volunteer coordinator shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Administration Lieutenant or the authorized designee.

The function of the coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management within the Department, and to direct and assist efforts to jointly provide more productive volunteer services. Under the general direction of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee, volunteers shall report to the volunteer coordinator and/or Patrol Lieutenant.

The volunteer coordinator may appoint a senior volunteer or other designee to assist in the coordination of volunteers and their activities.

The responsibilities of the coordinator or the authorized designee include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Recruiting, selecting and training qualified volunteers.
- (b) Conducting volunteer meetings.
- (c) Establishing and maintaining a volunteer callout roster.
- (d) Maintaining records for each volunteer.
- (e) Tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers.
- (f) Maintaining a record of volunteer schedules and work hours.

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- (g) Completing and disseminating, as appropriate, all necessary paperwork and information.
- (h) Planning periodic recognition events.
- (i) Maintaining a liaison with other community programs that use volunteers and assisting in community-wide efforts to recognize and promote volunteering.
- (j) Maintaining volunteer orientation and training materials and outlining expectations, policies and responsibilities for all volunteers.

An evaluation of the overall use of volunteers will be conducted on an annual basis by the coordinator.

336.8 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers assist department personnel as needed. Assignments of volunteers will usually be to augment the Patrol Division, but volunteers may be assigned to other areas within the Department as needed. Volunteers should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills and abilities and the needs of the Department.

All volunteers will be assigned to duties by the volunteer coordinator or the authorized designee.

336.8.1 COMPLIANCE

Volunteers shall be required to adhere to all applicable department policies and procedures. A copy of the applicable policies and procedures will be made available to each volunteer upon appointment. The volunteer shall become thoroughly familiar with these policies.

Whenever a rule, regulation or guideline in this Policy Manual refers to regular department personnel, it shall also apply to a volunteer, unless by its nature it is inapplicable.

Volunteers are required by this department to meet department-approved training requirements as applicable to their assignments.

336.8.2 VOLUNTEER MEETINGS

All volunteers may be required to attend scheduled meetings.

336.9 TASK-SPECIFIC TRAINING

Task-specific training is intended to provide the required instruction and practice for volunteers to properly and safely perform their assigned duties. A volunteer's training should correspond to his/her assignment as determined by the volunteer coordinator.

Volunteers will be provided with an orientation program to acquaint them with the policies of the Department and law enforcement procedures applicable to their assignments.

Volunteers should receive position-specific training to ensure they have adequate knowledge and skills to complete the required tasks, and should receive ongoing training as deemed appropriate by their supervisors or the volunteer coordinator.

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Training should reinforce to volunteers that they shall not intentionally represent themselves as, or by omission infer that they are, officers or other full-time members of the Department. They shall always represent themselves as volunteers.

All volunteers shall comply with the rules of conduct and with all applicable orders and directives, either oral or written, issued by the Department.

336.9.1 VOLUNTEER TRAINING MATERIALS

Each new volunteer will be issued volunteer training materials. The materials outline the subject matter and skills necessary to properly function as a volunteer with the Plymouth Township Police Department. The volunteer shall become knowledgeable of the subject matter and proficient with the skills as set forth in the training materials.

336.10 SUPERVISION

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor will be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and should be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

Functional supervision of volunteers is the responsibility of the supervisor in charge of the volunteer's assigned duties.

A volunteer may be assigned as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervising volunteer is under the direct supervision of an employee of the Plymouth Township Police Department.

336.10.1 EVALUATIONS

While in training, volunteers should be continuously evaluated until he/she has satisfactorily completed training and demonstrated the ability to take over the task. Volunteers who have completed their training should be evaluated on a regular basis.

336.10.2 FITNESS FOR DUTY

No volunteer shall report for work or be at work when his/her judgment or physical condition has been impaired due to illness or injury, or by the use of alcohol or drugs, whether legal or illegal.

Volunteers shall report to their supervisors any change in status that may affect their ability to fulfill their duties. This includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Driver's license.
- (b) Medical condition.
- (c) Arrests.
- (d) Criminal investigations.
- (e) All law enforcement contacts.

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336.11 INFORMATION ACCESS

With appropriate security clearance, a volunteer may have access to or be in the vicinity of criminal histories, investigative files or information portals. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, the duties of the position or department policy, all such information shall be considered confidential. Only that information specifically identified and approved by authorized members shall be released. Confidential information shall be given only to persons who have a need and a right to know as determined by department policy and supervisory personnel.

A volunteer whose assignment requires the use of, or access to, confidential information will be required to have his/her fingerprints submitted to the Bureau of Records and Identification to obtain clearance. Volunteers working this type of assignment will receive training in data practices and be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement before being given an assignment with the Department. Subsequent unauthorized disclosure of any confidential information verbally, in writing or by any other means by the volunteer is grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.

Volunteers shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any article for publication, act as correspondents to newspapers or other periodicals, release or divulge any information concerning the activities of the Department, or maintain that they represent the Department in such matters without permission from the proper department personnel.

336.11.1 RADIO AND MOBILE DATA TERMINAL USAGE

Volunteers shall successfully complete state and federal database access training and radio procedures training prior to using police radios or Mobile Data Terminals and shall comply with all related provisions. The volunteer coordinator should ensure that radio and database access training is provided for volunteers whenever necessary.

336.12 EQUIPMENT

Any property or equipment issued by the Department shall be for official and authorized use only. Any property or equipment issued to a volunteer shall remain the property of the Department and shall be returned at the termination of service.

336.12.1 VEHICLE USE

Any volunteer who operates a department vehicle while acting in the capacity of a volunteer shall receive training in safe driving and defensive driving. The specific training and course of study shall be determined by the volunteer coordinator.

Volunteers assigned to duties that require the use of a vehicle must first complete:

- (a) A driving safety briefing and department-approved driver safety course.
- (b) Verification that the volunteer possesses a valid driver's license.
- (c) Verification that the volunteer carries current vehicle insurance.

The coordinator should ensure that all volunteers receive safety briefing updates and license and insurance verification at least once a year.

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When operating department vehicles, volunteers shall obey all rules of the road, including seat belt requirements.

Volunteers should not operate a marked law enforcement vehicle unless there is a prominently placed sign indicating that the vehicle is out of service.

Volunteers are not authorized to operate department vehicles while using the vehicle's emergency equipment (e.g., emergency lights siren).

Fire Police are subject to the Fire Department's policy on vehicle use. The Fire Department should provide documentation to the Police Department showing proof of training and compliance prior to appointment.

336.13 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES/TERMINATION

If a volunteer has a personnel complaint made against him/her or becomes involved in an internal investigation, the matter shall be investigated in compliance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.

Volunteers are considered at-will and may be removed from service at the discretion of the Chief of Police, with or without cause. Volunteers shall have no property interest in their continued appointments. However, if a volunteer is removed for alleged misconduct, the volunteer will be afforded an opportunity solely to clear his/her name through a liberty interest hearing, which shall be limited to a single appearance before the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

Volunteers may resign from volunteer service with the Department at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice and a reason for their decision.

336.13.1 EXIT INTERVIEWS

The volunteer coordinator should conduct exit interviews, where possible. These interviews should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position and should solicit the volunteer's suggestions on improving the position. When appropriate, an exit interview may also include a discussion on the possibility of involvement in some other capacity with the Department.