

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Goals of the Houston Police Department and Citizen Patrol.....	2
Code of Conduct	3-4
Rules and Procedures	5-6
Disqualification from Citizen Patrol Program	7
Answering a Call for Emergency Assistance.....	8
Tips for Successful Information Exchange.....	9
Guidelines for Patrollers	10
Operational Procedures for Patrollers	11
Helpful Hints: What has worked for Other Patrollers	12
Coordinators' Responsibilities	13-14
Monthly Report Guidelines.....	14
Tips on Recruiting Members	15
Tips on Retaining Members.....	16
Training Tips for Identifying Suspicious Persons and Activity	17-18
Describe the Suspect	19
Vehicle Description.....	20
9-1-1 Call Flow at HEC to HPD & HFD Dispatch.....	21
Classification of Calls	22
Notes	23
Important Phone Numbers	24
Volunteer Acknowledgement	25

GOALS OF THE HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Enhance neighborhood safety by addressing crime, disorder, and traffic mobility issues.
- Instill public confidence and trust by enhancing professionalism while providing opportunities for employee growth and development.
- Improve customer satisfaction by enhancing quality services through community and government partnerships.
- Strengthen our commitment to addressing Homeland Security demands.

GOALS OF CITIZEN PATROL

- To provide an effective method of discouraging neighborhood crimes and neighborhood “decline”.
- To promote a friendly and safer neighborhood environment while respecting the privacy and rights of all citizens.
- To encourage awareness and provide improved communication among neighbors.
- To upgrade the quality of life and property values in the area.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Volunteers will behave in a professional manner at all times.
2. Volunteers are to exercise common sense and good judgment when participating in the program.
3. Volunteers should avoid physical confrontation at all times. Volunteers will be responsible for their own acts and they shall not shift this burden to others.
4. No member of the Citizen Patrol program will be intoxicated while patrolling.

Texas Penal Code, Chapter 49.01 (Definitions).
“Intoxicated” means: (a) not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties by reason of the introduction of alcohol, a controlled substance, a drug, a dangerous drug, a combination of two or more of those substances, or any other substance into the body; or (b) having an alcohol concentration of 0.08 or more. ***

5. At no time shall a volunteer drink an alcoholic beverage while patrolling.
6. Prescribed medications that cause drowsiness or in any way hamper the members safe performance of duty will not be used while patrolling.
7. Volunteers may not be in possession of any type of weapon, either on his or her person or in the patrolling vehicle. **This rule applies to volunteers licensed to carry a handgun in the state of Texas as well.**

Texas Penal Code, Chapter 46.01 (Definitions of Weapons). Examples of weapons are: club, explosive weapon, firearm, firearm silencer, handgun, knife, knuckles, or any other item that is design to inflict injury upon a person(s). ***

Texas Penal Code, Chapter 46.02 (Unlawful Carrying Weapons). (a) A person commits an offense if he intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly carries on or

about his person a handgun, illegal knife, or club. (b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), an offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor. (c) An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree if the offense is committed on any premises licensed or issued a permit by this state for the sale of alcoholic beverages. ***

8. Patrollers shall not imply or suggest to anyone that he or she is a peace officer or an employee of the Houston Police Department.

Texas Penal Code, Chapter 37.12 (False Identification As Peace Officer; Misrepresentation of Property).

(a) The person makes, provides to another person, or possesses a card, document, badge, insignia, shoulder emblem, or other item bearing an insignia of a law enforcement agency that identifies a person as a peace officer or a reserve law enforcement officer; and (b) the person who makes, provides, or possesses the item bearing the insignia knows that the person so identified by the item is not commissioned as a peace officer or reserve law enforcement officer as indicated on the item. ***

*** *Definitions are paraphrased and incomplete, see Texas Penal Code for detailed law.*

9. Patrollers shall carry a valid Texas driver's license and the Citizen patrol identification card while patrolling. Also, while operating a motor vehicle, the patroller must have valid proof of liability insurance as stated by State law.
10. When volunteers encounter a law enforcement officer who appears to be off duty or in civilian attire, they should not make contact or recognize the person as an officer unless the officer recognizes the volunteer first. This is to ensure the safety of the officer in case he/she is acting in an undercover capacity.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. Your personal safety shall always be the first, and most important, aspect of this program.
2. Patrollers are not to engage in any form of violence, or commit any violent acts.
3. Patrollers shall never attempt to apprehend or arrest anyone. Remember that you are there to OBSERVE and REPORT only.
4. Patrollers shall not stop, or attempt to stop, any car(s) or suspicious person(s). Call the police and let them handle the situation.
5. Do not threaten anyone, tell them to "go home", or issue any ultimatum. Examples: "I'll see to it that you guys go to jail." "You have five seconds to start your car and leave." "Why don't you kids go on home."
6. No one under the age of 18 may patrol, either as a driver or an observer.
7. An adult 18 years of age or older who has not undergone the Citizen Patrol training program may work with a trained patroller.
8. Do not carry large dogs with you while patrolling. A large dog is defined as an animal 55 pounds or greater according to the city of Houston's Animal Control.
9. Never leave your vehicle for any purpose, not to chase, apprehend, or question anyone.
10. It is never a good idea to patrol without a base station in operation to back you up.
11. Patrollers should always patrol with the magnetic signs on their vehicle. Remove these signs and place them inside your vehicle if you must leave your designated patrol area for any reason.
12. All Citizen Patrol Volunteers must be trained by personnel from the Houston Police Department prior to working alone, especially in the capacity of a patroller. Recruits may act as observers only.
13. Patrollers must observe traffic laws and the posted speed limit at all times.

14. Membership is open to all residents who have been cleared by the Houston Police Department.
15. The Citizen Patrol group is a separate entity from the civic association, and is not governed by the civic association. This means that the Citizen Patrol group is **not** affiliated with a civic group. The members of a civic group **may** be part of a Citizens Patrol group.
16. The Houston Police Department's Public Affairs Division is the sole authority on determining final judgment of who should be allowed to join a Citizen Patrol group.

DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE CITIZEN PATROL PROGRAM

1. Any violation of this training manual.
2. Excessive traffic violations in the past five years (three or more).
3. Failure to disclose information on the application.
4. Untruthfulness on any part of the application.
5. Unlawful sexual conduct prior to and/or during volunteer term.
6. Commission of a felony in the past 10 years or during the volunteer term.
7. Any other conduct or pattern of conduct that would tend to disrupt, diminish, or otherwise jeopardize public trust in the law enforcement profession.

Recommendation for dismissal from the program is subject to the final approval of the Police Volunteer Coordinator and the Public Affairs Division Captain.

ANSWERING A CALL FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Necessary information: Obtain as much of the following information as possible.

1. What is the problem?
Crime - Fire - Accident - Injury - Other
2. Where is the problem?
Be specific. Obtain an exact address, if possible.
3. What type of assistance is required?
Police - Fire - Ambulance - Other
4. When did the incident occur?
Is it still in progress?
5. Who is involved?
How many people need assistance or are involved in suspicious activity?

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INFORMATION EXCHANGE

1. **REMAIN CALM:** The patroller's voice must project confidence to assure the necessary information is given to emergency call-takers .
2. **SPEAK SLOWLY AND CLEARLY:** Be certain that you are understood. Avoid talking too fast or shouting into the phone.
3. **BE BRIEF AND CONCISE:** It is extremely important to concentrate your efforts on exchanging only necessary information.
4. **LISTEN CAREFULLY:** Some patrollers may be excited causing communication problems to occur.
5. **WRITE THE INFORMATION DOWN:** Do not rely on memory alone. An error could cause a delay in providing help.
6. **USE PLAIN LANGUAGE:** The "10 codes" (police jargon) or slang might be misunderstood.
7. **CLOSELY MONITOR YOUR CELLULAR PHONE:** Emergency responders may need to re-establish contact with you in order to verify information or pass along additional instructions to you.
8. **BE COURTEOUS:** Set a good example for other members of your patrol group.

GUIDELINES FOR PATROLLERS

The patroller's primary responsibilities are to observe and report situations that require emergency responses by the police. Criminal acts, fire, and other incidents affecting public safety fall into this category. The presence of the Citizen Patrol program can reduce the opportunity for criminal activity and enhance the general safety of the community.

It is possible that Citizen Patrollers may encounter circumstances in which a human life could depend upon their actions. This section provides guidelines for citizens who respond to emergencies, as well as, procedures for reporting suspicious activities or criminal acts to the Base Station Operator or directly to the Houston Emergency Center (HEC) at 9-1-1.

The most important guideline is to use common sense, considering carefully the ramifications of your actions. Your personal safety is the most important consideration.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR PATROLLERS

1. Use care and caution in the operation of your vehicle. Obey all traffic laws (This encompasses valid registration sticker, inspection sticker, proof of liability insurance and moving traffic violations).
2. Never pursue another vehicle or a person fleeing from the scene of an incident.
3. Never operate your vehicle in a manner that jeopardizes your safety or the safety of others.
4. If an emergency occurs that requires immediate first aid treatment, administer the necessary aid only if you are qualified to perform such acts. The Houston Police Department will accept no responsibility for any actions taken in this regard.
5. Never attempt to direct traffic or place yourself in danger around moving vehicles.
6. Never attempt to enter a burning building even if you believe people are inside. You may become trapped and create an even greater problem. Rescue attempts are best left to experts who are properly trained and equipped for such emergencies.
7. Do not approach a burning vehicle. It could possibly explode.
8. Emergency lights and/or sirens are not allowed on any patrolling vehicle.
9. All situations requiring police, fire, or EMS assistance must be reported immediately by phone to the Houston Emergency Center (HEC) at 9-1-1.
10. Do not leave your vehicle to check a suspicious occurrence or to become involved in any incident (this might jeopardize your safety or the safety of others). Your job is to observe and report your observation to the HEC at 9-1-1.

Helpful Hints: What has worked for Other Patrollers...

1. **ALWAYS** make phone contact with someone else before leaving home. Let them know that you will be out patrolling and what time you expect to return home. Check in with that person during and at the conclusion of your patrol time to let them know you are safe.
2. Store the magnetic signs flat. Wipe the back of signs & vehicles to remove dirt and grit. A clean vehicle will insure a tighter magnetic grip and prevent damage to the finish of your vehicle.
3. Do not install signs or magnetic antenna before leaving home. Go to the end of the block or the next street to do this. There is no need to advertise you will be away from home patrolling. It could make your home the target.
4. Allow some flexibility in schedules and your patrol route. The program works best when unpredictable.
5. Make eye contact as you drive. Potential criminals are less likely to act if they think they can be identified.

COORDINATORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The coordinator or co-coordinators are to act as the liaison for the group. They will be the only person(s) authorized to contact the Houston Police Department Citizen Patrol Division Liaison.
2. Maintain files and records for the group and its activities.
3. Ensure the group meets the required 30 patrol hours per month.
4. Submit the group's monthly patrol report on time each month. It should be received **no later than the 10th of the following month**.
5. If you submit your reports by fax, please send to your Citizen Patrol Division Liaison. If by U.S. mail, please send to the following address:

Houston Police Department
Your Substation's Address
Attention: Citizen Patrol Division Liaison

6. Monitor and schedule any monthly training sessions for all new and old patrol members that missed the scheduled training. (Renewal of your paperwork/membership is done every other year and should be done on or about the same month each time for your entire group).
7. Reserve the training date and time every other year with the Citizen Patrol Division Liaison. You can request to meet annually with the CP Division Liaisons to discuss topics of interest related to your area.
8. Notify your CP Division Liaison at least yearly of any changes in your group's membership (update the list of volunteers in your group).
9. Educate and explain to patrollers the correct care, use, and storage of magnetic vehicle signs.
10. Request replacement of broken equipment and damaged magnetic vehicle signs from the CP Division Liaison.
11. All requests for metal "Citizen Patrol" neighborhood signs must be directed in writing to the CP Division Liaison. The placement information for signs must be submitted for approval.

12. The maximum number of metal signs requested will not exceed four (4) signs at any given time, per guidelines established by the city of Houston's Traffic and Transportation Department. New Groups must patrol a minimum of six months before requesting metal signs.

CITIZEN PATROL MONTHLY REPORT GUIDELINES

The monthly report is a mandatory requirement. **The following guidelines should assist you in completing the monthly Citizen Patrol report.**

1. Begin reports on the first day of the month. End reports on the last day of the month. Do not carry over or overlap hours from the previous month into the next month.
2. For new groups, your first report should reflect the date your group actually started patrolling, then end the report on the last day of the month.
3. Reports should be **received by the 10th of the following month.**

Example: January's report should be received no later than the 10th of February.

The reports may be submitted via E-mail, U. S. mail or Fax to your CP Liaison.

The report must be submitted even if your group did not patrol or if your group did not meet the minimum number of patrol hours for the month.

Citizen Patrol

TIPS ON RECRUITING MEMBERS

Recruiting new members

1. Visibility and Community Awareness

- Create an interest in your organization.
- Become known in the neighborhood.
- Participate in parades, be visible at voting locations, community gatherings, and Civic Association meetings.

2. Communicate

- Who you are.
- What you are doing.
- What your purpose is.
- How it benefits the community.
- How to join Citizen Patrol.
- Deliver promotional fliers door to door.
- Print articles in your local newsletter.

3. Make it Easy

- Use sign up sheets at community gatherings.
- Make sure to provide a contact name and phone number.
- Provide transportation to meetings and events, if necessary.

4. Don't Lose Them

- Once someone expresses an interest in joining, get him or her to a HPD Citizen Patrol training class ASAP!
- After training, get them with an experienced member to show them the ropes.

Tips from our friends at Inwood Forest Citizen Patrol

Citizen Patrol Coordinators Workshop 01-26-02

Citizen Patrol

TIPS ON RETAINING MEMBERS

Keeping new members

1. Your C.P. Organization must have
 - Leadership.
 - Purpose.
 - Guidelines and procedures.

2. Communication
 - Keep members informed.
 - Make sure your volunteers know they are making a difference.

3. Recognition
 - Recognize and reward your members for their participation, loyalty, and service.

4. Member interaction
 - Share experiences and ideas.
 - Monthly meetings and community gatherings (National Night Out).
 - Promote loyalty, pride, and involvement.

5. Flexibility
 - Allow people to volunteer when it is convenient for them; flexibility with their schedule.
 - Encourage inactive volunteers to come back.
 - Combine community activities with crime reduction activities.

6. Blow Your Horn
 - Make sure the community/neighborhood knows about your Citizen Patrol group and what it is doing.
 - Publicize your successes.

Tips from our friends at Inwood Forest Citizen Patrol

Citizen Patrol Coordinators Workshop 01-26-02

TRAINING TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING SUSPICIOUS PERSONS AND ACTIVITY

If you see something suspicious:

Write down the description of the suspicious person(s) and/or vehicles. Get the make, model, color, and license plate number of the vehicle in question. When suspicious activity occurs in your neighborhood, you are to notify the Houston Police Department Dispatch at (713) 884-3131 or in case of a true emergency call the Houston Emergency Center at **9-1-1**. The Citizen Patrol program is in no way a vigilante group. It leaves the responsibility for apprehending criminals where it belongs, with the Police. No one is asked to be a hero. Neighbors are asked to be alert, observant, and caring.

What is Suspicious?

Basically anything that seems even slightly “out of place” for the area or during the time of day or night in which it occurs may mean criminal activity is taking place. Not every stranger who comes into your neighborhood is a criminal by any means. There are many perfectly legitimate door-to-door salespersons, repairmen, and servicemen moving around our neighborhoods. The question is if a criminal looked like a criminal, no one would have any trouble spotting him/her.

Some of the most obvious things to watch for and report include:

1. A stranger entering your neighbor’s house when it is unoccupied. It may be a burglar.
2. A scream heard anywhere. It may mean an assault, robbery, or sexual assault is taking place.
3. Offers of merchandise at a ridiculously low price. It may be stolen property.
4. Anyone removing accessories, car license plates, or gasoline from a car. It could mean theft is occurring and should be reported.

5. Anyone peering into parked cars may be looking for car keys left in the ignition switch or valuables left in plain view inside the vehicle. The result could be a stolen vehicle or a burglary of a motor vehicle.
6. Persons entering or leaving a business place after hours. It could mean a burglary of a business is occurring.
7. The sound of breaking glass or other loud explosive noises. It could mean an automobile accident, break-in, or vandals.
8. Persons loitering around schools, parks, or secluded areas in neighborhoods. It could be prospective offenders.

Situations involving people you might see and what their actions might mean:

1. Someone is going door-to-door in your neighborhood. And if after a few houses are visited and a pattern is observed where the person tries the front door to see if it is locked and/or goes to the side or backyard. This could possibly mean a potential burglar. Such action is seen as even more suspicious if a person remains in the front yard and/or if there is a vehicle following a few houses away.
2. Someone is waiting in front of a house or a business. Become suspicious if the owner is away or if the business is closed. This could be a potential look out for criminal activity.
3. Anyone forcing entrance to or tampering with a residence, business, or vehicle is suspicious anytime or anywhere.
4. A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms may be injured, under the influence of drugs, or otherwise in need of medical assistance.
5. Excessive human traffic to and from a certain residence is not suspicious unless it occurs on a daily or regular basis, especially during late night or unusual hours. It could possibly be the scene of vice or narcotic activity or possibly a fencing operation.

*****These activities may indicate a CRIMINAL ACT is being or is about to be committed. However, they may also be HARMLESS ACTIVITIES with reasonable explanations.*****

DESCRIBE THE SUSPECT

HPD Incident # _____

The primary or most useful information to obtain when describing a suspect is:

Sex _____ Race _____ Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____

If a weapon is used it is very helpful to know if the weapon is a:

Revolver



Automatic



Other useful information is:

_____ Hair

_____ Color of eyes

_____ Glasses

_____ Moustache/Beard, Sideburns

_____ Complexion

_____ Tattoos, Amputations, Scars, or Marks

_____ Speech impediments or accents

_____ Distinguishable gait or limp



_____ Hat

_____ Shirt

_____ Coat

_____ Tie

_____ Pants and Shoes

VEHICLE DESCRIPTION

HPD Incident # _____

The primary or most useful information to obtain when identifying a motor vehicle is the license number, with state of issue or identifying colors. _____

Other useful information is:

_____ What make? _____ Body Style? (2 dr., 4 dr., conv., etc.) _____ What year?

_____ What color? Two color (two tone)? _____ Identifying dents, scratches?



The police can use answers to as many of these questions as possible. Please remember that wrong information is worse than no information at all. Answer only those questions that you're sure of.

1. How many suspects were there? _____
2. What did they do? _____

3. What did they say? _____

4. What did they take? _____

5. Which way did they go? _____

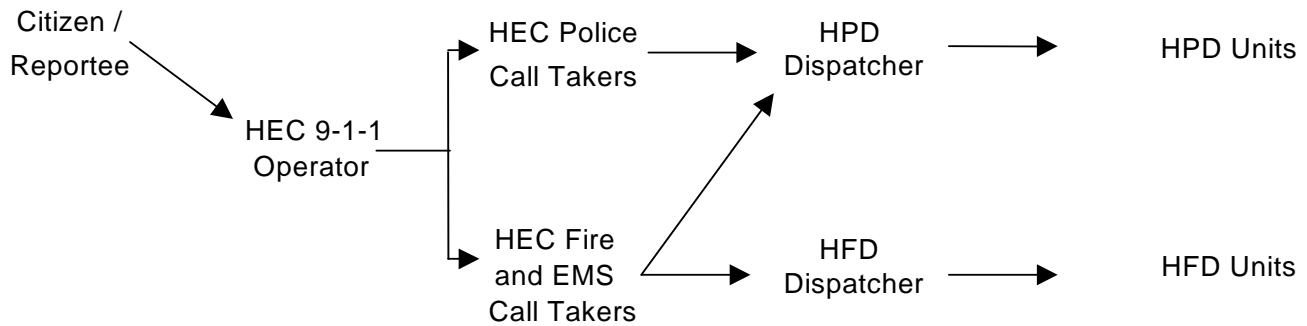
6. Were there any other witnesses? _____
Names and addresses? _____

Phone numbers? _____

7. Is there any other information you feel is important? _____

Illustrations for "Describe the Suspect" and "Vehicle Description" -- courtesy of city of Minneapolis Police Department.

9-1-1 CALL FLOW AT HEC TO HPD & HFD DISPATCH



Citizen/Reportee dials 9-1-1.

HEC 9-1-1 operator asks: police, fire or ambulance? Depending on how the caller answers depends on where the call is transferred.

Call Takers ask a series of questions such as: Where did this occur? What is happening? Who is involved? Are there any weapons involved? When did this occur? Extent of injuries? An incident record is created and depending on the type of call received, the call is routed to the appropriate dispatcher. Some incidents require a response from both HPD and HFD.

HPD dispatcher receives call and dispatches it according to various influences such as: When the incident occurred? How many people are involved? How many units are available in the area? Type of call.

HFD dispatcher receives call & dispatches either EMS/Fire engine or both.

CLASSIFICATION OF CALLS

Priority 1 - Emergency - Assumes that a potential threat to life or a potential threat of serious bodily injury is in-progress. Calls of this type are of such serious nature as to require an immediate response from patrol units.

Priority 2 - High Priority - Deals mainly with in-progress property crimes and/or a threat to human welfare. Assumes that if not in-progress, the event recently occurred, or response to the scene is urgent. Due to the serious nature of these calls, an immediate response from patrol units is warranted.

Priority 3 - Intermediate Priority - The first available area unit will be dispatched. Assignments will not supersede incidents of greater priority.

Priority 4 - Low Priority - Generally report calls. Assumes there is not a potential threat to human life or injury. Assumes that the call is not in-progress and that suspects are not at the location.

HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT DIVISIONS

Central Division 61 Riesner Street	713-247-4400
Clear Lake Division 2855 Bay Area Boulevard	281-218-3800
Eastside Division 7525 Sherman	713-928-4600
Fondren Division 11168 Fondren	713-773-7900
Kingwood Division 3915 Rustic Wood Drive	281-913-4500
Mid West Division 3203 South Dairy Ashford	281-597-6000
North Division 9455 West Montgomery	281-405-5300
Northeast Division 8301 Ley Road	713-635-0200
Northwest Division 6000 Teague Road	713-744-0900
South Central Division 2202 St. Emanuel	832-394-0200
Southeast Division 8300 Mykawa	713-731-5000
Southwest Division 4503 Beechnut	713-314-3900
Westside Division 3203 South Dairy Ashford	281-584-4700



Volunteer Acknowledgement

CP GROUP: _____

DIVISION: _____

I, _____ have received a copy of the City of Houston's Citizen Patrol Manual. I agree to abide by the rules and regulations as outlined in this manual.

Signature

Date