

BC Citizens Patrol Network

Information Module

Citizens Foot Patrol



British Columbia Crime Prevention Association

CITIZENS FOOT PATROL

Some jurisdictions have chosen to have their Citizens Patrol, patrol by foot. Most of the previous administrative and training chapters apply to foot patrol as well as vehicle patrols. Volunteers on foot patrol present different challenges than vehicle patrol and this chapter identifies areas that specifically address foot patrol volunteer training.

REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the requirements for volunteers in vehicles, it is necessary that the volunteer foot patroller be physically fit to be able to participate in the foot patrol program and must be able to operate a cellular phone or radio.

It is desirable to have volunteers that represent the ethnic heritage of the communities in which they serve.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

As a member of a foot patrol, volunteers may be more readily identified with the police organization and therefore may be considered a representative of the police. It is important that the volunteers act in a professional manner at all times.

Usually, volunteers are asked to report activities of a criminal or suspicious nature to the police by way of a cell phone, dialling 911.

It must be emphasized that foot patrol volunteers have no special authority to contravene any section of the Criminal Code, Motor Vehicle Act or Regulations, and are not to intervene directly in any situation they may encounter while on foot patrol, unless authorized by a police officer.

Volunteer foot patrollers must not reveal the phone numbers of the cell phones used.

ASSIGNMENT

Volunteer foot patrollers are always assigned in pairs. If a partner does not show up, and no replacement is found, the patrol is cancelled.

Volunteers are normally assigned a specific catchment area at the beginning of a shift. Where possible, volunteers are advised of any concerns noted in the area prior to setting out.

Volunteers may not include a non-member in their patrol unless authorized by the police supervisor of the program. At no time is a non-member allowed to accompany only one program member, there must be minimum of two program members on patrol at any time.

Shifts are normally 2 - 4 hours in length.

IDENTIFICATION

Volunteers are usually asked to carry ID tags with them at all times on duty. Although these may be worn visibly in the office, they are covered while on patrol or in a public place, with some exceptions.

Volunteers show their tags when requested by police or a concerned citizen.

Some foot patrol programs request that their patroller be highly visible, especially when patrolling parking lots. Not only does this act as a deterrent, police can easily identify the patrollers. Patrollers may be asked to wear T-shirts with a Foot Patrol logo or, at night, bright clothing such as a reflective vest.

USE OF CELLULAR PHONE

The cellular phones provided are for use of the volunteer foot patrollers only. Calls made on the cellular phones must be for the purpose of carrying out foot patrol duties. No personal calls may be made from the phones.

Volunteers are normally asked to sign out a phone at the start of their shift and return it at the end. Any problems with the phones should be reported to the supervisor.

For those volunteers with scanners, these should be operated at low volume, out of sight and with earphones. The object of the patrol is to blend in, not to be identified or considered undercover police.

SOME TIPS WHEN ON FOOT PATROL

1. When volunteers start their shift they should make a note in their notebook of the time, date, weather, who is on patrol and what they are wearing
2. Also, they should make a note of all the cell phone numbers of the other volunteers going on patrol at the same time
3. Volunteers should have proper clothing for inclement weather
4. Volunteers should check their flashlight to ensure that it is working and conceal it until needed, advise them to use it sparingly
5. Volunteers should always know where they are when on patrol, if they are in a lane, they should know which 2 streets they are between and what block they are in. In a parking lot, they should know the area or the number of the parking lot they are in
6. Volunteers should try to patrol as much of their catchment area as they can during their shift
7. If they see someone who is suspicious and that person sees them several times walking by, they will know that the patrollers are following them. They should try to find an observation point and just watch them.
8. Volunteers should establish code words and signals with the other patrol members.
9. In parking lots, volunteers must use extreme caution when walking around vehicles and not assume that the driver sees them.
10. Foot patrollers can also be considered as “Ambassadors” and should be up to date on the area they are patrolling to be able to answer questions, provide directions and identify local services.
11. Rules and regulations are very important because volunteers are not in cars and they must stay together for safety.

WHEN TO CONSIDER CALLING FOR HELP

(Base station, security or the police)

If a volunteer sees something suspicious, they should observe for a while. They should THINK, does this really require the attention of the security / police?

When they see something that warrants the attention of the police, their first thing is to make sure they know where they are when they call base / 911. They should identify themselves immediately to the base / 911 operator. They must know the target's location and direction of travel; they can describe what they have on view. The police will be heading in their direction while they are broadcasting.

They wait for the police's arrival and keep updating base / 911 with any new information. They should stay as close to the scene as safely possible and maintain contact with base / 911 until they are requested to clear by base / 911 or by the attending police officer.

They should always be aware there are locations where cell phones will not work, such as underground lots. Advise them that all calls to 911 are recorded, to be calm and professional when giving information and that they must take direction from the 911 operator.

A good training exercise is to role-play 911 calls.

BC Citizens Patrol Network

Training Module

Citizens Bike Patrol



British Columbia Crime Prevention Association

BIKE PATROL

Many jurisdictions have instituted a Citizens Bike Patrol program using volunteers. Again, many of the administrative and training chapters will apply to bike patrol volunteers. There are some specific training areas that apply specifically to a Citizens Bike Patrol, as follows:

REQUIREMENTS

The issue of fitness is important to recruiting volunteers for a Citizens Bike Patrol program. Programs may require a signed Doctor's report. Usually there is a road test supervised by a police officer with the assistance of a senior bike patroller where available. The volunteer is subject to a road test to evaluate their riding and physical fitness level. The road test includes basic traffic situations.

TRAINING

In addition to the Citizen Patrol training, bike patrollers may be required to take a course in proper cycling techniques and traffic safety. The RCMP have developed curriculum for both these courses. There are also community bike safety courses and volunteers may be required to reach the CanBike 1 standards.

UNIFORMS

Many Citizens Bike Patrol programs issue a uniform shirt or jacket and reflective vest to their volunteers to be worn on patrol. Also for inclement weather programs provide volunteers with rain gear. At dusk / night, volunteers must wear the cycling jackets with the reflective material or a yellow cycling vest. Clothing that belongs to the program is usually checked out at the beginning of a shift and returned at the end of the shift.

EQUIPMENT

Citizens Bike Patrol programs often provide their volunteers with bicycles. Programs engage in fund raising to buy equipment and gear. Many bicycle shops have been very generous.

If the volunteers ride at dusk and / or night, their bicycle must be equipped with a white light to the front and one red light to the rear of the bicycle.

Volunteers should be responsible for the immediate reporting of any loss, or malfunctioning or damage to equipment. No unauthorized repairs or maintenance should be done.

PATROLS

Volunteer bike patrollers are always assigned in pairs. If a partner does not show up, and no replacement is found, the patrol is cancelled.

Because patrollers are on bicycles, they have access to areas where cars may not. Patrols should be made in parking lots, parks, school grounds, back streets and alleys paying special attention to poorly lit areas. A good deal of criminal activities cannot be seen from the main streets. It is a good idea for the supervisor to alert volunteers of the areas of concern within their catchment area.

If volunteers are followed, they are to remain calm and make their way back to a safe area.

Volunteers are advised to ride slowly whenever possible. It's difficult to see persons hiding in the dark when travelling too quickly.

Volunteers should prearrange with their partners who will do what.

Volunteers should not put themselves in areas where they could be blocked in.

Rules and regulations are very important because volunteers are not in cars. They must stay together for safety.

COMMUNICATION

Again, cellular phones and / or two-way radios may be the primary means of communication.