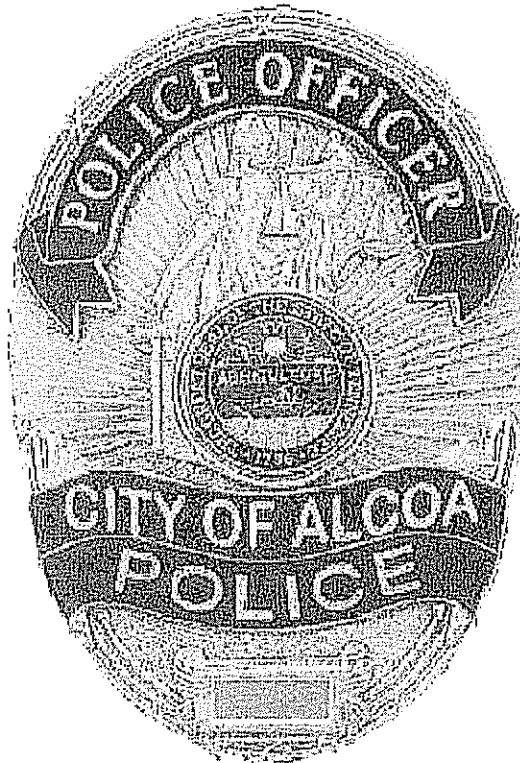


*THE ALCOA POLICE DEPARTMENT
VOLUNTEERS IN POLICE SERVICE
HANDBOOK*



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Introduction

The Alcoa Police Department Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS) Program was established in 2005.

Volunteers can be an important part of any organization and have proven to be a valuable asset to law enforcement agencies. Volunteers help to increase police responsiveness, service delivery, and information input. They provide new program opportunities. In addition, volunteers can bring new skills, perspectives, and expertise to the job and prompt new enthusiasm. It is the policy of the Alcoa Police Department to use qualified volunteers for specific tasks and duties that can create efficiencies for the department and continue to improve service to the community. The Alcoa Police Department, in partnership with our community, provides impartial, ethical, and professional law enforcement service and protection. We strive to maintain the trust and confidence of our citizens while working to improve the quality of life. Our vision is to provide the environment, programs, and equipment for the department and the VIPS Program that results in reduction in crime and fear of crime, maximum efficiency, enhanced customer service, improved public confidence, and personal and professional growth. Volunteers are intended to supplement and support, rather than supplant, sworn officers and civilian personnel and will participate only in non-enforcement activities.

The purpose of this handbook is to help you as a volunteer to understand what is expected of you and to answer some, but not all, of your questions. We hope that it will allow you to have a smoother transition into the VIPS Program. We depend on you – your success is our success. Note that the terms VIP volunteer, volunteer, VIPS member, and member are used in this handbook interchangeably and are synonymous. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask.

Administration

The Volunteer Coordinator in conjunction with the Community Policing Director or his/her designee, shall be responsible for a) maintaining VIPS records for each volunteer, b) maintaining the VIPS handbook, c) maintaining a record of VIPS schedules and work hours, d) completing and disseminating as appropriate all necessary paperwork and information, and e) maintaining membership in the VIPS organization. All requests for VIPS personnel shall be routed through the designated chain of command for review and VIPS selection. The VIPS program has no other employees and relies heavily on its volunteers. There is no rank structure for the volunteers in the VIPS Program.

Recruitment, Screening, Selection, and Placement

VIPS members shall be recruited on a continuous and ongoing basis consistent with the department's policy on equal opportunity nondiscriminatory employment. The applicant must be at least 21 years of age. The individual does not have to be an Alcoa Police Department Citizen's Police Academy graduate. A primary qualification for participating in the application process shall be an interest in and an ability to assist the agency in serving the public.

As part of the screening process, all prospective members shall complete the VIPS application form. The applicant must also sign the Volunteer Agreement and Release of Liability form (which must be notarized), the Authorization to Release Form, and the Release of Liability During Training form.

The Volunteer Coordinator, or designee, shall conduct a face-to-face interview with an applicant under consideration. The Community Policing Director shall perform a documented background investigation on each VIPS applicant, which shall include but not be limited to a) traffic and criminal records, b) employment, and c) references. The Alcoa Police Department reserves the right to decline any VIPS application and does not have to disclose the reason for that decision.

Once selected, applicants shall receive a confirmation letter prior to the start of service. All VIPS members shall receive a copy of the VIPS handbook and sign a volunteer agreement.

Regarding placement, VIPS members shall be placed only in job assignments or programs, which are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities, and the needs of the agency.

Probation

Upon entry into the VIPS Program, new VIPS volunteers will be on a 90-day probationary period. During this time, the individual's immediate supervisor and other officers will interact and observe the individual and make the decision to retain, reassign based on the individual's skills and interests, or remove the individual from the program. This enables both the department and the volunteer to decide if the assignment is a good fit to meet the department's needs and objectives and if the commitment to the program is genuine.

Position Description

Volunteers shall be provided with a comprehensive, written position description detailing their duties and training requirements. Volunteers shall be used only in accordance with this description. Volunteers shall not work without a written job description or outside the limits of job responsibilities specified in the job description. Position descriptions shall be reviewed periodically to ensure that they accurately reflect the volunteer's duties, limitations, and responsibilities.

Training

Volunteers shall be provided with an orientation program to acquaint them with the department, personnel, policies, and procedures that have a direct impact on their work assignment. Volunteers shall receive position-specific training to ensure they have adequate knowledge and skills to complete tasks required by the position. Volunteers shall receive periodic training as deemed appropriate by the Volunteer Coordinator or the Chief of Police. Training shall reinforce to volunteers that they may not intentionally represent themselves as, or by omission infer that they are, sworn officers or other full-time members of the department. They shall always represent themselves as VIPS members. All volunteers shall comply with the rules of conduct and with all orders and directives either oral or written, issued by the department.

Volunteer Time

The Volunteer Coordinator will fill a Volunteer Time Sheet out monthly. The date, time, and number of hours (to closest quarter hour segment - .25, .50, .75) each day volunteered that month will be included in the report.

Workspace

If the volunteer needs a work space within the facility to fulfill his or her volunteer duties, the Volunteer Coordinator will make the necessary arrangements. Volunteers need to remember that two or more people usually use the workspace to which they are assigned. A volunteer's personal belongings must come and go with the volunteer.

Fitness for Duty

No volunteer shall report to work or be on duty when his or her judgment or physical condition has been impaired by alcohol, medication, other substances, illness, or injury.

Dress Code

Volunteers shall be neat and clean in their person and conform to department-approved dress consistent with their duty assignment. Volunteer's attire shall be neat and conservative. Uniforms authorized for VIPs shall be readily distinguishable from those worn by sworn officers. No volunteer shall wear his or her uniform or identifiable parts of that uniform while *off* duty. Volunteers shall be required to return any issued uniform or agency clothing at the termination of service.

Dependability

Volunteers shall make every attempt to be prompt and consistent. When ill, on vacation, or unable to volunteer, let the Volunteer Coordinator know as far in advance as possible.

Personal Phone Calls

Volunteers shall keep personal phone calls to a minimum while on duty -- they must not interfere with volunteer responsibilities. Local calls are allowed on department phones for essential personal business.

Smoking

The Alcoa Police Department is a nonsmoking facility. Designated areas outside the building must be used for the volunteer to have a short break. Volunteers shall not use any tobacco product while in direct public contact or in situations where fellow employees find it offensive. Tobacco use is prohibited in any "pool" or unassigned vehicle.

Confidential Information

The Alcoa Police Department has an obligation to the citizens of Alcoa to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. Every citizen served by the department has the right to confidentiality.

With appropriate security clearance, volunteers may have access to confidential information such as criminal histories or investigative files. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or departmental policy, all police information shall be considered confidential. Only that information specifically identified and approved by authorized personnel shall be released. Confidential information shall be given only to persons who have a need and a right to know as determined by departmental policy and supervisory personnel. Such information is not to be shared with one's family, friends, or acquaintances.

Each member shall sign a nondisclosure agreement. Subsequent disclosure of any confidential information, verbally, in writing, or by any other means, shall be grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.

The Media/Public Gatherings

Volunteers shall not address public gatherings, appear on television or radio, prepare any article for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or other periodical, release or divulge any information concerning the activities of the agency, or maintain that they represent the agency in such matters without written permission from the Alcoa Chief of Police or designee.

Property and Equipment

Volunteers shall be issued an identification/access badge that must be worn at all times while on duty. It shall not be worn while off duty. If lost, notify the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

In representing the Alcoa Police Department, it is imperative that all personnel be cautious in the use or display of any credentials. The following are three particular instances where volunteers **shall not** use their police identification/access badge:

- As a second form of identification,
- To identify your association with the Alcoa Police Department when not participating in a department sanctioned function or event or not on duty,
- While engaged in contact with any other law enforcement personnel or entity outside your official capacity.

Any usage of police department identification and/or equipment other than what is within the scope of your particular volunteer duties may lead to disciplinary action up to and including criminal prosecution (i.e., impersonating a police officer) and dismissal from the VIPS Program.

Any fixed and portable equipment issued to the volunteer by the department shall be for official and authorized use ONLY while on duty. Any property or equipment issued to a volunteer shall remain the property of the agency and shall be returned at the termination of service.

Concealed Weapons

Volunteers are not to carry weapons within the facility or when on duty in a volunteer capacity even if a concealed weapons permit was applied for and received.

Sexual and General Harassment/Discrimination

It is the policy of the Alcoa Police Department that all employees and volunteers shall be provided a work environment free from sexual and general harassment and discrimination because of but not limited to their race, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or political beliefs. Sexual and general harassment and discrimination are viewed as serious issues and will not be tolerated.

If you feel you are being harassed or discriminated against, the following procedure should be followed:

1. If comfortable, talk with the person you feel is doing the harassment or discrimination, letting the person know that his or her behavior is unacceptable to you.
2. If not comfortable talking with the person, discuss the situation with the Community Policing Director or,
3. Talk with the Captain of that division or,
4. Request a meeting with the Chief of Police.

Change in Status

Volunteers shall report to the Volunteer Coordinator any changes in status that may affect their ability to fulfill their duties. This includes, but is not limited to, arrests, criminal investigations, criminal or civil litigation, revoked/suspended driver's license, drug charges, and any change to information provided on one's application for the VIPS Program.

Inactive Status

VIPS volunteers may request a short period of inactive status due to health problems, military commitments, extended trips, or family/work related issues that cause him or her to curtail their volunteer work. The volunteer shall notify the Volunteer Coordinator. The notice should include the reason for requesting the inactive status and an estimate when they can return to active status.

Disciplinary Procedures/Termination

A VIPS volunteer may be removed from the VIPS Program at the discretion of the Chief of Police. A VIPS volunteer who fails to participate in the program on a continual basis or declines to complete required training or assigned tasks shall be contacted by the Volunteer Coordinator to determine why this is occurring. The Volunteer Coordinator will make a recommendation and the Chief of Police will decide whether to remove or reassign the individual. Termination of a volunteer shall not be subject to due process considerations and members shall have no property interests in their continued employment.

Accidents Involving Alcoa Police Department Vehicles

Every traffic accident involving an Alcoa Police Department vehicle resulting in any property damage and/or complaint of personal injury or death must be reported immediately to the Shift Supervisor. Accidents that occur inside the city shall be investigated and reported by the Blount County Sheriff's Department, Maryville Police Department or the Tennessee Highway Patrol.

Volunteers involved in the accident shall make no statements concerning the accident except to the investigating officers or supervisor. If uninjured, the volunteer shall remain at the scene until the on-scene investigation is completed, or until released by the investigating officer or supervisor. Members will submit to post accident and post injury testing at no cost to them.

The volunteer/operator shall submit a detailed, written statement about the accident to the Shift Supervisor before the end of the member's tour of duty. This statement shall include a detailed description of the events surrounding the accident. Supervisors will be responsible for the Supervisor's Vehicle Collision Report (APD Form 168).

Evaluation

An evaluation of the overall VIPS program shall be conducted on an annual basis by the Volunteer Coordinator and Community Policing Director and be submitted to the Chief of Police for review.

Regular personnel evaluations shall be conducted with volunteers to ensure the best use of human resources available, to ensure personnel problems can be identified and dealt with promptly and fairly, and to ensure optimum job satisfaction on the part of volunteers.