

Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol

R.S.V.P. Manual



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St. Joseph, MI

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Introduction

Vision

The St. Joseph Police Department believes the Retired Senior Volunteer Program will enhance the delivery of municipal services and improve the overall quality of life of the community.

Mission

The RSVP program is:

An effort by retired or semi-retired senior citizens to enhance the security and comfort of residents of St. Joseph by supplementing the activities of the St. Joseph Police Department by performing non-confrontational tasks.

Goals

RSVP is committed to recruit, orientate, train, and retain a talented force of volunteers who will:

- Work in a spirit of cooperation and partnership with the community.
- Expand or enhance the delivery of services to the residents and businesses of the City of St. Joseph.
- Enable the St. Joseph Police Department sworn officers to more effectively and efficiently direct police services as a result of volunteer services provided to the Department.
- Further the goals of the SJPD Community Policing philosophy with active citizen involvement, publicity, and direct service to neighborhoods and schools.
- Continually evaluate the effectiveness of the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol in achieving and maintaining these goals and maintain at all times a high standard of excellence in personnel and

service.

Qualifications for Membership

A desire to provide volunteer service to the St. Joseph Police Department and to the community it serves.

Possess of a valid Michigan Driver's License.

Age fifty-five or older.

Citizen of the United States.

Successfully meet the Department's qualifications and completion of a background investigation.

Residency in the community in which they serve is not required.

Patrol Policies

All RSVP Volunteers shall:

Obey all traffic laws and shall not operate vehicles in an emergency response mode at any time.

Wear the full issued uniform as approved by the Chief of Police, wearing it only when providing volunteer service as outlined in this manual.

Patrol only in an assigned vehicle, which identifies its occupants as members of the Senior Volunteer Patrol Program.

Successfully complete a twenty-hour training program as defined by the St. Joseph Police Department.

Volunteers should provide a minimum of 4 to 6 hours of volunteer service per week, or 16 hours per month.

All volunteers shall adhere to the following principals:

Loyalty: Volunteers will be loyal to the RSVP, the Community, to the Department and its members, and to the standards of excellence set by SJPD.

Ethics: Volunteers will demonstrate integrity and honor in all actions.

Esteem for Others: Volunteers will treat members of the community and each other with dignity and respect at all times. Volunteers will listen to one another's opinions and concerns. Volunteers will appreciate their individual differences and recognize that their unique characteristics, skills, talents and backgrounds bring strength and variety to the program.

Patrol Limitations

Although uniformed, issued a badge and working under the auspices of the St. Joseph Police Department, **YOU ARE NOT A POLICE OFFICER!**

NEVER

place yourself in a situation, which is or has the potential to become dangerous or confrontational.

If you accidentally become involved in such a situation, immediately contact Dispatch and leave the area... Remember Non-Confrontation.

You will never carry any type of weapon while in the RSVP uniform, even if you have a weapons permit.

You will never make, attempt to make, or threaten arrests.

You will never respond to any radio call unless RSVP is specifically asked for by name.

You will never enter a house or building found open during a Vacation Check, under any circumstances.

These subjects will be covered in your training

Remember, your personal safety and the success of this program depend on you and your actions. If you find yourself in a situation that has not been addressed, use sound judgement and err on the side of caution and safety.

Duties and Responsibilities for Volunteers on Patrol

A minimum of one or two volunteer teams shall patrol the City of St. Joseph no earlier than 8:00 am nor later than sunset daily. Volunteers that are making home checks, directing traffic or any duties, which may expose them to a possible hazardous situation, will have another trained RSVP member working with them. Non hazardous duties such as delivering notices and who to call information will not require two members to work. Volunteers will not leave their authorized vehicle without their radio in hand. During their patrols, the volunteers will respond to the following types of service as well as other duties as directed by the Volunteer Coordinator and/or requested by Dispatch:

- Monitor parking areas reserved for handicapped persons and write parking tickets for unauthorized use of such designated spaces.
- Report violations of city ordinance.
- Be aware of their location at all times.
- Observe traffic regulations.
- Behave in a non-confrontational manner at all times.
- Observe and report suspected criminal activity.
- Visit, and when applicable assist, disabled, elderly, or otherwise isolated residents.
- Issue fire lane warnings.
- Conduct Vacation House Checks.
- Report any hazardous conditions.
- Patrol school areas, parks, and nature areas to assist in assuring safety of our children.
- At all times behave as Public Relations Representatives of the St. Joseph Police Department and RSVP, providing miscellaneous services to residents and/or businesses when appropriate.
- Obey all traffic regulations.

Additional services, policies and procedures, regulations, and duties as directed by a St. Joseph Police Officer.

Meeting & Training Attendance

All RSVP members are required to attend scheduled training and in-service meetings. It is vital that you be kept informed of on-going safety and training issues. At least twenty hours of training is required. (Some classes may be made up)

Absences

Members must give 24 hours of notice to the Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator if they are unable to report for their volunteer service on any specific day, unless sudden illness or other emergency occurs. While you are unpaid staff, your service is depended upon and important to the Department and the Community. As a team we work together to be as effective as possible. Volunteers should find their own replacement unless unable to do so because of an emergency situation.

Meetings

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be conducted by the Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator. In the event the Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator is absent, the meeting will be conducted by the St. Joseph Police Captain.

Attendance at the monthly meetings and at specially called meetings is essential to be informed of duties and procedures.

All persons scheduled to work special events are required to attend the instructional meeting for that event.

Ride-Alongs

A part of your training as an RSVP volunteer will be one ride-along with a Police Officer. This allows you an opportunity to observe and experience various duties of the patrol officer and gain a deeper understanding of their role and responsibilities. You will also observe the police radio and patrol procedures. You must at all times do exactly what the officer advises, avoid interrupting their performance of duties, and remember you're a guest in their car.

Personal Conduct

Purpose

SJPD and the Volunteer Patrol have established rules and policies that define the personal conduct of the individuals of the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol members. This section is designed to provide a defined training and reference source addressing personal conduct policies while "on and off" duty.

Role

The Senior Patrol member is a reflection of the St. Joseph Police Department and as such shall conduct themselves in a manner as to reflect most favorably on the Department. This conduct includes, but is not limited to the following appropriate behaviors:

- **Unbecoming Conduct**

Volunteers shall conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in such a manner as to reflect positively on the Department. Conduct unbecoming a volunteer shall include that which brings the department into disrepute or reflects discredit upon the volunteer as a representative of the Department, or which impairs the operation or efficiency of the Department or RSVP.

- **Conformance to Laws**

Volunteers shall obey all laws of the United States and of any state and local jurisdiction in which they may be present. Conviction of a violation of the law shall be evidence of a violation of this section and may result in discipline up to and including termination.

- Conduct Toward the Public

Volunteers shall be courteous and efficient in their dealings with the public. Volunteers shall perform their duties in such a manner as to avoid harsh, violent, profane or insolent language or gestures.

RSVP Volunteers shall be tactful in the performance of their duties, shall control their tempers despite provocation and exercise patience and discretion.

Volunteers shall supply their name upon request.

All volunteer officers shall maintain a completely impartial attitude toward all persons coming to the attention of the department, regardless of an individual's race, creed, sex, religion, politics, lifestyle, personal characteristics, or influence.

Property and Equipment

Purpose

The SJPD believes volunteers must have access to the most functional equipment available for the performance of their service and be adequately trained in the effective use of all equipment issued.

Role

The volunteer is to apply the training in equipment operation as demonstrated by the St. Joseph Police Department. The equipment discussed is the property of the St. Joseph Police Department and shall be operated in a safe, courteous, and conscientious manner in compliance with the following:

- Use of Department Equipment

Volunteer shall utilize Department equipment only for its intended purpose. Volunteers are responsible for the proper care of Department property and equipment assigned to them.

- Reporting of Hazardous or Damaged Equipment/Property

In the event of department property or equipment being lost or damaged, volunteers involved shall immediately notify their supervisor. This applies to the discovery of any hazardous police or city property.

- Equipment and Separation from Department

Upon separation from the Department, all volunteers are required to surrender all department property in their possession and any that has been issued to them.

- Use of Department Vehicles

Volunteers shall not use any department vehicle without permission of a supervisor.

- Drivers License of Volunteers

Volunteers shall advise their coordinator in the event of their driving license being suspended, restricted or revoked. Volunteers shall possess and have with them, a valid Michigan Drivers License in order to operate a Department motor vehicle.

Volunteers shall operate department vehicles in a careful and prudent manner, and shall obey all laws and all departmental orders pertaining to such operation.

Violation of driving laws and regulations whether such a violation results in an accident or not shall be treated as an infraction of the department manual.

In the event a volunteer has been informed of an infraction of the Department Manual Vehicle Operations and continues to behave in the inappropriate driving manner may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

- Parking of Department Vehicles

All Departmental vehicles, while at the Police Department, shall be parked in their designated spot.

When it is necessary to leave a vehicle unattended or unoccupied, the operator shall lock all doors and have windows rolled up.

- Vehicle Inspection and Care

At the beginning of each shift, volunteers assigned to a department vehicle shall carefully inspect the vehicle and its equipment to insure it is in serviceable condition and is not damaged. If any significant defect or damage is discovered upon inspection or during the shift, the volunteer shall report it in writing to the Volunteer Coordinator. Any defect, damage or loss reported after the vehicle has been inspected and placed into service shall be construed to have occurred during the tour of duty of the volunteer reporting same.

Volunteers using a departmental vehicle shall be held accountable for the proper use and care of the vehicle, all accessories, equipment and tools assigned to it. Standard and/or assigned equipment of vehicles shall not be changed,

interchanged, altered or removed from a vehicle unless directed by competent authority.

- Tire Changing of Police Vehicles

When there is a need to change the tire on a police vehicle, Dispatch shall be contacted and will arrange to have the tire changed.

- Jump Starting Other Vehicles with SJPD Vehicles

At no time will a volunteer jump-start a motorist's vehicle. Nor will they give a "push start" or utilize the SJPD vehicle to push another vehicle for any reason.

In the event a Department Officer requests a jump-start, the Sworn Officer must connect the cables and perform the start.

All vehicles should be inspected prior to being taken into the field. If a defect in a vehicle is discovered, report it to the garage personnel and make out a vehicle repair slip. Once the repair has been made, the vehicle repair slip can be given to the Police Administrative Secretary.

Upon securing from duty, the driver is responsible for filling the vehicle with gas if the tank registers less than 3/4 full, and for removing all trash.

To eliminate potential complaints, horns should not be tested at the area stations or near residential neighborhoods.

Proper care for the vehicle while driving and parking is very important. Always place the car in "Park", set the parking brake, make sure the ignition is off and that you have the key when you leave the vehicle.

Always check behind the vehicle prior to backing up. Whenever possible, park the vehicle so that you do not have to back up, or so you have to back up for the shortest possible distance. The passenger RSVP should exit the patrol car and assist the driver when backing is required.

An RSVP Radio is required whenever a RSVP patrol car is being operated. Training in a controlled environment would be the only exception.

Vehicle Operation

All RSVP Members must have a valid driver's license issued by the State of Michigan. There may be restrictions on individual licenses such as: Valid Sunrise to Sunset, Must Wear Corrective Lenses, etc. Remember you are operating a vehicle with "City of St. Joseph" and "Police Department" on the exterior. The public will be observing your driving performance.

As an operator of a city-owned vehicle, you are responsible for operating it in a safe manner at all times. That is, you should:

- Obey all rules and laws.
- Comply with all traffic controls, lights, and posted signs.
- Don't insist on the "right of way", even if the other driver fails to yield. Let them have it. You will be better alive than dead.
- Check your vehicle for safety before you report on patrol, and also when you return.
- If you detect mechanical abnormalities, make note of them on the Daily Log. Then consult the mechanic on duty, obtain a vehicle repair slip from the Police Department and fill it out. **MAKE SURE YOU NOTIFY THE NEXT PATROL THAT THE VEHICLE IS BEING REPAIRED AND IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR PATROL THE FOLLOWING DAY.**
- Clean the windows and mirrors and make use of your side mirrors.

The DMV defines accidents in this manner:

"There are no accidents - only collisions and crashes". The word "accident" implies an unforeseen event that occurs without fault or negligence. In most collisions that is not the case. Most people involved in a collision can usually claim responsibility for what has taken place.

Due care and caution shall be exercised while operating any Police Department vehicle, (including RSVP vehicles). All traffic laws must be obeyed.

Vacation House Checks

Purpose

Vacation House Check service is designed to monitor those residences within the City of St. Joseph whose occupants are away from their home for a period of more than one day. Commercial buildings are not included in House Checks.

Role

Volunteers shall check the house and property to detect and report suspicious and/or criminal activity.

Policy

RSVP members will never enter the residence or garage. The volunteer shall not confront possible suspects or attempt to apprehend such a person. If an unsafe condition develops during a Vacation House check, the volunteer must back away until in a safe environment. Applications for house checks will be provided to RSVP with all pertinent information including whether or not vehicles will be present. The form will indicate if the house check is to be “walk around” or “drive by”. If neither are indicated the house check will be a “drive by”.

Procedure

Visually scan the residence, garage and yard area prior to exiting your vehicle.

Note signs of:

Possible forced entry or a trespass

Open window or door

Broken Window

Screen removed from a window

Fresh tire tracks in the driveway/snow

Foot prints in the snow leading to or away from the residence

Suspicious Activity or Evidence

DO NOT approach the residence.

Drive your vehicle away from the residence and maintain a visual from a safe distance.

Use your communication equipment to advise Dispatch of your location & situation

Determine there is no radio traffic, before use.

Give your RSVP number.

Wait for Dispatch to acknowledge.

Give your location and the type of complaint. Example: "My location is 763 361h Street SW on a possible burglary of a residence. Can I have an officer at my location. Dispatch will acknowledge accordingly.

Record observations.

Follow directions of responding officer upon his arrival.

If no suspicious or unusual activity is observed in routine Vacation House check, record your activity on the vacation house check card and document your Daily Log appropriately.

Found Property

Purpose

SJPD feels volunteers should receive basic training in responding to events of "Found Property".

Role

To secure such property, take custody of the property and transport it to the St. Joseph Police Department.

Policy

While on patrol, volunteers may locate or be dispatched to a location to recover found property. Found property can be anything, such as a wallet, purse, bicycle, etc. Volunteers will not pick up "found" property without authorization from the Department.

The volunteer is not to become involved in property disputes among parties, or engage in situations whereby the volunteer serves as a mediator. In the event that ownership of any property is an issue, the volunteer shall contact Dispatch and report the situation. Volunteers will then comply with Police direction.

Procedure

When happening upon "found" property, evaluate the environment surrounding the situation. Consider the potential of ownership.

If a situation exists whereby an officer or evidence technician is dispatched to your location, control the property to the best of your ability. Control does not suggest you hold or touch the property. Your presence, indicating an awareness of or interest in the property until appropriate personnel arrive will suffice (i.e. standing near the property).

RSVP UNIFORMS

The approved RSVP uniform consists of the following items:

Uniform Shirt:

Shall be long or short sleeve, plain gray in color. The shirt shall have the approved City of St. Joseph RSVP arm patches and rockers sewn to the shirt in the same configuration as the uniformed members of the department, with the rockers above the arm patches. The very top button (collar neck button) of the shirt will be the only button not buttoned.

Trousers:

Shall be tailored, wash and wear, and black in color. Black shorts may be worn in the summer (black socks must be worn).

Jackets:

The approved RSVP jacket will have the same arm patches, rockers, and badge eyelets as the uniform shirt, arranged in the same manner.

Belt:

Shall be smooth black leather with plain silver buckle, 1 1/2 inches in width.

Hats:

Shall be black baseball type or blue cloth visor with the RSVP patch in the front.

Shoes:

Shall be black, plain toe, soft or hard toe footwear. Boots are acceptable.

Socks:

Shall be plain black if visible at any time when wearing long uniform pants.

Tee Shirt:

Tee shirts when worn and visible shall be round-collared neck style and black or white in color. The sleeves of the tee shirt shall not extend beyond the sleeves of the uniform shirt.

When wearing the long sleeve uniform shirt, the tee shirt will be black in color. With short sleeve uniform shirts, the tee shirt will be white.

The uniform worn for special events requires a tie.

Name Tag:

Shall be brass metallic and will be worn on the outermost garment, (shirt or jacket).

Communications

Purpose

The St. Joseph Police Department feels it is vital that the Senior Volunteer be supplied with and proficiently trained in the use of the communications equipment provided them by the Department.

Role

To apply the training of police communication techniques offered by SJPD, utilizing radio and telephone equipment supplied by the Department.

The volunteer shall be accessible via the police radio frequency, pager, or telephone at all times when on duty.

All communications are for official business only and must comply with FCC Regulations.

The volunteer will be familiar with the phonetic alphabet and utilize them when applicable.

Telephone Equipment

The office telephone(s) shall be answered promptly and conversations carried on in accordance with current procedure and courtesy.

No personal, private or long distance calls shall be made on department telephones unless authorized by a supervisor.

Mobile and Personal Radio

Volunteers shall operate the portable radio and mobile radio as demonstrated in the training exercise offered by the St Joseph Police Department and in compliance with all FCC Regulations.

Determine that the frequency is clear of radio traffic.

Speak Clearly in a normal tone of voice.

Keep the message brief and concise.

Use the phonetic alphabet when appropriate.

Portable radios are kept at the RSVP workstation and are stored in the appropriate charger when not in use. Be sure to turn the radio off when returned to the office.

Volunteers on foot or bicycle patrol will have a radio with them at all times.

St. Joseph Police Retired Senior Volunteers Table of Organization



