



# TALBOT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



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September 22, 2015

## GENERAL ORDER NO. 15-007

TO: All Talbot County Sheriff's Office Personnel

SUBJECT: Volunteers in Police Support - VIPS

### I. PURPOSE

- A. To establish procedures for the Talbot County Sheriff's Office (TSO) to identify and screen persons who may have an interest in, or be suitable to perform volunteer services for the Office.
- B. To designate the Chief Deputy as the primary person responsible for the management, review, and oversight of the VIPS programs and activities in the office.

### II. BACKGROUND

The VIPS program has become an important and successful asset of the Talbot County Sheriff's Office. These volunteers supplement responsibilities traditionally assigned to law enforcement personnel and support staff. This program stresses participation and partnership between the private, public, and community efforts needed for effective law enforcement. These properly trained volunteers can contribute many needed skills to improve the effectiveness of the office, while offering the volunteers new meaning and purpose in their lives, as well as the enjoyment of social contacts in the workplace. The office will continue to use volunteers in programs and projects as the need arises.

### III. POLICY

- A. All preliminarily approved persons who have an interest in volunteering in long term support of our office operations will receive screening and cursory background checks prior to being utilized. A screening or pre-employment type of application will be designed and used for this purpose; to include a personal release of information form, and a confidentiality/non-disclosure agreement.
- B. Persons so approved as VIPS will be assigned duties consistent with their interest, skills, and needs of the office. They will be assigned meaningful work that contributes to the mission and success of office programs.

### IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Chief Deputy will serve as the primary person responsible for the management, review, and oversight of VIPS activities in the office.
- B. Periodic reports that capture the work efforts and volunteer hours of VIPS will be initiated to document their accomplishments and to conduct assessments of their total work hours and the value that these work hours add to our police operations.

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**V. PROCEDURE**

- A. A process will be constructed and used to identify, recruit, and screen potential VIPS.
- B. Approved VIPS volunteers will be issued a photo identification that will be worn on their outer clothing at all times while representing the office in an approved function, work detail, or special event.
- C. Volunteers will be treated as co-workers and will be included in all office oriented events when practicable.
- D. Volunteers will not be issued nor will wear or display on their person or personally owned vehicle any official TSO or other active police related item that may possibly lead the public to believe that they are sworn members of the office; unless specifically approved by the Sheriff.
- E. Volunteers will be permitted general access to the office area and will not be issued keys to any restricted area or commonly locked offices. The level of security access to the facility and accessibility to electronic and document files will be approved by the Sheriff.
- F. Volunteers will be provided access to certain files and materials that are consistent and in concert with their assigned task and responsibilities. They will not be given, nor provided access or use of controlled documents beyond an approved need to know, and they will not be placed in positions of access or responsibility that could compromise security audits.
- G. Volunteers will function under the operational control of the Chief Deputy, and may be assigned to other office personnel for work tasks and direction when appropriate.
- H. Requests for volunteer work activities and program support will be coordinated through the Chief Deputy, who shall maintain supervisory control of the volunteer.
- I. Conditions that lead to the approval and acceptance of an applicant into the VIPS program, or that cause their release from the program will be coordinated by the Chief Deputy with concurrence of the Sheriff.

**VI. EVALUATION**

The continued use and evaluation of the VIPS program, its volunteers, and its work outcomes will be subject to periodic review and revision to assure its effectiveness.

**VII. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This General Order is effective September 22, 2015, and supersedes/cancels General Order No. 12-001, and any previous order or memoranda in conflict therewith.

Authority: \_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph J. Gamble, Sheriff