

CONA's Public Safety Handbook

Volume 1.0 – May 20, 2009

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Dedication

CONA dedicates this Handbook to all the officers who put themselves at risk daily to keep us safe and make our lovely city a wonderful place to live, work and raise our families. CONA also dedicates this to all the neighborhood associations and residents who work daily to make our city a safer place. Thank you.

Section One – St. Petersburg Police Department (SPPD)

History of our Police Department

In 1892, St. Petersburg was a dusty little village. The entire police force consisted of one man, William A. Sloan, the town marshal. Law enforcement, during this period, was like the old western films. He patrolled the streets on horseback, which he had to provide for himself, along with his own saddle and the boots. Marshal Sloan was paid \$20.00 per month and \$1.50 for each conviction. He could hire as many special policemen at \$1.50 per day as needed.

There was a succession of five town marshals until 1902 when the last marshal was appointed. His name was W.C. Dees and he served until 1903. The population of St. Petersburg in 1903 had grown to 1,600 people, and a new charter was approved. The city now had telephone service, Central Avenue was paved and a franchise for a street car was granted. 1903 was also the year that the city was incorporated.

The St. Petersburg Police Department was officially born in 1903 with the appointment of Police Chief James J. Mitchell who was paid \$100 dollars a month. The police force had four full time police officers. Police headquarters was an old grocery store at 345 First Avenue South and remained the headquarters for the next 50 years.

In 1924, the police department consisted of 20 officers, one patrol car, and motorcycles which the officers each had to purchase. Police radios were still ten years away and a police officer was required to come to the station and wait for the next call. 1934 ushered in a new era for police communications. The department installed radios in nine cars and designated the cars as prowl cars and in 1936 a county wide radio system was installed.

As the country grew, so did the City of St. Petersburg. Population and response times demanded that a new communication center be built in 1969 and in 1978 the implementation of the 911 system and the introduction of computers further expanded the department and the communications center. In 1985, the police department was nationally accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement (CALEA). Since then the department has been reaccredited 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2003. In 2003, the department was also accredited by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation.

Today's St. Petersburg Police Department

Today's St. Petersburg Police Department is divided into four Bureaus:

- Office of the Chief of Police
- Uniform Services Bureau
- Investigative Services Bureau
- Administrative Services Bureau.

The Office of the Chief of Police

Consists of the Chief's Office, along with four components which report directly to the Chief of Police.

- **Executive Assistant to the Chief of Police** - Works with the City's Labor Relations Division and represents the Chief of Police during collective bargaining; meets with unions, and coordinates grievance and arbitration proceedings; conducts staff inspections.
 - **Legal Division** - Works with the City's Legal Department and other criminal justice agencies, assisting the Chief of Police and other employees with legal issues; provides legal training; reviews proposed legislation, and provides input during the development and review of policies and procedures; also directs Seizure and Forfeiture and Nuisance Abatement activities.
 - **Community Awareness Division** - Crime Prevention officers work with neighborhood and business Crime Watch groups to reduce crime through proactive measures. The Public Information Officer is responsible for coordination and release of information to the media and represents the Chief of Police at various meetings. The Division directs the Volunteer Road Patrol Program and coordinates all other volunteer programs.
 - **Internal Affairs Division** - Investigates complaints brought against employees of the Department; and reviews all vehicle pursuits, complaints of bias-based profiling and reports of use of force by agency members.
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Uniform Services Bureau

Provides direct police services 24 hours a day, responding to 911 emergencies, investigating crimes, crashes and much more. Embracing a community policing philosophy, all members of the bureau work with the community to prevent crime and resolve neighborhood issues. Commanded by an assistant chief of police, the bureau represents 49% of the department's personnel. The Bureau is comprised of the following:

Districts – Community Service Officers

The City is subdivided into three (3) geographic Police Districts, each commanded by a Major. Each District has a complement of lieutenants and sergeants to supervise field activities being performed by uniformed community patrol officers, community service officers and K-9 officers.

- District 1 Community Service Officers Contact number 727-551-3181
- District 2 Community Service Officers Contact number 727-551-3182
- District 3 Community Service Officers Contact number 727-551-3183

To check in which district you reside, check the District Maps at <http://www.stpete.org/police/usb/cso.html>

Field Training Section

The Field Training Unit is overseen by the major of Uniform Support along with a staff of nine sergeants and several field training officers. Officers selected to become field training officers are among the elite of our agency who are carefully selected to do the on-the-job training and evaluation of new officers.

Once new officers have completed the police academy and the in-house post academy training, they enter the Field Training and Evaluation Program. The program involves 14 to 20 weeks of intense, structured training and evaluation to ensure the officer is prepared to work a solo assignment.

Traffic Section

The Traffic Section is comprised of a number of officers who are specifically trained in a variety of fields. Whether on land or on water, their mission is to deter accidents and through enforcement, reduce the number of traffic crashes that result in injury or death.

- **Traffic Homicide Investigators** are responsible for the investigation of all traffic fatalities within the City of St. Petersburg.
- **Selective Enforcement Unit** utilizes a variety of methods (motorcycles, unmarked police cruisers or undercover vehicles) in order to gain voluntary compliance with the state's traffic laws. They attempt to deter crashes through enforcement and reduce the number of crashes that result in injury or death.
- **D.U.I. Unit** functions as a collective effort to both prevent and apprehend impaired drivers. This is accomplished by conducting and participating in D.U.I. Checkpoints, D.U.I. Wolfpacks, Beer Buy Operations, as well as routine pro-active patrol. They also maintain the Department's Breathalyzer instruments and Mobile Breathalyzer Unit.
- **Marine Unit** is responsible for monitoring activities and enforcing laws on the 142 miles of coastline surrounding the city. The Marine Unit is also responsible for investigating incidents of impaired drivers on the waterways and act as a liaison to other local and government agencies.

Street Crimes Unit

A highly flexible group organized to specifically address policing problems throughout the City, such as street level drug dealing or other criminal activity. The Street Crime Unit is comprised of a lieutenant, 3 sergeants, and 20 officers. This unit provides both uniform and covert support to the Uniform Services Bureau, as well as, various components of the Investigative Services Bureau. The unit addresses specific types of criminal activity with an emphasis on street level narcotics and prostitution, utilizing both traditional and contemporary methodologies.

Special Events Unit

The Special Events Unit is responsible for the planning and staffing of police coverage for events and circumstances outside those normally addressed by patrol and detective units. Known as "off-duty" jobs, these range from vendor requests, such as retail security, to City-sponsored events. The City co-sponsors approximately 60 events a year that require off-duty officers, including holiday parades, races, and concerts. The St. Petersburg Police Department, through Special Events, also provides officers to work the Tampa Bay Rays' home games at Tropicana Field. The Special Events Unit also issues permits for street closures and provides the administration of the Police Reserve Unit.

Investigative Services Bureau

Performs follow-up investigations of selected criminal acts and works to identify and develop solutions to police-related community problems. Units also conduct proactive investigations to suppress vice activity and the trafficking and use of controlled substances. Under the command of an assistant chief of police, the bureau is comprised of the following:

Crime Analysis, Surveillance, Enforcement (CASE) Unit

- The Unit is comprised of Crime Analysts and two squads of undercover surveillance detectives (formerly called Special Investigations Unit). The members of this unit are responsible for the identification, investigation and apprehension of habitual criminals and support other units through surveillance operations.

Crimes Against Persons Division

The Crimes Against Persons Division investigates crimes which result in injury, or threat of injury, directly to one or more persons. Personnel assigned to the Crime Analysis function analyze crime trends and patterns and provide tactical and strategic information throughout the Department. The Division is further subdivided into:

- Homicide Unit – Investigates homicides and assaults.
- Robbery Unit – Investigates all robberies and provides direct support services to victims through the Victim Assistance Unit.
- Domestic Violence/Personal Violence Unit – Investigates familial and other personal crimes, missing adults, and sexual assaults.
- Forensic Services Unit – Provides on-scene evidence recovery and processing.

Crimes Against Property Division

The St. Petersburg Police Department Crimes Against Property Division carries out investigation of crimes directed against property. The Division is divided into:

- Burglary Unit – Investigates commercial and residential burglary.
- Economic Crimes Unit – Investigates frauds, forgeries and similar offenses. This unit also includes Investigators who monitor activity at pawn and secondhand shops to ensure compliance with applicable laws and ordinances, and investigators who follow up environmental and computer-related crime.
- Auto Theft Unit – Investigates the theft of all motorized vehicles.

Forensic Services Unit

There are no sub-components of the Forensic Services Unit. These technicians process crime scenes and submit evidence for lab testing.

Intelligence Division

The St. Petersburg Police Department Intelligence Division is responsible for collecting, evaluating, analyzing, and disseminating organized crime intelligence data on any and all person(s) and/or groups or organizations that engage in activities defined as "criminal" by Federal and State legislatures. Of primary significance will be organized criminal activity to include, but not limited to, the following crimes:

- Gambling , Loan sharking, Narcotics, Prostitution, Bribery, Extortion
- Conversion of Illegitimate Funds into Legitimate Investments
- Trafficking in Stolen Property, Counterfeiting, Arson, Homicide/Kidnapping
- Crimes designed to subvert the economic interests of State, Black Market activity, etc.
- Labor Racketeering, Domestic and Foreign Criminal Activist and Terrorist groups.

Vice & Narcotics Division

Vice and Narcotics Division is responsible for the investigation of crimes relating to narcotics, prostitution, obscenity, and gambling.

Victim Advocates

The purpose of the Unit is to provide assistance to citizens who have been victimized by a criminal act in the City of St. Petersburg. The Victim Assistant Specialists will comply with Florida State Statute 960.001 to wit, Guidelines for Fair Treatment of Victims and Witnesses in the Criminal and Juvenile System.

Some of the services provided include:

- **Short Term/Crisis Intervention** – Counseling for victims and "significant others" may be provided at crime scenes, hospitals, homes, or Police Department as necessary. If the need is not critical, contact will be made as soon as possible by telephone, letter or a personal visit.
- **Referrals to Other Agencies**
- **Transportation** – Transportation for victims may be provided via police department vehicles when necessary.
- **Assistance through the Court Process** – Many victims have had little experience with the Criminal Justice System. The Victim Assistant may explain the events encountered during the prosecution of a case; i.e. state attorney investigation, depositions, preliminary hearings, trials, and sentencing. In some cases, the Victim Assistant may accompany the victim and act as a liaison.
- **Assistance with Replacement of Important Papers** – Many victims are unaware of the type of documents which may need to be replaced. The Victim Assistant may write letters, make telephone calls, or, if necessary and the case permits, accompany the victim to the appropriate agency.
- **Assistance with Medical Bills** – Many victims have no knowledge of the Florida Crimes Compensation Trust Fund or have little experience dealing with insurance companies. The Victim Assistant may help complete applications for crimes compensation and insurance claim forms when there is an injury related to a specific crime.
- **Assistance to "Victims of Society"** – Assistance on a limited basis may be provided for a Victim of Society (transient, persons who have been evicted, mentally ill), and other persons who often come to the Police Department.
- **Assistance to Victims/Witness of Crimes** – Appropriate assistance will be provided for Victims/Witnesses who have been threatened, or who have expressed specific credible reasons for fearing intimidation or further victimization.

Youth Resources Division

Youth Resources Division investigates certain crimes committed by juveniles, juvenile status offenses, and most incidents where juveniles are the victims. The Division participates in preventive efforts, including the Police Athletic League (PAL) and operation of the Police Explorer Program of the Boy Scouts of America.

These include:

- Crimes Against Children Unit
 - High School SRO Unit
 - Middle School SRO Unit
 - Gang Intelligence Unit
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Administrative Services Bureau

Provides administrative support to the Department and operates a formal Recruiting Program to maintain a pool of eligible police candidates. The Bureau works to identify and develop solutions to police-related community problems. The bureau is comprised of the following:

- Communications Division
- Information & Technology Services Division
- Employee Assistance Program
- Fiscal Services Division
- Planning and Accreditation Unit
- Records and Identification Division
- Recruitment Unit
- Training Division

Section Two – Crime Prevention

What Can You Do?

Now that you understand how the St. Petersburg Police Department is set up, let's look at what you and your neighborhood association can do to help prevent crime in your neighborhood. In the sections below are crime prevention techniques that have been successful for many neighborhoods and associations.

Take advantage of all this information and these contacts. Many valuable tips also will come from CONA members, CONA's Public Safety Committee, our neighborhood associations and City and County staff. Use that information to improve your crime prevention programs in your neighborhood. Thank you for helping make our neighborhoods a safe place to live and raise our families.

Crime Watch

Neighborhood Crime Watch is one of the most effective and least costly ways to prevent crime and reduce fear. It bonds area residents to help reduce crime and improves relations between police and the communities they serve. In 1981, the St. Petersburg Police Department began the Neighborhood Crime Watch program. Since that time, we have been working hard to reduce crime, but we need the help of every citizen in this effort. Citizens like yourself need to involve themselves in the fight against crime by working with the police and other residents.

Why Neighborhood Crime Watch?

- Neighborhood Crime Watch encourages citizen participation in reducing crime. Residents and police work together to achieve one common goal – "Making Their Neighborhoods Safe."
- Residents are taught how to protect their property and report suspicious activities to the police.
- Neighborhood Crime Watch also helps build pride and serves as a springboard for efforts that address other community concerns.

What does a Neighborhood Crime Watch do?

- Members meet their neighbors and learn how to make their home more secure. They watch out for each other and report suspicious activities to the police.
- Neighbors mark their valuable property with an identifying number (driver's license number) to discourage theft and help police return stolen property.

Crime Watch Components

- **Meetings** – These should be held at least once a year with your Crime Prevention and Community Police Officers.

- **Citizens' Patrol** – Crime Watch members who walk or drive through the neighborhood and alert police to crime and questionable activities. Not all neighborhood crime watches need a citizens' patrol.
- **Communications** – Regular discussions between neighbors, Crime Prevention Officers and Community Police Officers.
- **Special Events** – Block Parties, Crime Prevention Programs and National Night Out

How to start your Neighborhood Crime Watch

- **Start small.** Organize a small group of neighbors to discuss concerns, the level of interest, and possible neighborhood problems.
- Schedule a date, place and time to hold your first crime watch meeting.
- Call Officer Johnny Harris, SPPD Crime Watch Coordinator at **727-893-7559**.
- Talk with CONA's Public Safety Committee, neighborhood associations and other Crime Watch groups citywide to gain insight and helpful hints on being successful.

Citizens Police Academy

The purpose of the Citizen's Police Academy is to foster better communication between citizens and police through education. The St. Petersburg Police Department has found that education has been most effective in gaining understanding and support from the community. The Academy offers citizens insights into how police officers perform their duties and how the department serves the community. Graduates of the academy are encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences with the community.

Course Description

The academy is held at the St. Petersburg Police Department, 1300 First Avenue North, St. Petersburg and consists of an eight-week course. Each three-hour class meets every Monday evening from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Any interested citizen, 18 years of age or older, who resides or works in the City of St. Petersburg is encouraged to attend this free academy. Citizens involved with the community in some way, such as youth involvement, neighborhood watch, and neighborhood groups are very important to the academy. NOTE: All applicants are subject to a criminal background check.

This instruction is comprehensive, covering a different area of the police department each week. Certified police officers, supervisors, and civilian instructors, with particular expertise, will conduct each topic.

- Course Curriculum
- Child Abduction/ Internet Safety
- Tactical Apprehension and Control Team
- Homicide Investigations
- Traffic Enforcement (D.U.I.)
- Crime Scene Processing/Forensic
- Communications
- K-9
- Use of Force / Firearm Simulation

A vital part of the Academy is participation in a variety of "hands-on" learning experiences. Students will also have the option, on a voluntary basis, to "Ride-a-Long" with a patrol officer during his/her shift, or sit with a communication center dispatcher.

To apply for the next Academy, fill out an application now. Class size is limited. An application may be mailed to you by calling 893-7128 or can be picked up at: St. Petersburg Police Department, Community Awareness Division, 1300 First Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL 33705. For more information, please

contact: Officer Tonia Nave at 727-893-7141

Court Watch

All crime affects the quality of our life. It is the intention of St. Petersburg Court Watch to target ALL crimes, not just focus on drugs and prostitution as in the past. Court Watch representatives attend court, speaking with the Judge one-on-one, or just sitting in the Court room wearing the yellow shirts with the Court Watch emblem. Over the years this yellow shirt is recognized and known by career criminals who affect our quality of life. Attendance at court and speaking out against early releasing of repeat offenders has resulted in extended sentences for these career criminals. Please contact either Carole Griffiths or Ingrid Comberg. Court Watch will help you.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, or CPTED (pronounced sep-ted), is defined as the proper design and effective use of the built environment that can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement of the quality of life. There are three basic and overlapping principles in the CPTED concept.

- **Natural Surveillance** – create environments where there are plenty of opportunities for people engaged in their normal behavior to observe the space around them. Design the placement of physical features, activities and people in such a way to maximize visibility.
- **Natural Access Control** – Most criminal intruders will try to find a way into an area where they will not be easily observed. Limiting access and increasing natural surveillance keeps them out altogether or marks them as an intruder. Selectively place entrances and exits, fencing, lighting and landscape to control the flow of or limit access.
- **Natural Territorial Reinforcement** – An environment designed to clearly delineate private space does two things. First, it creates a sense of ownership. Owners have a vested interest and are more likely to challenge intruders or report them to the police. Second, the sense of owned space creates an environment where "strangers" or "intruders" stand out and are more easily identified. Use buildings, fences, pavement, signs, lighting and landscape to express owners and define public, semi-public and private space.

At your request, a certified crime prevention practitioner will conduct an assessment and complete a formal written security survey. For further CPTED information or to request an assessment, please call St Petersburg Police Department at **727-893-7128**.

Prevention Tips

Please check the St. Petersburg Police Department website for additional tips on how to prevent and protect you from the following: auto theft, business robbery, identity theft, internet safety, personal safety, sexual assault, taxi cab robbery and vehicle burglary. The site lists many things each person can do to keep themselves and their property safe.

Tip Line Program

The St. Petersburg Police Department provides a confidential TIP LINE **727-892-5000** as an alternative means by which individuals can relay valuable information in an anonymous manner. The department's goal is to obtain information on criminal activity that is unattainable through conventional methods, and to assist the department in investigating criminal activity that might otherwise go unreported. Take the first steps in helping make your community safer by calling the TIP LINE when you have personal knowledge of criminal activity.

Text a Tip Line

New in 2009, the St. Petersburg Police Department has set up a text line where individuals can relay valuable information about criminal activities or a crime in progress. The number is **727-420-8911**.

Tone Down Program

Loud car stereos are illegal in Florida. FSS 316.3045 makes it unlawful for any person operating a motor vehicle on a street or highway to amplify the sound produced by a stereo or other device so that it is plainly audible at a distance of 25 feet or more, or louder than necessary for the convenient hearing by persons inside the vehicle in areas adjoining churches, schools or hospitals.

Residents can now report loud car stereo violations on the St. Petersburg Police Department's website at www.stpete.org/police. Simply click on the front page tab that reads "To Report a Loud Stereo Violation" and fill in the blanks. So, the next time you hear that annoying thump, thump, thump of a car sitting next to you at a traffic light, write down the tag number, along with a description of the car and driver, and send it to the St. Petersburg Police Department online.

Once the information is verified, a letter from St. Petersburg Chief of Police will be sent to the registered car owner reminding the car owner that their loud car stereos are not only objectionable, but also illegal. Of course, repeat violators will receive more than a letter. The citation is a non-moving violation with a fine of \$101.00, and that's a lot of money in any economy.

"Calls for Service" Information

Each neighborhood can request crime statistics that are just for your neighborhood. These are called "calls for service" and will help you understand what is happening and where it is happening in your neighborhood. This way, you can better direct your crime watch and other activities to combat crime.

CAPE Program

In 2008, SPPD implemented a new initiative in three neighborhoods called CAPE (Community and Police Engagement). This was an action plan designed to reduce the residents' concerns about crime and get the bad guys off the street. The results were so good (violent crime decreased 26.7% and gun-related crimes reduced 17.1% last year), SPPD decided to do it again in three new neighborhoods.

This year, the plan is to reduce crime patterns in three historic neighborhoods: Bartlett Park, Grand Central and Historic Kenwood. Each area is unique, so SPPD met with the neighborhood association Presidents to identify mutually-agreed upon objectives for reducing crime.

Police officers will visit every home in these three neighborhoods to meet with the residents, listen to their concerns and provide them with important information. It is thought that these personal interactions will encourage residents to get involved in their neighborhood and persuade residents to provide tips or leads that might help the Police Department close open cases.

Safe Summer Program

The St. Petersburg Police Department's Operation Safe Summer Program (OSS) begins the end of May to address the expected increase in criminal activity during the summer months involving juveniles and young adults who have limited access to structured activities. This project will utilize all necessary and available Department resources in an effort to minimize the typical summertime rise in crimes.

The police officers assigned to this initiative will be proactive in their approach to combat crimes against persons and property, including drug-related offenses. They will use both traditional and non-traditional methods of addressing crime, disorder, and quality of life issues.

Throughout the OSS initiative, individuals who are in need of human services (including, but not limited to, substance abuse, conflict resolution, mental health issues, employment and/or education, structured youth activities, etc.) will be given referrals to service providers.

Section Three – Website Links

City of St. Pete Web Site Links

- St. Petersburg Police Department
<http://www.stpete.org/police/>
- Codes Compliance Assistance Home Page
<http://www.stpete.org/codes/>
- Codes Compliance Search by Address Look Up
<https://actiononline.stpete.org/Click2GovCE/>

Pinellas County Web Site Links

- Pinellas County Sheriff's "Who's in Jail" Website shortcut link:
<http://pcsoweb.com/InmateBooking/>
- Pinellas County Public Records "Guest Login" Website:
<https://pubtitles.co.pinellas.fl.us/login/loginx.jsp?goto=/mainmenux.jsp>
- Pinellas County Property Appraisers "Search Database" Website for property owner:
<http://www.pcpao.org/>

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Home Website

<http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/content/getdoc/2952da22-ba08-4dfc-9e45-2d7932a803ea/Obtaining-Criminal-History-Information.aspx>

- Florida Department of Law Enforcement "Sexual Offenders & Predators Neighborhood Search"
<http://offender.fdle.state.fl.us/offender/searchNeighborhood.do?actionPerformed=neighborhoodSearchMain>

Additional websites for information look up.

- Felony Spy
<http://www.felonspy.com/search.html?agree=0>
- Spot Crime
<http://spotcrime.com/fl/st.+petersburg>

Sexual Predators – FDLE Sexual Predator/Offender Registry

Check the SPPD website for a link to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement site that contains a map of sexual predators/offenders living in the community. The Neighborhood Search function allows the user to enter any address in Florida and search for any registered sexual predators/offenders living within a 1 to 5 mile radius of the address entered.

Also available to the public is a Florida Department of Law Enforcement site that allows citizens to receive automatic e-mail notification of sexual predators/offenders that move near a specified address. The address is entered by the user and allows the public to closely monitor sexual predators/offenders in their community.

Section Four – Emergency Phone Numbers

Emergency

Police, Fire, Ambulance 911

Police Non-Emergency 727-893-7780

Community Service Phone Lines

District One 551-3181

District Two 551-3182

District Three 551-3183

Tip Line 892-5000

Text Line 420-8911

Crisis Hotline 211

Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222

*CONA's Handbook will be updated annually. Please call, write or e-mail CONA with your suggestions for improvement. Thank you.