

# **Lakewood Police Department Volunteer Support Team**



## **A Brief Department History**

In 1969, an unincorporated area of Jefferson County officially became the City of Lakewood and the fourth largest city in Colorado. The Lakewood Department of Public Safety became operational on May 3, 1970, and in 1987, its name was changed to the Lakewood Police Department.

The new department predictably experienced growing pains but also continued solid development under the leadership of seven police administrations. At this writing in 2022, the ninth and current chief, Ed Loar, and a command staff of three division chiefs, lead a department of more than 400 employees and citizen volunteers. During the decades, the department was relocated several times. In 1984, it moved to its new and current site at 445 S. Allison Parkway.

Since its beginning in 1970, the department's motto, *Integrity, Intelligence, Initiative*, is its way of doing business. The goal of every employee and department volunteer is to serve the citizens of Lakewood with the highest level of commitment. In 1986, the Lakewood Police Department was the second agency in Colorado and the 24th in the nation to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. To maintain this accreditation, the department is required to meet more than 450 nationally recognized law enforcement standards every three years.

## **Department Structure**

While on assignment, volunteers will notice that each member of the Lakewood Police Department is ranked, and some ranks have an identifiable symbol that is worn on uniforms to distinguish them. To help clarify the different positions, here is a list identifying some symbols and descriptions:

The Chief of Police wears 3 stars on his uniform collar.

Division Chiefs wear 2 stars on their uniform collar. The Chief of Police and Division Chiefs are addressed as *Chief*.

Commanders wear 1 star on their uniform collar.

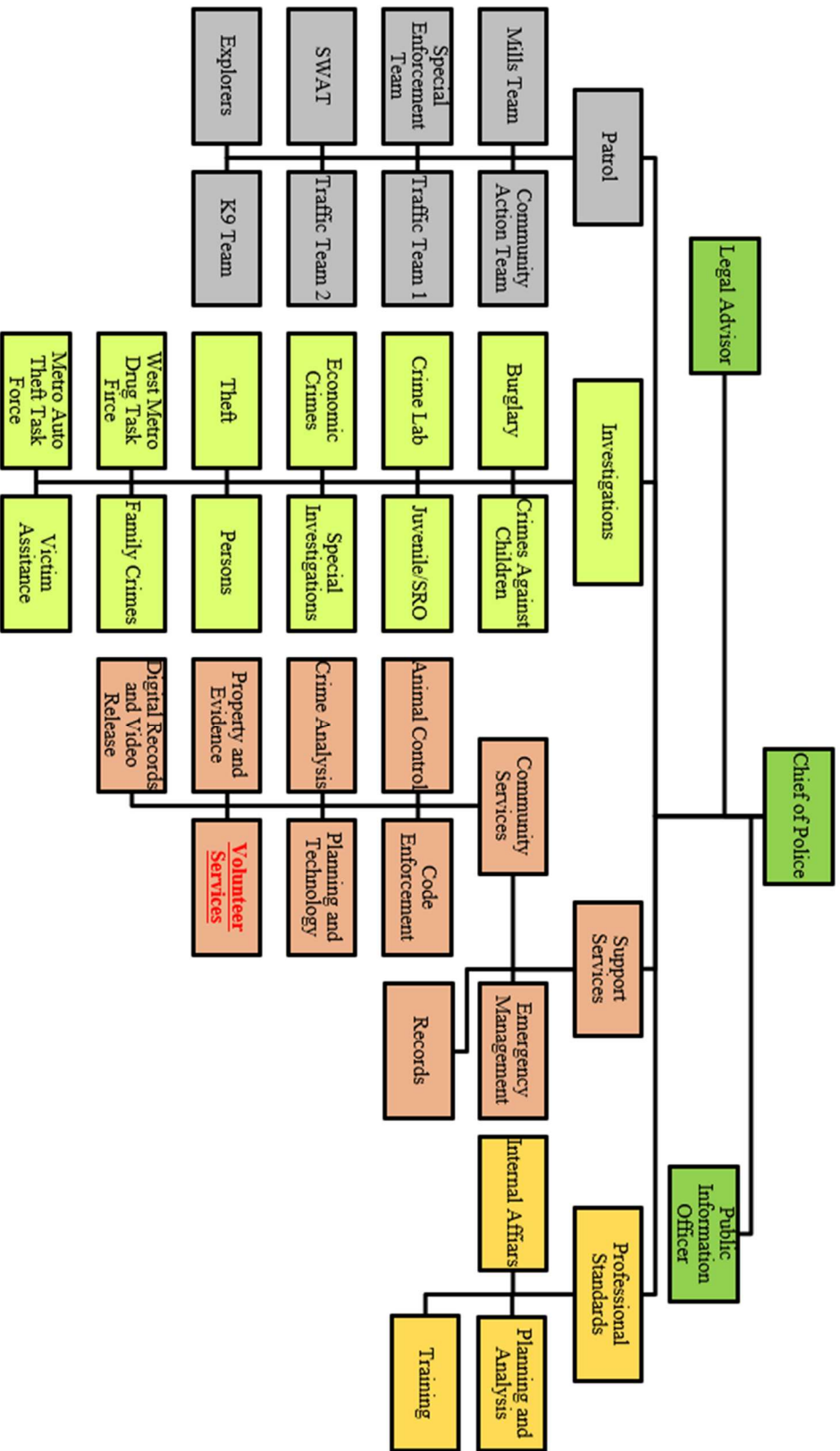
Sergeants wear 3 chevrons on their upper sleeve similar to the example.



You may also see what we call, "Senior Agents." These veteran Agents are identified by a gold name plate on their uniforms.

Agents are line level Police Officers. This group includes detectives, traffic teams, and special assignments.

Community Service Officers are civilian employees that assist in report taking, crime scene processing, booking evidence, and traffic related assignments. They generally wear green-colored uniforms with “CSO” written on them.



## **Police Department Mission Statement**

The men and women of Lakewood Police Department will protect and serve with integrity, intelligence and initiative. Working with our community, we will bring to justice those who commit crimes and cause disorder in our city.

## **Volunteer Support Team Mission Statement**

The Volunteer Support Team (VST) serves the citizens by its involvement in Community Oriented Problem Solving (COPS) projects aimed at preventing crime and assisting with the apprehension of law violators. The VST performs a multitude of service-oriented functions within the department and community that do not require status as a sworn officer. VST members may also serve as a resource during emergencies or large-scale special events.

The VST is comprised of citizens who volunteer their time and skills to the City of Lakewood. Members include alumni of the Citizen Police Academy. The ability to work effectively with others in rigid, quasi-military operations is very important and is expected from all participants.

## **Definition**

The City of Lakewood Administrative Regulation AR 35-0024, defines a Volunteer as, "an individual who performs hours of service for a public agency for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered." Of mutual benefit to both the community and the volunteer, the activities engaged in benefit both the volunteer and the community, and the hours of service suit the convenience of the volunteer.

Volunteers have proven to be valuable assets to law enforcement agencies and are an important part of our organization. Volunteers help to increase police responsiveness and service delivery, as well as providing useful information and new program opportunities. In addition, volunteers bring new skills and expertise to the department and promote enthusiasm within the agency.

## **Administration**

The Volunteer Support Team (VST) was established within the Support Services Division and the Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for the administration of all police volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator reports to the Community Services Section Commander, who in turn reports to the Support Services Division Chief.

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for recruitment and screening of volunteers and management of all volunteer programs. A volunteer's assignment supervisor is

responsible for assignment-specific training, assigned work and day-to-day direction for projects within their work sections.

All prospective volunteers must complete the VST Application Form. The Volunteer Coordinator (or designee) will interview prospective volunteers prior to proceeding to the background investigation. If selected to proceed to the background investigation, applicants will submit a copy of their government issued identification and complete a Release of Information Authorization. As the final part of the background investigation, selected candidates will be asked to submit to a polygraph examination prior to appointment to the VST.

Candidates may be disqualified at any phase of the selection process. Disqualified candidates are ineligible to reapply for any Police Department volunteer programs. There is no appeal process for disqualification from the VST application process.

The background investigation will include, but not be limited to the following:

- a. Criminal and traffic records check
- b. Personal reference (minimum of 3) contact
- c. Criminal Justice records check
- d. Fingerprint check

A background investigation report will be submitted to the Community Services Section Commander for approval or disapproval of all candidates for appointment to the VST.

**\* In accordance with AR 35-0019, a background check must be conducted on any individual wishing to return to volunteer service after not working for more than 365 days.**

Automatic disqualifiers include:

- a. Conviction of a felony or any offense that would qualify as a felony under Colorado Revised Statutes.
- b. Arrest for any crime involving Child Abuse, Domestic Violence or involving threats of violence or use of unlawful force against another person.
- c. Involvement in any incident involving unlawful sexual conduct.
- d. Sale of any illegal drug, substance, or illegal sale of prescription medication.
- e. Arrest for any major traffic offense (DUI, DWAI, DUR, etc.) within the past five years.
- f. Intentional omission or falsification of information during any part of the application process.

Applicants may be disqualified at the discretion of the Community Services Section Commander (or designee) for the following reasons:

- a. A physical or mental inability to perform the required duties of the volunteer assignment.
- b. History of drug or alcohol abuse.
- c. Excessive traffic violations.
- d. Any discharge from the U.S. Military other than Honorable.
- e. Any conduct that could cause the candidate's integrity to be questioned.
- f. Any conduct that could embarrass or jeopardize public confidence in the Lakewood Police Department.

All volunteers must successfully complete the volunteer selection process before working in any division of the Lakewood Police Department.

Once a volunteer applicant has successfully completed the selection process, The Volunteer Coordinator submits requests for:

- Fingerprint clearance and ID card issue
- Assignment of a Volunteer Number
- Access to City/Department computer systems
- Establishment of an email account
- Issuance of a Public Safety Building access code

### **Confidentiality**

The Lakewood Police Department is designated as a sensitive location by City of Lakewood Administrative Regulations. Volunteers shall only enter non-public areas of City or Police Department facilities to which they have been granted access permission as part of their official duties.

All records of the Police Department are considered sensitive information. As a part of their assignment(s), volunteers may be exposed to or have access to confidential information such as criminal histories or law enforcement data bases. Volunteers may only access information that is required as part of their specific duty assignment. Confidential information shall only be given to persons who have a need to know as part of their official duties.

Any unauthorized access to locations or disclosure of Lakewood Police Department sensitive or confidential information by a volunteer shall be grounds for immediate dismissal from the volunteer program and may subject the individual to criminal prosecution.

### **Department Expectations of Volunteers**

Lakewood Police Department volunteers are subject to City regulations and Department policies and procedures and are expected to maintain the highest standards of on-duty

conduct. The Volunteer Support Team (VST) is supervised by the Volunteer Coordinator, under the direction of the Community Services Section Commander.

All volunteers serve at will and are subject to dismissal at any time for any reason at the discretion of the Community Services Section Commander, or his designee. There is no appeal process for dismissal from volunteer programs. Volunteers dismissed from the program are ineligible to reapply to volunteer with the Police Department.

The following shall be deemed the minimum standards for appointment to the VST:

- a. A person of sound mind displaying clear and rational thinking.
- b. Physically capable of performing essential elements of assigned duties.
- c. Ability to communicate in English, both verbally and in writing at a level consistent with the requirements of the assignment.
- d. Ability to understand and adhere to written and verbal directives.
- e. Willingness to complete all initial training prior to assignment, and refresher training as required. Training will be supervised by the Volunteer Coordinator or designee.

While assigned to the VST, all individuals are expected to adhere to the following expectations:

1. A volunteer ID card shall always be carried by a VST member during field operations. While on duty inside the Public Safety Building or in any City facility, VST members shall wear ID cards in plain view.
2. Volunteers are not commissioned as law enforcement officers and have no authority beyond that of any other citizen. Volunteers may be assigned to law enforcement related community service functions. Department-issued VST uniform items worn will clearly distinguish volunteers from sworn law enforcement officers.
3. Volunteer Support Team members shall never represent themselves as police officers and will not carry weapons (firearms, knives, Taser, batons), or any other police equipment, including handcuffs while on duty. **A government-issued concealed weapon permit is not an exception to this rule.** Any volunteer found in possession of a firearm or other weapon on duty will be subject to immediate dismissal.
4. Alcoholic beverages shall not be consumed within 8 hours prior to reporting for duty. VST members shall not report for duty while under the influence of or impaired by any substance, to include medication or non-prescription drugs (includes Marijuana). Violation of this rule will subject the individual to immediate dismissal.



5. Tobacco use is not permitted inside any City facility or Department-owned vehicle.
6. Volunteers are required to dress neatly and conservatively for all assignments. Department-issued VST uniform items shall be worn during all assignments that take place outside the Public Safety Center.
7. VST members shall not be dispatched to or interject themselves into in-progress calls or engage in activities that expose them to undue risk.
8. VST members shall not engage in confrontation, contact, pursuit of or detention of suspicious persons or vehicles. Volunteers should never be exposed to direct contact with suspects or persons under arrest.
9. If a volunteer becomes a witness to a crime and/or arrest, he/she will be named in police reports and may be required to complete a written statement. Appearance for court testimony may also be required.
10. Volunteers shall avoid any conduct that might compromise their integrity or compromise public confidence in the Department. Volunteers shall not accept gratuities or solicit/receive any special advantage from their affiliation with the Lakewood Police Department.
11. Access to City computer systems and law enforcement data bases is for department authorized purposes only and shall be done in accordance with applicable Lakewood Police policies, and/or federal and state law.
12. Department-owned computers and telephones are for official business only and there is no expectation of privacy for users.
13. Volunteers are reminded that they are representatives of the City of Lakewood and as such they are expected to be courteous in their dealings with members of the public, other volunteers, and City/Department employees. Discourteous or rude behavior will not be tolerated.
14. All volunteer work hours shall be entered into the Volgistics system or documented on a monthly time sheet submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator.
15. Out of concern for others in the workplace, we ask all volunteers who are sick to stay home. If a volunteer stays home, he/she should inform the Volunteer Coordinator or the supervisor in their assigned duty section, whenever possible.

16. Volunteers shall report any changes in status that may affect ability to fulfill duties to the Volunteer Coordinator. This includes, but is not limited to arrests, criminal investigations, and medical conditions directly affecting duties.

### **Volunteer Service Team Orientation**

#### **Training:**

Upon appointment to the VST, each member will receive orientation training from the Volunteer Coordinator or designee. Training will consist of:

1. Police Department orientation.
2. Civic Center and City facility orientation.
3. City geography orientation.
4. Explanation of City, Department and VST policies and procedures.
5. Police radio operation and procedure training (if applicable).
6. Defensive driving (if applicable).

Any volunteer who requires access to department Records Management Systems and/or CCIC shall complete the CJIS Security Awareness Training prior to beginning their assignment.

Once a volunteer has been assigned to a specific VST program, the team leader is responsible for providing all team-specific training. Final approval of certification for the specific VST assignment is the responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator.

All VST members are encouraged to attend the Citizen Police Academy.

### **Team Leader Responsibilities**

Team leaders are appointed by the Volunteer Coordinator and assist in communicating with and providing training for individuals assigned to various VST programs. Team leader responsibilities include:

1. Team leaders are responsible for coordinating shifts with their individual team members and attempting to find a replacement should a team member be unable to work a scheduled assignment.
2. Providing required training to volunteers upon assignment to their specific VST team.

3. Providing oversight of operations related to their specific team to ensure members perform their duties in accordance with policy and procedure, and their training.
4. Communicating with the Volunteer Coordinator on a regular basis regarding the team operations and member performance.

### **Volunteer Operation of Department Vehicles**

Department vehicles are provided to the Volunteer Support Team for use while performing specific functions. VST vehicles are specifically marked to identify the occupants as police volunteers. All volunteers required to operate VST vehicles must have and maintain a valid driver's license and complete the City Defensive Driving course. The following guidelines for vehicle operation are provided:

1. Volunteers shall use the VST vehicle that is best equipped for the duties assigned.
2. Use of any Department vehicle other than one assigned to the VST requires permission from the Volunteer Coordinator or a sworn supervisor.
3. Keys to VST vehicles are kept on clipboards with sign-out sheets in the Volunteer Office. Vehicle keys must be signed out at the beginning of all operations and signed in at the end.
4. Vehicles will be kept clean and returned with no less than one half tank of fuel.
5. Vehicles will always be locked when unattended.
6. Pre-trip and post-trip inspections will be conducted every time a VST vehicle is used. The Volunteer Coordinator will be notified of any vehicle damage or maintenance problems.
7. Compliance with Department/City policies and all applicable state and local laws is mandatory while operating VST vehicles.
8. Overhead lights on VST vehicles will only be utilized in situations where it is necessary to warn other traffic of a hazard when the vehicle is stationary in the roadway, of a pending vehicle movement, or at the direction of sworn personnel. VST vehicles are not emergency vehicles and under no circumstances will they be operated as such. This includes not exceeding the posted speed limit or operation in violation of any traffic laws.

9. A spotter will be used every time a VST vehicle is backed up (including leaving parked position). The spotter will be a VST member, Community Service Officer or sworn police employee.

## **Volunteer Support Team Functions**

### **Extra Patrol Program**

#### Overview

When LPD receives a request from a resident or business owner within the city describing a problem or request for police attention, the information is entered onto the Patrol Sector Logs as an Extra Patrol request. Examples of Extra Patrols are for on-going criminal or suspicious activity in a specific area that might be reduced by concentrated police presence.

#### Duties

Extra patrol

Assist with Non-violent crime perimeter or search\*

Assist with search for missing children and at-risk adults\*

*\*At request of or with approval from a sworn police supervisor.*

### **Motorist Assist Program (MAP)**

#### Overview

The primary purpose of MAP is to help keep traffic flowing smoothly especially during peak hours. If a vehicle becomes disabled and is impeding traffic, MAP volunteers try to move the vehicle off the roadway to a safe location where any additional help can be provided without interfering with traffic. As time and circumstances permit, MAP Volunteers can perform other volunteer functions included below.

#### Duties (Activities)

Jump start vehicles

Push vehicles out of roadway

Change/inflate tires.

Provide water for cooling system.

Provide gas (no diesel)

Clear roadway debris.

Respond to non-injury accidents\*

Relieve Agents awaiting tow truck\*

Assist Agents with traffic control\*

Assist Agents searching for missing children and at-risk adults\*

*\* At request of or with approval from a sworn police supervisor.*

## **Speed Watch Program**

### **Overview**

Volunteers watch for vehicles exceeding posted speed limits on neighborhood streets. VST personnel are assigned to locations by a Traffic Team Sergeant.

### **Duties**

Main duties include counting number of speeding vehicles, recording location, direction of travel, time of day, speed, vehicle description, and license plate number. Warning letters are then generated and sent to the registered owners of violator vehicles.

## **Property Pickup Program**

### **Overview**

Volunteers assist patrol by picking up non-evidence, and/or abandoned property, usually bicycles.

### **Duties**

Property pickup is usually done in conjunction with MAP or other VST duties. Department volunteers obtain property pick up locations from the Volunteer Coordinator or Jeffcom Dispatch.

## **Internal Volunteers**

### **Overview**

Internal volunteers have been used in the police department for over 25 years. Their responsibilities vary by position but strive to serve both to the Lakewood Police Department and the community at large. When the Volunteer Coordinator receives a request for a volunteer assignment, a volunteer is recruited for the position. Training varies depending on position/assignment.

Volunteers have historically performed activities in the following Department units:

1. Patrol Division
2. Records Section
3. Property & Evidence Section
4. Investigations Division
5. Crime Lab
6. Colorado Metropolitan Auto Task Force (CMATT)
7. Volunteer Office

Volunteers shall only be placed in assignments or programs that are consistent with their interest, skills, abilities, and the needs of the department. Volunteers must meet the requirements and expectations of the assignment and may be removed at the request of the assignment supervisor.

## **Evaluation**

The Volunteer Coordinator shall conduct an evaluation of the VST program on an annual basis. A program status report is produced that includes total volunteer hours logged, VST member activities, program status, and volunteer turnover.

The Volunteer Coordinator shall audit each volunteer annually to ensure that he/she meets the minimum requirements of the Volunteer Support Team, has completed all required training, and is still actively volunteering.

Thank you again for your commitment to assisting the men and women of the Lakewood Police Department. We hope you can serve with integrity, intelligence, and initiative.