



PAWNEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
SHERIFF DARRIN VARNELL

Policy # Volunteers in Policing Service	Related Policies:
<i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable Oklahoma Statutes:	
CALEA Standard: 16.4.1; 16.4.2; 16.4.3	

I. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to set forth guidelines and mandates with respect to the use of volunteers to assist The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office in providing for the public safety of the community.

II. **Policy:** It is the policy of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office to maintain an active group of civic-minded individuals who shall serve as volunteers to assist The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office in providing for the public-safety and welfare of the community. The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office shall utilize volunteers in a capacity that diminishes risk to the volunteers and does not place the volunteer in a law enforcement function.

III. **Definitions:**

A. **Volunteer Coordinator:** A paid member of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office specifically directed by the sheriff to manage the volunteer services.

B. **Volunteer:** A non-salaried individual over the age of 18 who offers his or her time for the benefit of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office, willingly and of his or her own accord for a limited time and without promise, expectation, or receipt of any type of compensation. Volunteer shall not mean Reserve Deputy Sheriff.

IV. **Procedure:**

A. **Selection Process:**

a. **Application:** Each person who seeks a position as a volunteer with The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office must complete an application. This application shall include all information as well as confidentiality waivers such that a proper background examination of the individual may be conducted. Each applicant must supply the names of three non-related references who may be interviewed during the

background examination. The applicant must also provide an employment history for review.

- b. Background Examination:** The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office shall conduct a thorough and documented background examination of any person seeking to become a volunteer. This examination will be conducted by a sworn member of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office and shall include a criminal history check, traffic records check, employment history check and references interview.
- c. Status:** Once selected, volunteers must recognize that their status is "at-will" and that they may be dismissed at anytime without cause. Volunteers are non-salaried and have no benefits or labor relation rights.

B. Maintaining Good Standing as a Volunteer:

- a. Confidentiality:** Volunteers must maintain confidentiality in the business of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office. Volunteers shall not release any information concerning any police event or make any public representation of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office without the express authorization of the sheriff or his or her designee.
 - i. Non-disclosure: each volunteer shall be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement as to any confidential information coming into the volunteer's knowledge through his or her position as a volunteer.
 - ii. Any request for information from the media or from the public regarding confidential information should be courteously directed to the office of the sheriff.
 - iii. At no time shall a volunteer appear in the media or in the public as a representative of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office without the express permission of the sheriff or his designee.
- b. Time Requirements:** This program requires a two-way commitment between The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office and the volunteer. The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office invests in the volunteer while the volunteer invests time in The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office. Volunteers must complete four hours of volunteer time in The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office per month in order to maintain their status as a volunteer.
- c. Training:** Volunteers shall be trained in accordance with the functions they will be expected to fulfill within The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office. Training shall include:
 - i. Overview of the Justice System: familiarization of the agencies within the justice system to include law enforcement, corrections, and the courts.
 - ii. Agency orientation: familiarization with The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office organization and structure as well as facilities and public resources.
 - iii. Agency reports and records management
 - iv. Parking violations and the manner of properly writing and issuing a parking violation.
 - v. Being a good witness: The premise of this program with respect to volunteers who are placed in any public situation on behalf of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office is that volunteers do not take action when there is a law enforcement

need, but rather, volunteers observe and report. With this in mind, volunteers should be made aware of the needs of law enforcement with respect to being a good witness. Training shall include: taking note of descriptive factors; direction of travel, and the actions of the suspect during the event.

- vi. **Traffic and Crowd Management:** At times, volunteers may be utilized to assist sworn personnel at special events. During such events, volunteers may be utilized to assist with traffic and crowd management. Training in this area should include instruction on the proper methods of traffic and crowd management.
- d. Use of Equipment:** Volunteers shall utilize equipment belonging to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office only when authorized to do so by the Sheriff or his or her designee. At no time is a volunteer authorized to use any type of weapon belonging to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office.
- i. **Vehicles:** Volunteers who are authorized to drive a vehicle belonging to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office are not authorized to drive the vehicle as an "emergency" vehicle. As such, any volunteer driving a vehicle belonging to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office shall obey all traffic laws.
 - ii. **Vehicles:** No volunteer shall drive a vehicle belonging to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office unless it has been verified that the volunteer has a valid driver's license. Any volunteer, who becomes aware of a change of their license status, shall immediately notify The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office.
 - iii. **Vehicles:** Vehicles that may be used by volunteers will be distinctively marked as volunteer vehicles. This is necessary to ensure the safety of the volunteers who may be at risk if the public or persons who would harm an deputy were to mistake a volunteer for an deputy. Additionally, the expectations of the public upon seeing a marked vehicle belonging to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office may expect certain actions by law enforcement personnel that they would not expect from non-law enforcement personnel.
 - (a) Seat belts shall be worn at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
 - (b) Agency vehicles shall be locked at all times when left unattended.
 - (c) Agency vehicles shall not be operated off paved roadways unless directed by a supervisor for special assignments or functions.
 - (d) Agency vehicles shall not be used for any purpose other than an assigned duty without expression of the sheriff or his/her designee.
 - (e) No statements relating to a vehicle accident involving an agency vehicle shall be made except that the volunteer shall provide information to the deputy or supervisor investigating the accident.
 - iv. **Lighting Equipment:** Vehicles that may be driven by volunteers shall be equipped with "amber" emergency lighting to distinguish these vehicles from law enforcement vehicles. Volunteers shall not operate the lighting equipment while the vehicle in motion. Emergency lighting shall only be used when the vehicle is in a stationary position and where said use is necessary for public safety.

- e. **Damage or Loss of Agency Property:** Volunteers shall not maliciously or unreasonably damage any agency equipment or property. Any damage to agency equipment or property shall immediately be reported to a supervisor.
- f. **Uniforms:** Volunteers shall wear the uniform prescribed by the sheriff, unless authorized to wear plainclothes. In such cases, the volunteer shall wear proper business attire meeting the professional standards of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office.

C. Standards of Conduct:

- a. **Expectations of Volunteers:** Volunteers, like any member of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office are expected to maintain the ethical standard of conduct demanded by The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office. In all conduct relating to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office, volunteers are expected to act professionally and courteously to the public as well as to other agency members. The role of a volunteer does not include the duty to investigate crimes, pursue, apprehend, or prosecute law breakers. Volunteers shall not go beyond an "observe and report" function.
- b. **Representations:** Volunteers shall not, at any time, represent themselves, in any manner, as a sworn member of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office. They shall make it clear that they are volunteers of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office.
- c. **Weapons:** Volunteers shall not be in possession of any weapon when acting in their capacity as a volunteer for The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office.
- d. **Alcoholic beverages:** Volunteers shall not report for an assignment within eight hours of consuming alcoholic beverages. If the volunteer is scheduled for an assignment, they shall notify on-duty agency personnel that they are unable to fulfill their allotted assignment. Volunteers are prohibited from drinking alcoholic beverages while wearing their uniform irrespective of their duty status.
- e. **Prescription medications:** Volunteers who are prescribed medications that may cause drowsiness or in some other way hamper their ability to function as a volunteer shall report this fact to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office and shall not be assigned volunteer duties.
- f. **Arrest or investigation:** Any volunteer who becomes aware that they are the subject of an investigation by a law enforcement agency or who has been arrested, shall immediately report this fact to The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office.

D. Duties and Limitations: Duties of the volunteers shall be directed by the sheriff.

- a. **Administrative Duties:** Assist with report taking function and other administrative duties deemed appropriate by the sheriff.
- b. **Search and Rescue**
- c. **Citizens on Patrol** shall be limited to high-visibility, non-confrontational assignments where the overall objective is to deter crime through visibility. Where observations are made with respect to suspected criminal activity, volunteers are to observe and report and shall not take action. Volunteers utilized in this capacity shall be issued

a police radio while on patrol in order to allow for immediate response to a volunteer's observation and report.

- d.** Community education programs-assist agency with crime prevention surveys and crime prevention education as well as other community education functions,
- e.** Special events: Volunteers may be utilized as directed by the sheriff to assist with special events to include traffic and crowd management. Such assignments shall be limited to non-confrontational positions and functions.
- f.** Interpreter functions: In order to be utilized for this function, the volunteer must be certified as an interpreter unless such interpretation is for an emergency circumstance.
- g.** Special Skills: In cases where a volunteer has, a special skill that may be utilized for the good of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office, the sheriff may designate the volunteer for this special function. Under no circumstances shall the special function include one, which involves confrontation or foreseeable danger to the volunteer.
- h.** Issuing handicap and other parking violations. Note- volunteers assigned to this function shall be equipped with an agency radio so that they may seek immediate assistance should a confrontation occur.