



## **General Order 54.2 - Community Relations**

**PURPOSE:** Describe the community relations statement; [define community relations](#) function; outline community relations plan; describe the position responsible for the community relations function; describe the responsibility for achieving community relations goals; define monthly community relations report; define the semi-annual evaluation; define agency commitment; describe the citizen's attitude and opinion survey; and define community input.

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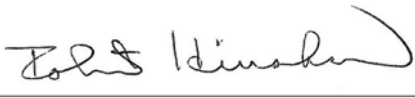
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ISSUED BY : Sheriff Robert Hinshaw

REVIEWED BY: Patrol Commander



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## **DEFINITIONS:**

- A. Community Relations: For purposes of this General Order, when referring to community relations, the term may be considered synonymous with crime prevention.

### **54.2.1 COMMUNITY RELATIONS STATEMENT**

- A. The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office realizes the need to strengthen its relationship with the community it serves. The need for mutual understanding and cooperation between the department and the public is a major consideration to the administration. The department is dedicated to furthering this understanding and to the establishment of an effective working relationship between the community and the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office. The achievement of social order, both by the criminal justice system and personal contact with the community, can only exist if there is a partnership. The purpose of the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office community relations program is to establish such a partnership.
- B. The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office learns of issues that are of a concern to the community by establishing links to the community and responds to the issues before they become problems within the community. Developing programs geared toward increasing understanding of the activities and role of the department will increase public confidence.
- C. Accurate information and public understanding and backing can aid in the acceptance of new programs and approaches.
- D. A statement of commitment to community relations serves a two-fold purpose. First, it assures members of the community that the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office is, in fact, concerned with meeting their needs. Second, it acts as an internal statement of policy that guides the conduct of departmental employees.

### **54.2.2 COMMUNITY RELATIONS FUNCTION**

- A. The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office community relations function is to establish direct contact with the community. A well-organized and active community relations function can become an effective means of eliciting public support and can serve to identify problems still in their infancy before they become too complex to handle. Without this "grassroots" community support, successful enforcement of traffic, vice, and other laws may be difficult, if not impossible, to enforce.

### **54.2.3 COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN**

- A. The objective of the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office community relations plan is to establish direct contact with the community through school systems, community groups, business, civic and professional organizations; in order to gain community support for the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office law enforcement activities and other programs.
- B. The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office community relations plan is to:
  - 1. Establish liaison with formal community organizations, to include school systems, community groups, business, and civic and professional organizations.
  - 2. Develop community relations policies that reflect both Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office objectives and input from the community.

3. Publicize agency objectives, problems, and successes. This may be coordinated with the Communications Department.
4. Convey information transmitted from citizen organizations to the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office.
5. Identify training needs by means that can include but not be limited to:
  - a. Citizen statements;
  - b. PSU consultation; and
  - c. Interviews with members of the department.
  - d. Assist in establishing pro-active community involvement groups.
  - e. Improve agency practices bearing on law enforcement/community relations.

#### **54.2.4 POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS FUNCTION**

- A. The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office recognizes that each employee has the responsibility for promoting community relations. The authority and responsibility for developing and coordinating the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office community relations function lies with the supervisor in charge of the Community Liaison unit. The functions are similar in many ways in that they both involve interactions with various members of the community. The Community Liaison Unit also affords the community with easy access to the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office to explain what they perceive as community problems.
- B. Community Liaison unit is administered by a supervisor as designated by the sheriff. The unit operates through the Road Patrol Division, as well as through direction from the sheriff.

#### **54.2.5 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACHIEVING COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS**

- A. Because the conduct of each employee reflects on the department as a whole, the burden of achieving the department's community relations objectives should be shared. More important, a unified, coordinated effort will require the participation, enthusiasm, and skills of all department personnel.
- B. Every member of the department must realize that the existence of a community relations function does not in any way relieve them of the responsibility to promote good community relations.

#### **54.2.6 MONTHLY COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT**

- A. A monthly report on crime prevention activities must be submitted by the Community Liaison supervisor. Information in this monthly report should include, but not be limited to:
  1. A description of concerns that have been voiced by the community to the Community Liaison unit;

2. A description of potential problems that have a bearing on law enforcement activities within the community; and
  3. A statement of recommended actions that addresses previously identified concerns and problems.
- B. If a problem becomes apparent in the community that should be addressed immediately, a report will be submitted through channels.

#### **54.2.7 OPEN**

#### **54.2.8 AGENCY COMMITMENT**

- A. The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office is committed to correcting actions, practices, and attitudes on the part of the agency that may contribute to community tensions and grievances. The intent of this standard is to communicate to department personnel and Sedgwick County, the need to identify and rectify actions, procedures, and attitudes that may contribute to community unrest. By recognizing such problems at an early stage, preventive action can be taken that might deter greater problems in the future.

#### **54.2.9 CITIZEN'S ATTITUDE AND OPINION SURVEY**

- A. In an attempt to provide an efficient and professional law enforcement service to the citizens of Sedgwick County, the department surveys citizen attitudes and opinions with respect to:
1. Overall agency performance;
  2. Deputy/employee attitude and behavior toward citizens;
  3. Concern over safety and security within the agency's service area as a whole;
  4. Recommendations and suggestions for improvement.
- B. The citizen attitude and opinion survey is used to complement other sources of information used in the decision-making process.

#### **54.2.10 COMMUNITY INPUT**

- A. The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office uses community input in the development of its law enforcement policies. Input from the community helps ensure that department policies accurately reflect the needs of the community.
- B. The department receives community input from the citizens by the use of the citizen attitude and opinion survey sent randomly to citizens. (See [Section 54.2.9.](#))
- C. **(R)** The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office has established a Citizens Community Council. The mission of the council is to foster open communication and cooperation among the Sheriff's Office and the citizens of Sedgwick County. The goal is to be proactive in addressing issues with members of the community.
1. **(R)** Members will be selected by the Sheriff or his designee.

2. **(R)** Meetings will be held quarterly or as necessary.