# Volunteers

## 338.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines for Elkton Police Department volunteers to supplement and assist department personnel in their duties. Trained volunteers are members who can augment department personnel and help complete various tasks.

### 338.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Active status** - A volunteer who provides 144 hours or more of service each year.

**Police auxiliary, reserve volunteer program, or program** - The various activities using volunteers to assist the Elkton Police Department by performing administrative or technical tasks, or other services in support of the duties or mission of the Department (COMAR 12.04.07.02).

**Volunteer** - An individual who performs a service for the Department without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered. This may include unpaid chaplains, unpaid reserve or auxiliary officers, interns, persons providing administrative support, and youth involved in a law enforcement Explorer Post, among others.

## 338.2 POLICY

The Elkton Police Department shall ensure that volunteers are properly appointed, trained and supervised to carry out specified tasks and duties in order to create an efficient department and improve services to the community.

## 338.3 ELIGIBILITY

Requirements for participation as a volunteer for the Department may include, but are not limited to:

(a) Residency in the Town of Elkton.

(b) Being at least 18 years of age.

(c) Possession of a valid driver’s license if the position requires vehicle operation.

(d) Possession of liability insurance for any personally owned equipment, vehicles or horses utilized during volunteer work.

(e) No conviction of a felony, any crime of a sexual nature or against children, any crime related to assault or violence, any crime related to dishonesty, or any crime related to impersonating a law enforcement officer.

(f) No conviction of a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor crime within the past 10 years, excluding petty misdemeanor traffic offenses.

(g) No mental illness or chemical dependency condition that may adversely affect the person’s ability to serve in the position.

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(h) Physical requirements reasonably appropriate to the assignment.

(i) A personal background history and character suitable for a person representing the Department, as validated by a background investigation.

The Chief of Police may apply exceptions for eligibility based on organizational needs and the qualifications of the individual.

## 338.4 RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

The Elkton Police Department shall endeavor to recruit and appoint only those applicants who meet the high ethical, moral and professional standards set forth by this department.

### 338.4.1 RECRUITMENT

Volunteers should be recruited on a continuous and ongoing basis consistent with department policy on equal opportunity, nondiscriminatory employment. A primary qualification for participation in the application process should be an interest in and an ability to assist the Department in serving the public.

Requests for volunteers should be submitted in writing by interested department members to the Chief of Police or authorized designee through the requester's immediate supervisor. A complete description of the volunteer's duties and a requested time frame should be included in the request. All department members should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting assignments.

### 338.4.2 SELECTION

Volunteer candidates shall successfully complete the following process prior to appointment as a volunteer:

(a) Submit the appropriate written application.

(b) Interview with the Chief of Police or authorized designee.

(c) Successfully complete an appropriate-level background investigation.

### 338.4.3 APPOINTMENT

Service as a volunteer with the Department shall begin with an official notice of acceptance or appointment by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. Notice may only be given by an authorized representative of the Department.

No volunteer should begin any assignment until he/she has been officially accepted for that position and has completed all required screening and paperwork. At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer should complete all required enrollment paperwork and will receive a copy of the position description and agreement of service with the Department.

All volunteers shall be required to sign a volunteer agreement.

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Volunteers should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities and the needs of the Department.

Volunteers serve at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

## 338.5 IDENTIFICATION AND UNIFORMS

As representatives of the Department, volunteers are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Necessary safety equipment will be provided for each volunteer, depending on the task assigned.

Volunteers will be issued Elkton Police Department identification cards must be carried at all times while on-duty. The identification cards will be the standard Elkton Police Department identification cards, with the exception that “Volunteer,” “Reserve,” or “Auxiliary” will be indicated on the cards.

## 338.6 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers assist department personnel as needed. Assignments of volunteers will usually be to augment the Field Operations Bureau. Volunteers may be assigned to other areas within the Department as needed. Volunteers should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities and the needs of the Department.

All volunteers will be assigned to duties by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

### 338.6.1 COMPLIANCE

Volunteers shall be required to adhere to all department policies and procedures. A copy of the policies and procedures will be made available to each volunteer upon appointment. The volunteer shall become thoroughly familiar with these policies.

Whenever a rule, regulation or guideline in this Policy Manual refers to regular department personnel, it shall also apply to a volunteer, unless by its nature it is inapplicable.

Volunteers are required by this department to meet department-approved training requirements as applicable to their assignments.

## 338.7 TASK-SPECIFIC TRAINING

Task-specific training is intended to provide the required instruction and practice for volunteers to properly and safely perform their assigned duties. A volunteer’s training should correspond to his/her assignment as determined by the volunteer coordinator.

Volunteers will be provided with an orientation program to acquaint them with the policies of the Department and law enforcement procedures applicable to their assignments.

Volunteers should receive position-specific training to ensure they have adequate knowledge and skills to complete the required tasks, and should receive ongoing training as deemed appropriate by their supervisors or the volunteer coordinator.

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Training should reinforce to volunteers that they shall not intentionally represent themselves as, or by omission infer that they are officers or other full-time members of the Department. They shall always represent themselves as volunteers.

All volunteers shall comply with the rules of conduct and with all orders and directives, either oral or written, issued by the Department.

## 338.8 SUPERVISION

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor will be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and should be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

Functional supervision of volunteers is the responsibility of the supervisor in charge of the volunteer's assigned duties. The following are some considerations that supervisors should keep in mind while supervising volunteers:

(a) Take the time to introduce volunteers to members on all levels.

(b) Ensure volunteers have work space and necessary office supplies.

(c) Make sure the work is challenging. Do not hesitate to give volunteers an assignment or task that will tap these valuable resources.

A volunteer may be assigned as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervising volunteer is under the direct supervision of Elkton Police Department personnel.

### 338.8.1 FITNESS FOR DUTY

No volunteer shall report for work or be at work when his/her judgment or physical condition has been impaired due to illness or injury, or by the use of alcohol or drugs, whether legal or illegal.

Volunteers shall report to their supervisors any change in status that may affect their ability to fulfill their duties. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) Driver's license

(b) Medical condition

(c) Arrests

(d) Criminal investigations

(e) All law enforcement contacts

## 338.9 INFORMATION ACCESS

With appropriate security clearance, a volunteer may have access to or be in the vicinity of criminal histories, investigative files or information portals. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, the duties of the position or department policy, all such information shall be considered confidential. Only that information specifically identified and approved by authorized members

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shall be released. Confidential information shall be given only to persons who have a need and a right to know as determined by department policy and supervisory personnel.

A volunteer whose assignment requires the use of, or access to, confidential information will be required to have his/her fingerprints submitted to the Maryland Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) to obtain clearance. Volunteers working this type of assignment will receive training in data practices and be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement before being given an assignment with the Department. Subsequent unauthorized disclosure of any confidential information verbally, in writing or by any other means by the volunteer is grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.

Volunteers shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any article for publication, act as correspondents to newspapers or other periodicals, release or divulge any information concerning the activities of the Department, or maintain that they represent the Department in such matters without permission from the proper department personnel.

## 338.10 EQUIPMENT

Any property or equipment issued by the Department shall be for official and authorized use only. Any property or equipment issued to a volunteer shall remain the property of the Department and shall be returned at the termination of service.

## 338.11 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES/TERMINATION

If a volunteer has a personnel complaint made against him/her or becomes involved in an internal investigation, the matter shall be investigated in compliance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.

Volunteers are considered at-will and may be removed from service at the discretion of the Chief of Police, with or without cause. Volunteers shall have no property interest in their continued appointments. However, if a volunteer is removed for alleged misconduct, the volunteer will be afforded an opportunity solely to clear his/her name through a liberty interest hearing, which shall be limited to a single appearance before the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

Volunteers may resign from volunteer service with the Department at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice and a reason for their decision.

### 338.11.1 EXIT INTERVIEWS

The Chief of Police or authorized designee should conduct exit interviews, where possible. These interviews should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position and should solicit the volunteer's suggestions on improving the position. When appropriate, an exit interview should also include a discussion on the possibility of involvement in some other capacity with the Department.

## 338.12 REPORTING

The Chief of Police or authorized designee shall:

(a) Maintain annual records on each volunteer, including (COMAR 12.04.07.07.A):

1. Full name.

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2. Social Security number.
3. The total itemized hours of service worked each month.
4. Other information the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) or the State Comptroller may require.

(b) Provide to each active status volunteer, no later than February 15 of each year, a written report in the format specified by MPTSC, the volunteer's specific information, including:

1. The identity of the volunteer
2. Certification signed by an authorized department member stating that the volunteer is qualified to apply for the subtraction modification under Md. Code TG § 10-208(l)(2) on the basis that the individual has, between January 1 and December 31 of the preceding year:
   (a) Participated in a MPTSC-approved program.
   (b) Met the requirements of Md. Code TG § 10-208(l)(2) to be considered a qualifying police auxiliary or reserve volunteer.
   (c) Met the minimum requirements for active status.

(c) Submit an annual report to MPTSC and the State Comptroller by October 1, in the format specified, that includes the annual records for each volunteer collected under COMAR 12.04.07.07 from January 1 through December 31 of the preceding year that either (COMAR 12.04.07.07.C):

(a) Qualified to apply for the subtraction modification established under Md. Code TG § 10-208(l).
(b) Otherwise met minimum requirements for active status.

(d) Report any change to the information submitted as part of the original application for MPTSC approval or the department program supporting volunteers to the Deputy MPTSC Director within 30 days of the effective date (COMAR 12.04.07.06.B).

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