

COMMUNITY RELATIONS SECTION

The Community Relations Section is responsible for the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program, the Teen Court Program, the Office of the Chaplain, and the Crime Prevention Unit.

School Resource Officers (SRO)

School Resource Officers (SRO) are assigned to the twelve high schools in the county to implement security measures, assist with students at-risk for potential criminal involvement, and perform other assignments necessary to help promote safe schools.

Teen Court

Teen Court is a juvenile justice diversionary program designed to offer first-time juvenile offenders an opportunity to accept responsibility for their minor crimes without having to incur a criminal record. Teen Court is a voluntary program that allows a juvenile defendant to be judged by a jury of his/her peers. Conducted in a real courtroom, a judge presides over each Teen Court case while teens serve as prosecutors, defense attorneys, jurors, bailiffs, and clerks, under the tutelage of volunteer attorneys. Sanctions imposed by Teen Court juries consist of mandatory community service hours and service as a Teen Court juror. Other optional dispositions include apology letters, essays, visits to the Anne Arundel County Detention Center, visits to the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Unit, and various counseling programs.

Crime Prevention Unit

The Crime Prevention Unit provides information to citizens through regular meetings with community associations and business groups to prevent crime and offer ways to reduce becoming a victim of a crime through self-protection. The Crime Prevention Unit also manages the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) and the Reserve Officer Program. Officers assigned to this unit also conduct the False Alarm Program aimed at reducing the number of false alarms.

To promote crime prevention, thwart robberies, and reduce shoplifting and other crimes related to business operations, the Crime Prevention Unit has joined in a partnership with the Commercial Security Network. The Commercial Security Network is a coalition of businessmen and women who manage or own a business within the county, and security personnel that provide security for a variety of retail and commercial businesses throughout the county. Together, the Crime Prevention Unit and the Commercial Security Network coordinate alerts for robbery activities, provide information on crime prevention, and promote safety and awareness to businesses to make them less vulnerable to crime. They also offer guidance to business employees who have been confronted with robbery and shoplifting.

In addition, the Crime Prevention Unit attends many yearly public events to interact with citizens to provide them with information on crime prevention techniques. Thousands of citizens get an opportunity to meet with county police officers to discuss issues, learn about law enforcement, obtain information on crime prevention techniques, and promote positive relationships between police and citizens. These events underscore the Department's commitment to community policing to reduce crime and the fear of crime, to make the county a better and safer place to live and work.