



Anne Arundel County Police Department
8495 Veterans Highway Millersville, Maryland 21108
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www.aacounty.org/police



Timothy J. Altomare
Chief of Police

Anne Arundel County Police Department Frequently Asked Questions

We realize that our community needs to know what we are doing and how we operate. George Floyd's death is nothing short of an unconscionable murder. Police/community relations have been set back decades due to the actions of those former officers. It is up to us to continue to earn the trust of those we serve and to rebuild bridges with all of our community members. We are hopeful that this information will be a good step forward in transparency and open communication.

We are proud to say that we have been a CALEA certified agency since 1994. CALEA is the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA®), was created in 1979 as a credentialing authority through the joint efforts of law enforcement's major executive associations. Only 5% of law enforcement agencies achieve this accreditation. We also have achieved the GOLD STANDARD of accreditation which involves an intricate dissection of all our policies and procedures, including those dealing with community engagement, the use of force and officer accountability. Only 1% of agencies in North America are able to achieve this standard. We are very proud of this fact.

We have received a ton of great questions and decided to put the most commonly asked questions in this document. We thank you for your questions. We welcome them as an opportunity to continue to be transparent and build bonds with our community. We hope to become a closer, more unified Anne Arundel County.

(Additional Comment: It should be noted that some of the below questions ask about "excessive force" Excessive force is never acceptable and most certainly not taught. We answered the questions assuming the intent of the question was about use-of-force in general, not excessive force.)

1. Are the police officers in the Anne Arundel County Police Department being trained to de-escalate altercations by using peaceful conflict resolution strategies?

The Anne Arundel County Police Department trains its new and current officers (through continuing education) in a variety of methods to use conflict resolution and de-escalation methods when dealing with tense situations. The topics include Integrating Communication Assessment and Tactics (ICAT) for conflict resolution, and the critical decision making model. The critical decision model covers the officer's critical thinking process when responding to incidents, providing them logical thought processes to assess situations and use the safest and best methods to achieve resolution with the safety of everyone in mind. All officers are taught to evaluate their situation when using any type of force and to avoid using excessive force or to cause injury. The bottom line is: de-escalation is a part of our everyday mindset and we use it routinely. It is a part of who we are.



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2. Are the police officers in the Anne Arundel County Police Department forbidden from using carotid restraints (chokeholds, strangleholds, etc.) and hog-tying methods? Furthermore, are they forbidden from transporting civilians in uncomfortable positions, such as face down in a vehicle?

The Anne Arundel County Police Department does not teach any type of neck restraint. Force to the head and neck is considered deadly force by the AACoPD. We are trained through our entire career to avoid impacting or restricting the neck. As it specifically relates to the Minnesota incident, we are repeatedly trained that the position Mr. Floyd was placed in should be avoided for long periods of time more than seconds to avoid the risk of positional asphyxia. We are also taught specifically that when holding a person to the ground to avoid the neck area, particularly with our knees, because it impinges EVERYTHING that keeps a human alive, such as air and blood flow, nerve impulses from the brain, etc. In an instance where an arrestee must be held down, our officers are trained to both reposition the arrestee from the full belly down position to a position in which the arrestee is protected, i.e. recovery or sitting position, and use their shoulder, elbow or handcuffed hands as a way of controlling their movement.

We cannot say that a neck restraint is NEVER to be used because there IS a possibility in which a deadly force encounter may occur and that position is all the officer has to save a human life. Other than the active defense of human life in which no other option exists, any type of neck restraint is prohibited. Having said that, in a dynamic struggle, there can be unintentional contact to either area. If that occurs officers are trained to switch areas and avoid repeating the incidental contact. We must always document such unintentional contact and explain how we made corrections to avoid seriously harming the arrestee.

3. Are the police officers in the Anne Arundel County Police Department required to intervene if they witness another officer using excessive force? Will officers be reprimanded if they fail to intervene?

Officers from the Department have a duty and an oath to protect the lives of all people. We hold EVERY HUMAN LIFE AS SACROSANCT. If an officer witnesses an incident that becomes extreme or is out of policy, the officer(s) is required to stop the situation and report all actions to their immediate supervisor. Failing to do so will subject the involved parties to administrative sanctions and possibly criminal charges. The officers are continually reminded of department rules of conduct and behavior during daily roll call and in-service training. Between 70% and 80% of sustained (upheld) excessive force complaints originate from our own officers.

4. Are the police officers in the Anne Arundel County Police Department forbidden from shooting at moving vehicles?

Officers are not trained to shoot at moving vehicles. Agency policy clearly states police officers should refrain from discharging firearms at or from moving vehicles, unless a person in the vehicle is immediately threatening the officer or another person with deadly force and innocent persons would not be unduly jeopardized by the officer's action. Our policy and training also stress that shooting the



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driver of a vehicle will likely turn that vehicle into a 3,000 pound uncontrolled projectile. Police officers are also trained and directed to avoid tactics that could place them in a position of danger in which a vehicle could easily be used against them. This practice is highly discouraged and officers know their actions will be highly scrutinized when it occurs. Again, we have avoided an absolute term like NEVER in our policy because there are circumstances in policing that present dangers that must be negated. For example, if a gunman was driving down the highway, shooting at pedestrians and other drivers, the use of a firearm in defense of human life might, in fact, be necessary.

5. Is there a clear and enforced use-of-force continuum that details what weapons and force are acceptable in a wide variety of civilian-police interactions?

Anne Arundel County Police Officers are provided a variety of less-lethal tools, defensive tactics techniques, and verbal de-escalation skills as options to control a situation. They are taught using the critical thinking model and scenarios-based training to determine the appropriate response to safely control a situation and remediate it as quickly and safely as possible. We transitioned from the term "continuum" several years ago because the concept is rigid and can hinder an officer's attempt to de-escalate. We want our officers to use a myriad of de-escalation techniques with the latitude to make split second decisions in dynamic situations. One constant that remains, however, is that officers are only allowed to use that force necessary to stay safe and overcome resistance, and are held accountable to that standard. Every use of force by an officer is reviewed by every level in the chain of command. Excessive force is NEVER allowed or tolerated.

Along with the de-escalation skills that all officers are taught, we also have a specialized Conflict Negotiation Team (CNT). The CNT team consists of decentralized sworn police personnel who are available to respond to hostage/barricade situations and crisis incidents. These personnel are trained as hostage/crisis negotiators, technical communications specialists, and team supervisors. They have advanced training in de-escalation negotiation techniques.

6. Are the officers in the Anne Arundel County Police Department required to give a verbal warning to civilians before drawing their weapon or using excessive force? Are the officers in the Anne Arundel County Police Department required to report each time they threaten or use force on civilians?

Our officers are required to give a warning "whenever feasible" before using deadly force. They are trained, re-trained and trained again to give this warning as they draw their weapon. The warning becomes a Pavlovian response with repetition as "muscle memory" is built. Officers are also repetitively trained to give strong verbal commands to "stop resisting" or "get on the ground" when using any force technique to overcome resistance. Training focuses a great deal of attention on giving the appropriate warnings and making this second nature to overcome the "flight or fight" reaction in the body that makes it difficult for officers to remember if they gave the warning or not. Excessive force is NEVER allowed or tolerated.

Our officers are required to capture all elements of a situation through our reporting system. If force is used by the officer that results in injury or claims of injury by the affected person, the officer must notify



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their supervisor, who is mandated to respond and conduct an on scene review. The officer must also complete a “use of force or injury report” Each incident is reviewed by all levels of the chain of command review and dissect each incident to ensure that the actions are within policy and adhere to training and procedural principles. If we find that the force used was excessive, a thorough investigation is conducted that includes a review of initial training, procedural applications and possible areas for policy change. Officers found to have used excessive force are disciplined. Discipline can range from fines and suspensions up to termination.

7. Are the officers in the Anne Arundel County Police Department thoroughly vetted to ensure that they do not have a history with abuse, racism, xenophobia, homophobia / transphobia, or discrimination?

Prior to becoming a police officer in the state of Maryland, all applicants must have a comprehensive background check conducted. The applicant goes through several layers of review and their personal background is examined for any type of prior discriminatory practices. This includes interviews with associates, co-workers, former supervisors, family, etc. and a review of the applicant’s social media activity. Evidence of racism in an applicant’s background is cause for removal from the process and we have excluded individuals for it many times. If an applicant is hired and sent for new officer training, we literally start the new officer on a course designed to reduce implicit bias they may have. It should be noted that one of the tenants of Fair and Impartial Policing is to admit that ALL humans carry implicit bias within them. The Anne Arundel County Police Department was the first large agency in Maryland to train our officers in Fair and Impartial Policing, the program recommended in the President’s Task Force Report on 21st Century Policing in 2015.

We also re-train every year on cultural competency and serving people who have been historically marginalized. Last year’s cultural competence course focused on service to the LGBTQ community. We also train regularly to make sure we know how to appropriately serve persons experiencing mental health issues. We have been recognized nationally and internationally for our efforts to be more supportive of those in emotional health crisis. Every officer has been trained in Mental Health First Aid and about 22%, the recommended average, of our officers are Crisis Intervention certified which allows them to partner with mental health clinicians to bring positive solutions to those in crisis. We also work hard to serve those with educational and physical disabilities. We constantly update training modules on these topics to stay current with social policies and professional best practices and offer to staff through continuing education (in-service) sessions. Additionally, one of our officers was recognized as the **International** Crisis Intervention Officer of the Year in 2018 by Crisis Intervention International.

8. Are the officers in the Anne Arundel County Police Department trained to perform and seek necessary medical action after using excessive force?

All officers are trained in first-aid response and given the knowledge and tools to provide basic life saving techniques. Should an officer use force or respond to a situation where a person is injured, they are required to provide immediate medical assistance. The officers are trained to stabilize a situation and immediately request advanced help from the Fire Department/EMS. The officer then must notify a



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supervisor of the occurrence. We are proud to say our officers offer this immediate aid in every case where a person is injured. In fact, our officers are not allowed to accept a refusal of treatment from an arrestee and EMS services must be called in every case.

9. Is there an early intervention system enforced to correct officers who use excessive force? Additionally, how many complaints does an officer have to receive before they are reprimanded? Before they are terminated? More than three complaints are unacceptable.

The Anne Arundel County Police Department investigates every complaint against an officer and every use of force is reviewed by every level of the chain of command. We also have a tool that tracks these investigations and “flags an officer” if either four complaints are filed against him/her within a 12 month period, or an officer has six or more uses of force within a 12 month period. The Personnel Early Warning System (P.E.W.S.) is software that interfaces with our reporting system to “sound an alarm” when this occurs. We identify and assess employee performance and provide needed intervention when this “alarm” is sounded. Should that occur, all of the incidents are thoroughly reviewed by supervisors and the Office of Professional Standards. Each incident is scrutinized to ensure that any occurrence is within policy and meets our standards. If it does not, corrective action is immediately taken to provide further education, policy review, testing, and training. In the event of a deadly force encounter there is an additional Deadly Force Review board in which a member of the County’s Equal Employment Opportunity Office serves as the non-agency civilian voice of the review. After a discussion with County Executive Pittman, we will soon be changing the title of these review boards to Serious Incident Review Board and adding more civilian participation.

10. Is the AACPD recruiting officers from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds that more closely reflect the diversity of our community?

ABSOLUTELY. Our full-time recruiters, both African American officers, attend job fairs across our country. These job fairs included many Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), all female universities, ESOL classes, military installations, religious institutions, and more. Additionally, we utilize other recruitment methods including numerous Anne Arundel County open houses, social media campaigns, billboard campaigns, radio campaigns, and smaller community events where recruiters interact directly with our communities. Along with our two full time recruiters, we have approximately 30 decentralized male and female officer recruiters who are African American, Asian American, Hispanic, LGBTQ, and Caucasian. Our goal is, and has been, to have our department be an accurate reflection of the communities we serve.

Since 2014, we have doubled our African American officer membership from 7 % range to the 14 % range. We have also appointed an officer as our Latino Community liaison to help recruit more officers of Hispanic descent. We realize we have more work to do and continue our efforts.



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11. Is the AACPD maintaining high recruitment standards that help ensure officers have the personal capabilities to respond to the technical and interpersonal challenges of complex law enforcement in a diverse community such as ours?

Our recruitment standards have historically been and remain high. Applicants must meet minimum qualifications then must go through the application process which involves passing a written examination, a physical agility test, an oral board examination, a polygraph, and a background investigation that includes interviews of previous co-workers, neighbors and acquaintances. Applicants must also pass a psychological examination and a physical examination by the county physician. Applicants that successfully pass these rigorous requirements are given a conditional offer of employment. The recruit officer must then successfully complete and graduate from the seven month police training academy.

Our officers receive over one thousand hours of training, both in the classroom and practical exercises. The number of training hours our officers receive is approximately 250 hours above the Maryland Police Training Commission requirements. As part of the academy training, recruit officers are taken to the US Holocaust Museum and the National Museum of African American History and Culture to learn about how police have been used as a tool of oppression in the past to better help us avoid this in the present and future. Upon completing all these requirements, recruits are required to ride with a Field Training Officer for at least 480 hours. A Field Training Officer (FTO) is a veteran officer who has specific training on how to teach and train recent academy graduates. When graduates pass their FTO period, they are eligible to be a fully certified police officer in the State of Maryland.

In addition to the entry level training every officer goes through annual in-service training. The State of Maryland requires 18 hours annually, AACoPD averages over 20 hours a year for every sworn member of the department.

12. Are there adequate channels of communication with groups in the community that have concerns about policing practices, perhaps based on complaints of residents?

Each district has a Police Community Relations Council (PCRC) that meets once a month with the District Commanders to discuss issues, concerns, ideas, events, etc. The Chief of Police has a Citizen Advisory Council and a Business Advisory Council that meet monthly to discuss concerns with the Chief of Police. Each district has PACT (Police and Community Together) designated officers whose sole responsibility is to attend community meetings, and work on identified problems with community leaders. We have an entire Community Relations Section consisting of over 60 sworn and civilian employees who work with our Youth Activities Program (YAP) which is a community outreach program for youth in Severn and Hanover that was implemented in 2017. YAP is funded by the Local Development Council and was designed to bridge the gap between youth and the Anne Arundel County Police Department. This includes mentoring, recreational ball games/teams, camps, educational field trips and educational classes. During the first half of 2019, the YAP organized the following events:



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January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenway Bowling 4th graders from Hebron Harman’s Elementary School. (31st)
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navy Basketball game: taking members of the YAP Enforcers basketball boys and girls teams. (6th) Wheels Skating Center: 4th graders from Van Bokkelen Elementary School. (18th)
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning: 4-week karate camp Wheels Skating: 4th graders from Severn Elementary School. (5th)
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ninja Be (Columbia, Maryland): 6th grade students from Meade Middle School. On this field trip, students will be participating in obstacle activities. (8th) Golf with a COP (18th) Annapolis Cruise and Naval Academy Tour: Combining 4th grade students from Hebron Harman’s, Severn and Van Bokkolen Elementary schools. (22nd)
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pic-N-Paint (5/4) Bowie Bay Sox Baseball game: 4th grade students from Severn and Van Bokkelen Elementary Schools. (5/10) Bowie Bay Sox Baseball game: 4th grade students from Hebron Harman’s Elementary School. (5/17) Soap Box Derby (5/18) Character Counts Graduation: 4th grade students from Van Bokkelen Elementary School. (5/23) Character Counts Graduation: 4th grade students from Severn Elementary School. (5/28) Still waiting to confirm a graduation date for Hebron-Harman’s Elementary School for Character Counts.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRAB Sailing: 4th grade students from Severn and Van Bokkelen Elementary Schools. (6/20) Youth Police Academy (tentative dates) (6/24-28)
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basketball Camp at Annapolis Area Christian School: this camp is for YAP Enforcers girls basketball team. (7/1-3) Chesapeake Water Park field trip: a total of 45 students from Hebron-Harman’s, Severn and Van Bokkelen Elementary schools. (7/8) Baseball Camp: boys and girls ages 9 to 13. (7/15-17) Dance: boys and girls ages 9 to 13. Dance recital (7/18-8/3)

The Crime Prevention Unit has partnered with various businesses, community groups and civic organizations, and has conducted Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (C.R.A.S.E.) presentations, educating these entities on Active Shooter Responses. Crime Prevention Unit has also provided numerous educational and security programs to the community, to include the Citizens Police Academy



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(CPA), Coffee with a Cop, Lunch Buddies Program, Commercial/Residential Security Surveys, Senior Center visits, Youth Basketball games with YAP, as well as participating in community events where Crime Prevention has used static displays to disseminate educational material to citizens. The Community Relations Section, Crime Prevention Unit has continued to provide educational programs to all identified at-risk population members, such as the elderly. This is accomplished by having the Crime Prevention, Senior Liaison visit the County's senior centers and distribute crime prevention information.

Another part of the Community Relations Section is the Bike Patrol Unit. The Bike Patrol Unit is a highly visible and approachable community oriented aspect of the Community Relations Section. The Bike Patrol Unit participates in Coffee with a Cop, Lunch Buddies Programs, Bike Safety courses for the community, community bike rides on the B&A Trail, and public cycling rides, such as the Wounded Warrior Ride, and Life Line 100, and Century cycling event.

If you follow our social media you will see how we engage the community and will be made aware of events we hold throughout the year.

Our Crisis Intervention Team also falls under our Community Relations Section. The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is a collaboration between police and mental health professionals to help redirect individuals with social, emotional and mental health issues from the judicial system to the health care system and human services programs. The target population is people who are repeat 911 callers and persons with behavioral health issues who would benefit from mental health intervention or linkage to additional community resources, beyond the current capability of the Mobile Crisis Team (MCT). CIT members assist persons and families in crisis in the community and attempt to restore the person to a pre-crisis level. CIT provides direct follow up until the crisis is diverted or resolved.

Outcomes of CIT interventions include:

1. Improving officer and client safety.
2. Redirecting client with mental illness from the judicial system to the health care system.
3. Improving outcomes of police interactions with people with mental illness.

The following are typical situations for which CIT provides assistance:

1. Repeat callers to 911 who are identified with mental health issues.
2. Clients who are identified as high utilizers of the public mental health system.
3. Persons with known mental illness disconnected from services and causing concern in the community.
4. Suicidal attempts and completions.
5. Provide follow up for emergency petitions done by patrol officers.
6. Runaways.
7. Clients who are mentally ill and at high risk of becoming involved in the judicial system.
8. Provide resources and support to families and victims of traumatic events.
9. Provide death notification for traumatic events such as murders, suicides and major accidents.



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The police department also has a full time Business Liaison that is in contact with county businesses. We release a newsletter called the Guardian Shield monthly to business owners and parishioners. Our business liaison is available to those business owners and parishioners via telephone, email and personal visit. The COVID-19 Pandemic has really hurt us in terms of being able to physically engage with our community, but thankfully technology has allowed us to continue to be in virtual contact.

The Anne Arundel County Police Department also has a Hispanic Liaison Officer and an LGBTQ liaison Officer who assist in bridging the gaps with our Hispanic and our LGBTQ community members.

A citizen can file a complaint against an officer via many different avenues. Complaints can be filed online at <https://www.aacounty.org/departments/police-department/forms-publications/complaint-officer-form>; by phone or mail; or by coming to any police station and asking to speak with an on-duty supervisor.

13. Does the Police Department have any Diversion Programs?

Yes.

Teen Court

Teen Court is a diversion program by teens for teens—with volunteer teenagers serving in all courtroom roles except the Judge. After careful consideration of the facts, the jury deliberates and decides upon a disposition, including at least a minimum number of community service hours and teen court jury duties, based on Teen Court guidelines.

101 respondents participated in the Teen Court program during calendar year 2018.
90% of respondents who complete the Teen Court program DO NOT re-offend within a year of completion.

Community Conferencing

Community Conferencing is a conflict transformation and community justice program designed for non-violent offenders between the ages of 10 and 17 years. It provides a means for the involved parties to safely and collectively resolve conflicts to a degree that more effectively prevents future conflict/crimes. The victim, offender, parents, interested community stakeholders and a trained facilitator meet face to face to determine the root cause of the offense/destructive behavior and facilitate constructive ways to build connections that enhance long-term resolutions.

It should be noted that Community Conferencing is a means of both prevention and diversion. Juveniles and families can participate in a conference prior to the situation rising to the level of charging if all parties agree to participate. Because cases referred to Community Conferencing are referred to outside facilitators through the Partnership for Children, Youth and Families, recidivism data is not available for referrals to this program at this time.



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Juvenile Offender In NEED of Supervision (JOINS)

The JOINS program was implemented in May 2017 in response to an increased need for diversionary programs. Juveniles and their guardians meet with a panel of 3 departmental employees (most likely the Program Director, Community Conferencing Coordinator, and Teen Court Coordinator) for an initial intake. At this time, background information about the juvenile's personal-, school-, and home-life is discussed and the facts of the case are reviewed. The juvenile must acknowledge his/her role in the offense. The panel deliberates and hands down sanctions and services based on Teen Court guidelines and the respondent's needs.

The JOINS program has partnered with CIT and Mobile Crisis to ensure respondents and their families receive the mental health and/or addiction services that are necessary to prevent future delinquent behavior.

Handle With Care:

If officers come in contact with a child who has witnessed or been involved with a traumatic incident the officer will notify the school. No details of the trauma or event are released, simply a heads up to the school that the child may need some additional care and support. "If a law enforcement officer encounters a child during a call, that child's name and three words, HANDLE WITH CARE, are forwarded to the school/child care agency before the school bell rings the next day. The school implements individual, class and whole school trauma-sensitive curricula so that traumatized children are "Handled With Care". If a child needs more intervention, on-site trauma-focused mental healthcare is available at the school."

More information can be found here: <https://handlewithcaremd.org/index.php>

14. Where do we currently stand on support for and implementation of recommendations laid out in the 21st Century Policing Task Force final report?

We are extremely familiar with the 21st Century Policing report and are proud to report that we have approximately 95% of the recommendations for law enforcement agencies implemented.

15. Where do we currently stand on the support for and implementation of the Campaign Zero's 8 Can't Wait initiatives?

We are confident that as explained in the answers to questions 1 through 14, we have met the goals set forth in the 8 Can't Wait campaign. We are committed to fair and impartial service to all residents of and visitors to Anne Arundel County. We consider human life sacrosanct and the loss of ANY life is a tragedy. We will continue to operate by these values as we serve and protect ALL into the future.