

TITLE: Marine Patrol

SOP NUMBER: 13-049

EFFECTIVE DATE: 04-01-13

REPLACES/RESCINDS: General Order 530.3

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I. PURPOSE

This standard operating procedure establishes guidelines and procedures for use of the Fairfax County police boats and ensures effective utilization of the Marine Patrol Unit. The operational success of the Marine Patrol Unit is dependent on effective coordination between unit members and all the police and public safety entities who seek maritime support from the Marine Patrol Unit.

II. POLICY

The Fairfax County Police Marine Patrol Unit, a component of the Special Operations Division (SOD) within the Operations Support Bureau, will be the primary entity responsible for waterborne enforcement of State and County laws and public safety services. These public services include assisting any entity of the police or fire and rescue departments in maritime operations; investigating boating accidents; conducting searches for lost persons; assisting boaters in distress; providing boater safety education to the general public; conducting vessel safety inspections; and assisting the National Capital Region (NCR) public safety maritime community with mutual aid requests and ensuring the safety and security of the navigable waterways in Fairfax County.

All officers are encouraged to utilize this support whenever the situation warrants. Inquiries regarding possible uses of the Marine Patrol Unit and its vessels should be directed to the SOD commander.

III. DEFINITIONS

Marine Patrol Supervisor: The second lieutenant assigned as the first line supervisor of the Marine Patrol Unit.

Vessel Captain Operator: Operator of the marine patrol vessel who has obtained a Level 1 rating as prescribed by the Boat Operators' Qualification Manual and a holder of United States Coast Guard (USCG) license or equivalent, as described in the Unit's internal SOP.

Boat Crew Member: Any member assigned to the Marine Patrol Unit. All boat crew

members are directly accountable to the Special Response Unit Supervisor.

Shore Landing Zone: Any area designated as a possible shore landing for the boat.

Personal Flotation Device (PFD): A buoyancy safety device required to be worn by all onboard a waterborne vessel.

Very High Frequency (VHF) Radio: A radio that is required to be installed, monitored and used by public safety maritime units.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Officers Requesting Marine Patrol Unit Support

1. Requests for a marine vessel must be made through a supervisor who will relay the request to the duty officer.
2. Establish communications with the Department of Public Safety Communications Center and provide:
 - a. Location of incident, including landmarks, roadway in relation to the waterway, or other reference points. Keep in mind that street numbers are difficult to find from the waterway.
 - b. Type of incident.
 - c. Specific nature of service requested and any specific equipment required.
3. If a shore landing is indicated:
 - a. Establish a safe shore landing zone, preferably a dock, and relay all information to the boat crew. The boat captain will determine the feasibility of coming ashore, or locating the nearest dock. Weather, visibility, shore accessibility, and tidal conditions are all factors which should be taken into account.
 - b. Request the necessary officers for control of traffic and crowds as needed.
 - c. Maintain direct communications with water vessel (Marine Patrol 1) during docking phase and assist the crew by observing its approach and relaying any necessary communications.

4. No ground personnel, police or others, shall approach the boat unless specifically directed by the boat captain or crew member. When directed to approach the boat, personnel shall do so only from the side indicated by the crew member. Personnel approaching the boat should continue to observe the boat operator for any additional instructions that the boat operator may convey.
5. Unless personnel are otherwise directed, the boat crew members shall be responsible for assisting in embarking and disembarking.

B. Department of Public Safety Communications Center (DPSC)

1. Maintain up-to-date information on the status of the boat.
2. Relay requests and appropriate information to the boat crew.
3. Limit transmissions on assigned frequency during critical phases of boat operations, except for the following:
 - a. Relay of shore landing zone information
 - b. Mission details

C. Marine Patrol Crew

The boat crew will consist of one boat captain and at least [REDACTED] crew member. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) shall be worn at all times.

1. Boat Captain

The boat captain is the officer assigned to operate the boat. Only boat captains who are certified by the Fairfax County Police Department can be authorized to operate the police boat. The boat captain has sole responsibility for the safe operation of the boat at all times (as per U.S. Coast Guard Regulations), including the ability to terminate a mission at any point. Should a boat captain abort an assigned mission, the captain will notify the DPSC dispatcher of the reason(s) for the mission termination. When a mission is aborted, the DPSC shall notify the person or agency requesting the boat of the circumstances.

2. Boat Crew Member

The boat crew member functions as an observer, emergency medical technician (EMT), safety officer, and mechanical troubleshooter. In addition

to regular duties, the boat crew officer shall direct personnel in and around the boat when it is ashore. During maritime medevac operations, the boat crew member shall direct patient loading/unloading and designate who shall assist.

V. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

A. The following persons can deploy the Marine Patrol Unit and its equipment within the County of Fairfax:

1. Chief of Police
2. Deputy Chiefs of Police
3. Operations Support Bureau commander
4. Special Operations Division commander
5. Marine Patrol supervisor
6. Duty officer, in consultation with one of the above authorities.

All requests for administrative use of the Marine Patrol Unit and/or equipment shall be approved by the OSB commander.

B. Priorities

Missions shall be conducted in accordance with the following priorities:

- Priority I: Medical emergencies in Fairfax County
- Priority II: Police emergencies in Fairfax County
- Priority III: Vessel emergencies on jurisdictional waterways, or adjoining waterways
- Priority IV: Police emergencies outside Fairfax County
- Priority V: Routine police missions in Fairfax County
- Priority VI: Non-emergency missions outside Fairfax County

With limited exceptions, a mission of higher priority shall preempt any other mission.

C. Response

1. All requests for the Marine Patrol Unit must be authorized by a supervisor.

The request should be made through the DPSC.

2. All prisoner transports shall be in accordance with departmental General Orders.
3. If a shore landing is requested, the shore landing site must have a minimum of 24" water depth.
4. If a shore landing is requested, one police officer on the scene shall be responsible for maintaining and coordinating communications with the boat crew throughout the mission.
5. When a request for Marine Patrol Unit support is made and the request involves a park, reservoir, marina, lake, or pond, the name and exact location of the event should be communicated to the members of the Marine Patrol Unit. This will assist crew members in determining the vessels, gear, and support vessels that may be required.
6. Water depth, water conditions and water hazards are some of the factors which can hamper maritime operations. The assistance of Park Authority personnel should be sought to determine some of the factors, whenever possible.

D. Field Contacts and Arrests

1. Documentation of citizen field contacts shall be in accordance with General Order 540.2.
2. Arrests shall be conducted in accordance with General Order 601 and 601.1. Documentation of arrests shall be in accordance with existing General Orders and standard operating procedures.

VI. EQUIPMENT

- A. The police boat is equipped with a marine VHF radio. This radio allows the police boat to communicate with the United States Coast Guard, other law enforcement agencies, and civilian boats and marinas.
- B. The police boat is also equipped with a Mobile CAD and police radio that will be operational while the vessel is in service. The Mobile CAD "CF-19" will not be left on the vessel at the end of the tour of duty.
- C. The Marine Patrol Unit personnel are equipped with an Emergency Position

Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB). The EPIRB will be worn by MPU personnel on their person when the vessel is underway during inclement weather.

1. The EPIRB is registered with the U.S. Coast Guard. Should the device be activated, the U.S. Coast Guard will call DPSC requesting confirmation of the distress signal.
 2. Upon receiving a call from the U.S. Coast Guard, DPSC personnel shall immediately attempt to contact the Marine Patrol Unit and determine its status and need for emergency services.
 3. Should immediate assistance be indicated by the Marine Patrol Unit, DPSC will immediately dispatch the Helicopter and Fire Department River Rescue personnel to assist. Note that the vessel's location can be determined via CAD AVL and the EPIRB's coordinates.
- D. EMS gear and required safety gear, as mandated by the U.S. Coast Guard, shall be carried on the vessel when underway.
- E. 
- F. Repairs to the boat and its specialized equipment shall only be performed by a boat captain or qualified crew member who has been certified by the Department or an authorized repair facility.

VII. ASSISTANCE TO OUTSIDE JURISDICTIONS

The Fairfax County Marine Patrol Unit will provide assistance to other jurisdictions in accordance to the priorities established by this directive and mutual aid agreements.

- A. All operational requests for marine assistance from other jurisdictions shall be made through the DPSC.
- B. DPSC will then notify duty officer, who will coordinate the request with the on-call SOD commander.

VIII. ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCE

VLEPSC

OPR.

01.08

TRN.

02.01

This standard operating procedure becomes effective April 1, 2013, and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.

Issued by:

Chief of Police