

Chesterfield County (VA) Police Department

2023 Officer Traffic Safety Summary

Chesterfield County consists of 437 square miles, including 8,000 miles of roadways, and is home to 364,000 residents. The Chesterfield County Police Department (CCPD) chief, Col. Jeffrey S. Katz who was sworn in as Jan. 2, 2018, currently oversees 558 sworn officers, 138 non-sworn full-time employees and 57 part-time employees. The department achieved Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) accreditation in 1998 and Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) accreditation in 2017.

CCPD operates a self-contained, 71-acre driving range where its members practice basic driving, skills driving, motorcycle training, skid pan driving, emergency vehicle operation (EVOC), and precision immobilization technique (PIT) training. It consists of a classroom, a 1.4-mile emergency vehicle operators' course with four fully functioning traffic signals, an observation tower with a 360-degree view and state of the art traffic signal controls, the ability to restrict access during driving evolutions, a separate skid pan and skills pan area, a garage for minor vehicle **repairs, and sheltered pavilions**. The EVOC course is capable of training vehicle operations at speeds that exceed 100 mph. The facility operates approximately 300 days a year training current and recruit police officers. The facility is also an asset to the region: several of our area law enforcement partners utilize the facility for their agency EVOC training. Beyond the extensive emergency driver training provided to police recruits, all officers receive biennial EVOC or pursuit training.

CCPD regulates vehicles pursuits by policy. Only vehicles equipped and utilizing full emergency equipment are permitted to participate in the pursuit of fleeing suspects. Unmarked police vehicles and/or non-pursuit rated vehicles must yield to marked police vehicles equipped with a roof mounted light bar during a pursuit. CCPD specifically prohibits pursuits when the identity of the suspect is known, they are not suspected of a serious or violent offence and are not an ongoing threat to public safety, the officer is transporting a prisoner or a rider that is not a department employee, or the officer's vehicle cannot be operated safely at pursuit speed. Additionally, a field supervisor must acknowledge the pursuit and establish supervisory control over the radio. A thorough examination of each pursuit is conducted by all participating officers, the controlling supervisor, and the relevant chain of command through the rank of major. Pursuit reviews are memorialized via BlueTeam, and each participant and supervisor must review all BWC footage and the radio WAV file. The supervisors are responsible for determining if the pursuit was within policy restrictions and whether all actions of participating officers were within policy and training. Policy violations and exemplary performance are documented in BlueTeam, and appropriate corrective actions or positive recognition are administered by the chain of command. The collective results of these pursuit reviews are analyzed annually. The annual examination is published with recommendations for changes in tactics, equipment, training, or policies.

CCPD supervisors participate in regional pursuit training for supervisors every few years. The purpose of this training, which involves the regional departments that share radio interoperability, is to share experiences and information regarding department policies and procedures. Vehicle pursuits often cross over jurisdictional boundaries and it is essential that the supervisors controlling them are aware of different agency policies so they can make sound decisions for the safety of their officers.

CCPD officers are trained in safe termination of vehicle pursuits. Each officer initiating or participating in the pursuit of a fleeing suspect is authorized to terminate the pursuit if they determine conditions are unsafe or the hazard of the pursuit exceeds the need to apprehend the suspect. All officers are trained in the use of StopSticks tire deflation devices and StopSticks are issued to most patrol officers. All officers are trained in rolling roadblocks and receive refresher training during biennial driver training.

CCPD policy regulates emergency driving for certain circumstances. During a non-life-threatening emergency response, the following restrictions apply: 1. In areas with posted speed limits greater than 25 miles per hour, a maximum speed of 20 mph over the posted speed limit shall be permitted, and 2. In areas with posted speed limits of 25 mph or below, a maximum speed of 10 mph over the posted speed limit shall be permitted.

The department maintains an early warning system and strategy to help identify possible problem areas for members, including speeding, before they become actual problems. Supervisors monitor officer speeds in several ways. Supervisors are required to review BWC footage from all vehicle pursuits and use-of-force incidents, as well as a certain number of random recordings. Driving-related issues, such as speeding, are investigated when discovered internally or reported externally. AVL information is pulled and analyzed when driving-related complaints are investigated. Corrective action is taken as required. No preventable accidents have occurred in the last three years due to speed. However, nine officers have been held accountable for violations of speeding, two of which were from audits.

CCPD has a formalized process to internally review every incident in which an officer or other employee is involved in a crash while operating a department vehicle. The Crash Review Board (CRB) reviews all appropriate reports and may interview the involved parties to determine whether the crash was preventable or non-preventable on the part of the employee. The CRB consists of supervisors assigned to the Office of Professional Standards, training, and operations. Preventable crashes can result in disciplinary actions, remedial or specialized training, or policy change recommendations. The data derived from the CRB is also looked at in aggregate at the end of each year. Any detected trends will result in additional or improved training or acquisition of improved equipment.

CCPD recognizes safe driving by awarding a Safe Driving Ribbon to officers who go three years without a preventable vehicle crash. Officers receive a year pin for an additional three years without a preventable crash starting at year six.

CCPD has delivered Below 100 training to all sworn officers and 25 department instructors are qualified to teach the curriculum. The core tenets (Wear your belt; Wear your vest; Watch your speed; WIN – What’s Important Now; and Remember Complacency Kills!) are displayed prominently throughout CCPD’s facilities on Below 100 posters.

Department policy and 2.2.06, the state code for Virginia (46.2-1094), mandates that all department members shall always wear their safety belts while in county vehicles. Per policy all occupants of front seats who are 16 years or older are required to use safety lap belts and shoulder harnesses. Children under 16 years of age are required by the seat belt law to be secured with a seat belt or within a car seat no matter where in the vehicle they are sitting. Employees will face progressive discipline if they are found to have violated these mandates and employees throughout our organization understand and accept it.

National Traffic Incident Management Responder Training (TIMs) establishes a common set of practices and standards across all first responder disciplines in order to improve safety, quickly clear highways, and have consistent, interoperable communications. All CCPD officers have completed the in-person, four-hour course. CCPD policy controls the locations and ways in which checkpoints are performed. On-scene supervisory oversight is required for each checkpoint. The on-scene supervisor is not permitted to participate in the checkpoint and is responsible for monitoring conditions related to safety. The supervisor is also responsible for ensuring the checkpoint is operated within the limitations of policy and each officer is in uniform and wearing a high-visibility vest. Checkpoints are only permitted at pre-approved locations. Locations are approved by the Uniform Operations Bureau Commander and only

after a site survey that examines that the locations must have adequate visibility to provide safety to approaching motorists and to officers conducting the checkpoint. The locations need adequate space to park police vehicles in a safe manner and locations need adequate space to allow vehicles to move out of the traffic stream for additional examination without hazard.

In 2021, CCPD started an emergency lighting program that reduces the distraction of a chaotic flash, called the “scene calming effect,” into our emergency equipment lighting. When the emergency equipment is on and the vehicle is in park, the flash pattern slows down; this reduces the distraction that draws driver attention away from the road. The department uses 3M reflective tape for conspicuity markings. This decal/tape reflects at wide angles and is highly durable. We outline the trunk and doors in white reflective tape, so they remain visible to traffic if open.

This summary is only a brief overview of many of the agency’s programs. In the actual submission you will see that agency has other programs and incentives to benefit its members. Please review their entire submission and its associated documents to gain a complete understanding of their program.