



# CHESTERFIELD COUNTY POLICE TRAFFIC SAFETY





# Traffic Safety

Chesterfield County, Virginia, covers over 437 square miles, including 8,000 road miles, and is home to over 364,000 residents, making it the fifth-largest jurisdiction by population in the Commonwealth and the largest in the Richmond metropolitan area. The Chesterfield County Police Department (CCPD) was established in 1914 and has an authorized sworn strength of 558 and a professional staff of 138 full-time and 57 part-time employees. CCPD's core leadership and department culture is grounded in what we identified as the "4 Ps" for why we exist: Preservation of Life, Protection of the Vulnerable, Formation of Problem-Solving Partnerships, and Personnel: Recruit, Develop, and Retain Top-Tier Talent. In 2022, the department responded to 224,936 calls for service and assists and 329,698 police-initiated activities. The Chief of Police is Col. Jeffrey S. Katz, who was sworn in as chief on Jan. 2, 2018.

Interstates 95, 295, and 895, along with U.S. Highway 1 and state highways 288 and 150, traverse Chesterfield County. We border Richmond, Virginia's capital city, to our north and the City of Petersburg to our south. This area is a destination for history enthusiasts and sports competitions. Chesterfield County is also the home of the largest of Virginia's state parks, Pocahontas State Park, which is frequented for its camping, hiking, mountain biking, and outdoor concerts.

## Driving Range Facility

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 can accommodate vehicle operations training at speeds that exceed 100 mph. The driving range is operational approximately 300 days a year for officer and recruit training. The facility is also an asset to



the region, as several of our area law enforcement partners utilize the facility for their agency EVOC training. In 2022, CCPD trained personnel in the precision immobilization technique (PIT), a tool that officers can use to safely end some vehicle pursuits. Beyond the extensive emergency driver training provided to police recruits, all officers receive biennial EVOC or pursuit training. [Click here to view our Enon Driving Course.](#)

## Regional Pursuit Training for Supervisors

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.

## Vehicle Pursuit Policy and Review Process

CCPD regulates vehicle 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 offense, 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.

## Pursuit Termination Tactics

Police pursuits are inherently dangerous and can be necessary to hold persons to account for victimizing others. 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. Monitoring supervision may also terminate the pursuit at any time.

The Percision Immobilization Technique (PIT) is the intentional act of using a police vehicle in a prescribed manner to physically force a vehicle from a course of travel, thereby causing the fleeing suspect and vehicle to stop. PIT training began in January 2022 and will be phased in over three years to all officers. A total of 2,560 hours training hours have occurred, and 88 officers were certified in 2022. Note: not all officers successfully complete the training and earn certification. The department has conducted six PIT

maneuvers with four successfully ending in pursuit terminations.

PIT is not always practical due to roadway designs or other environmental factors. Therefore, the department also trains for and uses rolling roadblocks and StopSticks to terminate pursuits for the safety of all. 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. In 2022, department members conducted six successful rolling roadblocks and seven successful deployments of StopSticks. These techniques contributed to overall officer safety and to the safety of our community.

## Sears Project

CCPD has delivered the Sears Project presentation since 2008 to basic recruits and sworn officers. The class is taught by the widow of a law enforcement officer who was killed in a motor vehicle crash that was precipitated by a vehicle pursuit. The class reminds officers in a personal, emotional way of the dangers of "out driving" yourself and not heeding the safety of the public during emergency conditions. The class has been presented nationally and it is among the strongest messages about the importance of safe driving that officers will ever encounter.

[Click here to view VACP President's Award.](#)

## Policy Guidance on Emergency Response Speeds

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.
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.

## Supervisor Monitoring of Speeds and Officer Accountability

The department maintains an early warning system and strategy to help identify possible problem areas for members, including speeding, before they become actual problems, and to provide positive measures to enhance professionalism, strengthen the organization, and reduce a broad array of negativity. 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. Over the last three years, nine officers have been held accountable for violations of speeding.

## Safe Driving Award

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

## Below 100 Training

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.



## Mandatory Wearing of Safety Belts

Department policy mandates that all department members shall always wear their safety belts while in county vehicles. Per policy 2.2.06, the state code for Virginia (46.2-1094) mandates that 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

National Traffic Incident Management Responder Training (TIM) 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.

## Traffic Stops

The Training Division consistently provides sworn officers with practical scenarios, including traffic stop scenarios, during in-service to enhance officer safety. The training staff understands traffic stops are among an officer's most dangerous tasks and believes continued training is necessary to keep officers safe. During these practical scenarios, the officer participating in the scenario is outfitted with a protective helmet, inert pepper spray, inert taser cartridges, a blue plastic baton, and a simulation handgun/simulation rounds for the most realistic scenario possible. Once the scenario has ended, the officer has a detailed debrief with one of the training staff members who was watching the scenario. This is where the chosen tactics and officer safety considerations will be addressed.

This training is further amplified for basic police recruits, who receive the same practical scenario training as the sworn officers with a more in-depth curriculum. Recruits receive two days of basic traffic stop training, which includes classroom instruction and hands-on training. Recruits also receive two days of high-risk traffic stop training, which builds on and



incorporates what they learned in basic traffic stops, defensive tactics, and previous officer safety classes. Chesterfield County Police recruits are then exposed to practical scenarios with simulation gear until they can appropriately demonstrate they can properly complete the scenario while using sound officer safety tactics. The training division is dedicated to further enhancing officer safety within the department by offering sworn members a variety of practical exercises at all stages of their careers.

## Checkpoint Safety

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 the following criteria:

1. Locations must be distributed throughout the county to ensure a fair sampling of motorists using the highways.
2. Locations must have adequate visibility to provide safety to approaching motorists and to officers conducting the checkpoint.
3. Locations need adequate space to park police vehicles in a safe manner.
4. Locations need adequate space to allow vehicles to move out of the traffic stream for additional examination without hazard.
5. Locations are designated as approved for daylight or night operations or approved for both.
6. Locations should be free of any characteristics that could create a hazard to motorists or police officers.
7. Locations on interstate highways (except access ramps) or other highways where speed or traffic conditions would pose a safety threat to motorists or officers will not be approved.



In 2022, we were awarded a grant from the Department of Homeland Security and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to assist in the procurement of several large digital message board trailers. We expect delivery in 2023. These trailers will be used for large public events and traffic check points to help provide timely information and directions to the public and motorist. This will improve the scene safety for officers by improving motorist awareness.

CCPD currently incorporates our Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to monitor officer safety and safe traffic patterns at checkpoints. In addition to close supervision and high-visibility tactics, we have invested in the 200-900 Nomad 360 Scene Lighting to improve officer safety and utilize FLARE ALERT LED Lighting instead of traditional flares.

## High-Visibility Vests

Wearing a reflective traffic vest is mandatory while performing manual traffic direction and control and all officers, police service aids, and motorist assistants are issued such vests. They are also issued reflective raincoats to wear in the event of inclement weather. Policy also requires supervisors to ensure all members participating in traffic checkpoints are in uniform and wearing a traffic safety vest.



## Safety Lighting and Distraction Deterrence

Chesterfield County has started installing amber lights that always function when in park into the rear of light bars. This change is in response to NTSB studies that found amber is the most visible light in the spectrum. In 2021, we 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.

We currently use 3M reflective tape for conspicuity markings. This decal/tape reflects at wide angles and is highly durable. We outline the trunk and doors in the white reflective tape so they remain visible to traffic if open.

Our unmarked pursuit-rated vehicles receive additional lighting on all sides that makes them highly visible from any direction. In addition to the normal grill lights and rear flashing strobe effects, our vehicles receive flashing marker lights, LED undercarriage lighting, and grill and side LED lighting.

[Click here to view a video of our unmarked SUV light pattern.](#)

[Click here to view a video of our Tahoe SUV light pattern.](#)

## Drug Recognition Experts

Impaired driving continues to jeopardize the safety of officers and members of our community. In addition to impaired driving grants, the department currently has five Drug Recognition Experts (DREs), second most in the Commonwealth behind Virginia State Police, with four additional officers slated to attend training in 2023. As of this writing, CCPD officers have performed 47 evaluations. DREs have visited all roll calls and given a presentation on their capabilities and how they are best able to assist other officers. DREs are on call 24/7 to assist officers with DUI situations, which provides an additional level of traffic safety to our officers and our community.

## Body-Worn Cameras (BWC)

CCPD issues AXON Body 3 body-worn cameras to all uniformed officers and plain-clothes officers below the rank of captain assigned to the Uniform Operations Bureau. The value of these tools goes beyond the collection of evidence. CCPD utilizes its BWC program to identify needs for improvement in the areas of behavior, use of force, tactics, driving, and training. The BWC program protects officers from false accusations of misconduct. The required use of BWCs is regulated by policy and is monitored through required reviews in certain circumstances, such as vehicle pursuits and use-of-force incidents, as well as monthly random audits. Officers are required by policy to activate their BWCs in the following circumstances:

- All emergency driving.
- All enforcement-related contacts, such as traffic stops and pedestrian stops.
- Calls for service with any potential for disturbance, conflict or police enforcement action, or where a suspect is on scene.
- Arrests and transportation of prisoners until transfer of custody.
- Calls or encounters with mental health consumers.
- Any encounter that becomes adversarial after initial contact or any situation where the member believes it would be appropriate to document the encounter.

## GPS/AVL (Automatic Vehicle Location)

The Automatic Vehicle Locator system transmits positional and speed data of the police vehicles to the Emergency Communications Center. The system’s primary purpose is to enhance officer safety and improve coordination of police resources. AVL information is maintained and available for audit upon request. CCPD issues each officer a GPS-equipped PMDC. When logged on, each officer can be located by the ECC and other officers/supervisors who are logged in to mobile CADS. This is a great asset for officer safety, allowing dispatch to locate officers in an emergency. Officers and supervisors can also easily establish and adjust perimeters during response to crimes.

## Aviation Unit

CCPD participates in the Richmond Metro Aviation Unit with the City of Richmond Police Department and the Henrico Division of Police. The aviation unit enhances officer safety and operational capability by serving as an aerial surveillance platform during critical incidents, criminal investigations, and search-and-rescue/apprehension operations. The aircraft are equipped with FLIR, which enhances effectiveness during low-light and woodland operations. The unit is most often utilized by CCPD to search for suspects within a perimeter after a crime and to provide real-time intelligence during vehicle pursuits. [Click here to view a video of the FLIR helping officers safely close in on a suspect.](#)

## Motorcycle Officers

Our Motorcycle Section is composed of specially trained police officers on Harley Davidson motorcycles outfitted for law enforcement activities. In 2022, our agency pivoted to purchase the BMW police motorcycle and Harley Davidson Pan-America, which will be delivered in March of 2023. These motorcycles are hundreds of pounds lighter than the traditional Harley Davidsons we have used for years and are more maneuverable with ability to ride over rough terrain and, in the case of the Pan-America, off road. The riding positions of the BMW and Pan-America are slightly different in posture, which reduces fatigue and improves officer wellness and safety. Each officer is issued a new motorcycle every two years. The motorcycles are the most up to date with every safety option available. We also add additional lighting for higher visibility. Starting this year, officers will receive rifles that will be stored below their mobile data terminals. These officers and their motorcycles are indispensable for controlling high-volume traffic situations, as they can move when traffic is at a standstill.



Motorcycle officers conduct traffic-safety operations, speed enforcement, and provide escorts for visiting dignitaries and funeral processions. They provide support for numerous community programs and other special events.

Motorcycle officers are required to have a class M driver's license and have completed an 80-hour basic police motorcycle precision course. In addition to the basic course, all motor officers are required to complete monthly training and requalify each year to ensure their riding skills are up to the extreme task of policework on a motorcycle.

In each monthly training, officers review advanced techniques to improve their riding skills during various law enforcement functions. They also perform refresher exercises and self-assessments to demonstrate the importance of ongoing crash avoidance. Motor officers improve their riding proficiency through a series of progressively complex exercises where unique training aids and surface conditions will be introduced on our department emergency vehicle operations course. Officers review major safety issues and hidden dangers of operating escorts and the process of special event planning and debriefings.

## Crash Review Board (CRB)

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.



## Additional Safety Positions

CCPD has created multiple full-time professional staff and volunteer positions to assist police officers with traffic related duties. The members of these units enhance officer safety by freeing officers from low-risk or low-priority calls for service and providing direct assistance for traffic-safety-related duties.

### Police Service Aides

Police Service Aides (PSAs) are uniformed, professional employees who assist CCPD's sworn police officers with various duties. PSAs are trained to respond to non-active calls for service, parking lot crashes, and hazardous roadway situations. Additionally, these employees are trained in traffic direction and highway safety protocols. PSAs supplement officers by taking low priority calls for service and reports that do not require a sworn officer with arrest authority. This leaves officers more time to engage in proactive policing efforts and allows for greater availability for multiple sworn officers to respond to higher risk calls. PSAs are particularly helpful with traffic-crash- and highway-hazard-management incidents. They are equipped and trained to manage traffic control at such scenes, allowing the sworn officers to focus on the investigation rather than traffic hazards. CCPD currently has 21 PSAs and plans to expand the program. PSA vehicles are silver SUVs with a full LED amber light bars and high-visibility reflective tape. PSAs are issued and required to wear high-visibility vests when engaged in traffic safety functions.



### Auxiliary Police Officers

The Chesterfield County Police Department has an all-volunteer Auxiliary Officer Unit that is composed of fully accredited and sworn officers. Our auxiliary officers perform a wide array of tasks, ranging from traffic enforcement and traffic direction to prisoner transport in our PTV and crowd control at large events. The auxiliary officers have the authority, duties, and responsibilities to assist in the delivery of law enforcement services to the community.

### Motorist Assistance Team (MAT)

The Motorist Assistance Team is made up of trained volunteers who can perform an assortment of duties commonly performed by sworn law enforcement personnel including: responding to disabled vehicle calls; responding to hazardous road condition calls; working with road officers at crash scenes needing additional traffic control; relieving officers waiting for tow trucks; assisting officers with establishing and monitoring detours due to crime scenes, significant crashes, etc.; assisting with traffic control at events; providing directions and/or guidance to travelers; providing additional traffic control/visibility at intersections where traffic signals have failed; assisting motorists with changing tires on vehicles within the scope of their individual knowledge and ability; and conducting tasks and duties at the direction of a UOB supervisor. MAT volunteers provide valuable assistance to sworn officers by allowing them to focus on enforcement and investigative duties while others make the scene safe. New in 2023, we outfitted a Dodge Ram 1500 with an arrow board, and high visibility graphics to improve officer and MAT safety at crash scenes. The truck and arrow board provide a higher, more visible motorist notification of a crash ahead, which will slow motorists down and give them more warning to change lanes or prepare to stop.





## **Partnering with Other Agencies**

CCPD partners with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Chesterfield Department of Transportation (CDOT) to improve traffic safety. VDOT routinely assists CCPD in traffic incident management during weather incidents, major traffic crashes, and other road closure and control situations. VDOT brings additional safety measures, such as large mobile message boards, road closure or hazard signs, and personnel trained in traffic management, to large-scale traffic incidents or prolonged road closures. These additional resources free up police personnel and provide additional layers of protection for officers conducting investigations on roadways. CCPD works closely with VDOT and CDOT in addressing environmental and engineering improvements to existing roadways to enhance safety.

## **In Closing**

We value the efforts of all public and private entities striving to improve traffic safety. We will continue to augment current programs and acquire additional training, equipment, and technology that increases our safety efficacy. We have fortified our traffic safety programs through decisive leadership and learning from others. It is our hope that we can pay it forward by sharing our story.