

# DESTINATION ZERO AWARD SUBMISSION FORM

## AGENCY INFORMATION

Name of agency: **Herndon Police Department**

Award Category (If submitting for more than one category, a separate submission form must accompany each submission.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Officer Safety | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Officer Traffic Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Wellness          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Officer Wellness       |  |

Agency contact name: **Maggie A. DeBoard**

Contact Email: **maggie.deboard@herndon** Contact phone number: **571-262-1712**

Please include the following items in your submission.

- Department Release Form
- Executive summary that provides a brief overview of the agency approach including innovative practices, programs, and established partnerships
- Narrative that details the elements and initiatives of the program. Examples of items to include:
  - Description of the agency characteristics
  - Description of the program and its implementation (including marketing material)
  - Before-and-after comparison of change(s) due to the program
  - Qualities that make this program unique compared to other initiatives
  - Challenges that were overcome to implement the program
  - Impact of the program on staff within the agency
  - Quantitative evidence of success
  - Steps other agencies can take to replicate the program
- Appropriate supporting documentation or attachments

## AGENCY LEADERSHIP ENDORSEMENT

Signature of the agency representative on this form acknowledges that all information contained herein and in attached documents and/or submission is true and correct.

  
Signature of Agency Head

**2/27/23**  
Date

# 2023 NATIONAL OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS AWARD SUBMISSION



The Destination Zero program maintains a database of all submitted programs and corresponding materials in an effort to benefit law enforcement by providing a robust resource center of proven officer safety programs and wellness programs. The National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund and Museum require acknowledgment by the submitting agency that any materials submitted including, but not limited to relevant promotional materials, training guides, curricula, photos, policies and procedures that relate to the submitted officer safety and wellness program will be shared into the public domain website or other means of transmission.

## AGENCY RELEASE

Signature of the agency representative acknowledges and agrees to the release of all submitted materials into the public domain via website or other means of transmission.

Name of agency: **Herndon Police Department**

**Maggie A. DeBoard, Chief of Police**

(Printed Name and Title)

*M.A. DeBoard*  
(Signed Endorsement of Chief/Agency Lead)

*2/27/23*  
(Date)

# Herndon

HERNDON POLICE DEPARTMENT

**Maggie A. DeBoard**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**

T (703) 435-6841  
F (703) 437-4516



February 27, 2023

National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial and Museum  
Destination Zero Officer Safety and Wellness Committee  
444 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Committee Members:

Please accept the attached Comprehensive Safety Award nomination for the National Officer Safety and Wellness Award. This submission provides supporting, detailed documentation on the efforts our department and our staff is making to mitigate risk in the law enforcement profession. Our efforts include sound decision-making, managing health and wellness through innovative programs and leveraging resources, and instilling a culture of safety in the workplace to reduce accidents, injuries, and officer fatalities.

As a 37-year law enforcement professional, I have personally experienced the line of duty deaths of several colleagues and have lost even more to suicide. My background and experience have provided me with opportunities to educate others on the importance of officer wellness and promote a culture of safety within our department and our profession. This requires an expectation to engage in smart risk-taking strategies in the field, equipping our officers with the most effective equipment to do the job, and mental health and wellness resources for our officers.

As a law enforcement leader, I consider caring for the safety of my officers my number one responsibility. I have spent over half of my career focused on developing programs and strategies to keep officers safe, through innovative law enforcement safety programs that began during my early years with the Fairfax County Police Department. While there, I developed and initiated the first comprehensive law enforcement safety officer program in the country that provided dedicated safety officers on operational incidents. This program grew from a part-time to a full-time program under my leadership and touched all aspects of safety across the department. It became a national model for law enforcement safety management.

In 2012, I took that focus with me to the Herndon Police Department when I was appointed chief of police. During my tenure as the Herndon Chief, I completed my master's degree at the Naval Postgraduate School and wrote my thesis on safety entitled "*Applying Systems Thinking to Law Enforcement Safety: Recommendation for A Comprehensive Safety Management Framework*". I worked to change the antiquated culture that was present in the department, one that supported unnecessary risk-taking and exposed officers to increased vulnerability to injuries and fatalities.

With the assistance of talented staff, I instituted programs and leveraged resources to support the health and wellness of my officers and professional staff and have shared those best practices with other agencies throughout the region and the state. The Herndon Police Department has led the region in innovative wellness programs and is the first in the region to institute a mandatory physical

fitness program that involves an annual assessment and monthly to bi-monthly squad workouts led by a department fitness coordinator. I have also provided critical instruction to supervisors and commanders at the state level on how to manage safety and minimize risk in their agencies, as well as how to build wellness programs to fit their needs, sharing best practices, policies, and resources.

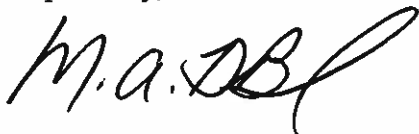
As President of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP), and now as a past president of the organization, I have advocated for the past few years for the advancement of legislation to get workers' compensation coverage for first responders diagnosed with depression and anxiety disorders. This legislation has passed unanimously through the 2023 Virginia General Assembly and will be enacted into law, becoming effective July 1, 2023. Virginia will be one of the first states in the country to have workers compensation coverage for depression and anxiety for first responders. This bill is about prevention and changing the future outcomes for our officers who are exposed to significant levels of trauma over the course of their careers.

Over the past two years, I also worked with the US Marshal's Service to support a National Public Safety Wellness Survey for law enforcement. My department served as the national law enforcement liaison to solicit agency leadership to allow their officers and dispatchers to participate in the national survey. I used the results from the Virginia Survey Report to demonstrate the critical need for mental health resources for the law enforcement profession to both our Virginia General Assembly and to our chiefs across the state through the VACP. These results validated the important need for dedicated mental health resources in this profession. I continue to do presentations on the results of this survey to agencies and groups throughout the state to bring awareness to the growing crisis and generate a call to action.

Aside from my sworn position as the Herndon Chief, I have recently started a non-profit corporation called the Foundation for First Responder Wellness and Resiliency, whose mission is to build a Public Safety Wellness Center in Northern Virginia, a no-cost, walk-in center for first responders in need of mental health resources. The facility will not only serve as a treatment center for first responders in need (both active and retired) but will also be used to support research to direct future services and serve as a training location for a variety of wellness topics.

I am immensely proud of the work that we have done in Herndon and throughout the state to change the culture towards mental health and wellness, and advance innovative and effective officer safety practices, policies, and programs in the profession. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to share this evolving body of work with you through the Destination Zero Award Program and I am confident you will find our department's efforts both significant and impactful.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M.A. DeBoard', written in a cursive style.

Chief Maggie A. DeBoard  
Herndon Police Department

**Destination Zero: Comprehensive Safety Award Submission**  
**Herndon Police Department (VA)**



**AGENCY OVERVIEW**

The Town of Herndon is the third largest incorporated town in Virginia, comprised of 4.25 square miles. It is situated in western Fairfax County, just minutes from Dulles International Airport and approximately 25 miles from Washington, DC. The town has 11 parks, and the W&OD bike trail runs through its downtown. It has a current residential population of around 24,500. Its citizens are well educated, with 48.5% having a college degree, and the median income level is approximately \$100,000. The town also has a growing Hispanic population of approximately 36%. The town is surrounded by a growing business base due to its location and has become a hub for information technology, government facilities, and other national and international businesses. The leadership of the town preserves the unique sense of community of Herndon and strives to maintain the balance between business growth and small-town charm, especially with the recent opening of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority subway stop along our adjoining border with Fairfax County.

Historically, the first law enforcement office in the town was formed in 1879, with an appointed town sergeant. In 1958, the responsibilities of a town sergeant were turned over to a chief of police. Under a chief of police, the department was comprised of both full and part-time officers. By 1972, the department had six officers. From 1972-1983, the six-man department grew to 26 officers and 10 civilian personnel. Also, in 1972, the first dispatcher was hired for a part-time call center, and was later expanded to a 24-hour, seven day a week operation in 1975.

Today the agency is a professional, progressive mid-size police department employing 54 police officers and 18 civilian personnel. It is nationally accredited through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) and has led the region in policies and practices for the past 10 years under the current chief, who came to Herndon after retiring from a neighboring county agency in 2012. The department serves a very diverse and supportive community and places a priority on community policing and engagement, a practice that is supported throughout all levels of the organization. It values the trusting relationship it has earned with the Herndon community and has accumulated over 15,800 followers on its social media platforms (with a town population of 24,500).

## Message From the Chief



Over the past 11 years, the Herndon Police Department has made significant strides in developing a culture of safety, emphasizing smart risk-taking and sound decision making through education, discussion, training, and accountability. Changing a culture takes time and patience, a desire of staff to engage in continuous learning, and a recognition of the need to modify how we operate. Officers and supervisors need to be provided encouragement and support for decisions that minimize risk in the accomplishment of the public safety mission, and to make mistakes within safe boundaries to enhance the learning process.

Creating a culture of safety within law enforcement requires a change in mindset, a progressive approach to examine new ways to safely solve the tactical and operational challenges with less staffing, and that meet the changing expectations of the community we serve. This means abandoning old ways of doing business, and an openness to new methods and tactics that challenge our traditional approach to problem solving, all with the goal of reducing accidents, injuries, and exposures to work-related traumatic incidents.

As the Town of Herndon chief and throughout my professional career, I have continually placed a priority on law enforcement safety and officer health and wellness. This attention to safety began during my early career with the Fairfax County Police Department where I developed and commanded the first comprehensive Law Enforcement Safety Officer Program in the country. After being appointed chief in Herndon, I returned to school to earn my master's degree and completed my thesis on organizational safety (*"A Systems Approach to Law Enforcement Safety: Recommendation for a Comprehensive Safety Management Framework"*). I have worked diligently through my appointment to various board with the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP) and the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to educate both officers and executive leaders towards a mindset of safety and wellness. This is illustrated in a class that I developed entitled *"Building Organizational Safety"* that was taught in Herndon and for the VACP

First Line Supervisors Course. I have partnered with the U.S. Marshal's Service to facilitate a National Public Safety Wellness Survey and educated others about the mental health challenges facing our profession. I have also recently started a non-profit corporation, the Foundation for First Responder Wellness and Resiliency, whose mission



Signs of support posted on each entrance gate to the secured parking lot. Officers pass through these gates whenever they return to the station.

is to build the first private Public Safety Wellness Center in Northern Virginia, a no to low-cost, walk-in facility to treat first responders (both active and retired) experiencing mental health challenges. This future facility is expected to serve as a national model, not only for treating those in need, but for connecting our first responders and their agencies with a variety of programs, practices, and policies to support officer health and wellness.

The process of building this award submission last year provided me with far more than a platform to demonstrate the commitment our agency and leadership team has made to officer safety and wellness. It assisted me in identifying current gaps in our efforts and programs that still needed addressed. The pursuit of excellence in the interest of officer safety and wellness is an endless process that must continue to evolve. We must always evaluate where we have room to grow and improve, especially given the challenges and evolving threats facing our profession. Placing a priority on the health and safety of our officers must become the single most important job of every law enforcement leader if we want to retain sufficient staffing to carry out our mission and effectively serve our communities.

### **CATEGORY 1 – GENERAL OFFICER SAFETY**

The goal of the department's efforts to increase officer safety have focused on several key areas:

- Instill sound decision-making and smart risk taking in operational settings to reduce injuries and enhance personal safety (culture of safety)
- Enhance departmental equipment to ensure officers have the proper tools to conduct safe and effective operations, and
- Increase training that focuses on critical thinking and tactical decision-making in both classroom and scenario-based exercises to improve positive outcomes.

#### **Tactical Trauma Kits and Training**

Several years ago, the department purchased tactical go-bags to issue to all sworn officers. These tactical go-bags are equipped with emergency medical supplies to use in the field including tourniquets, Quick Clot, sucking chest wound patches, extra handgun and rifle magazines, gauze, bandages, and an



Tactical Emergency Medical Training



artificial airway tube. Officers are issued a total of three tourniquets to be used for their go-bags and also to be carried on their outer ballistic vest carrier for use on themselves should they become critically injured and unable to get medical immediate assistance.

A partnership was developed several years ago with our local fire department, who conduct tactical medical field training for all sworn officers, to include our executive staff. This training involves hands-on guidance that includes both classroom instruction on how to use the medical supplies, as well as scenario-based training that involves realistic officer rescue scenarios in active shooter and other high-risk incidents. Training is conducted each year that refamiliarizes officers with how to use this equipment properly. New officers are provided these tactical trauma kits upon hire and first receive training on the equipment while in the academy.

Additional small medical kits are attached to the back of the front seat passenger headrest of every patrol cruiser. This provides additional medical supplies for every on-duty officer and increases access to emergency medical supplies for others to assist when an officer may not have immediate access to their trauma bags.

In 2022, the department purchased new cruiser headrest kits that are larger and provide more storage for emergency medical supplies and ease of retrieval. They velcro to the back headrest so they can be quickly torn away and put in use. The bags that were purchased have a visible red cross on them so anyone can quickly identify these as medical supplies. The old cruiser vehicle supply kits are being given to the officers for use in their personal vehicles.



Medical "Headrest" Kits



Extra Medical Supplies in Each Patrol Cruiser

### **Body Worn and In-Car Cameras**

The Herndon Police Department was using the Panasonic in-car and body worn camera systems since 2017 and was one of the first agencies in Northern Virginia to equip its officers with body worn cameras. The department has now transitioned to the modern Axon camera systems for BWCs, in-car cameras, and station interview room cameras.

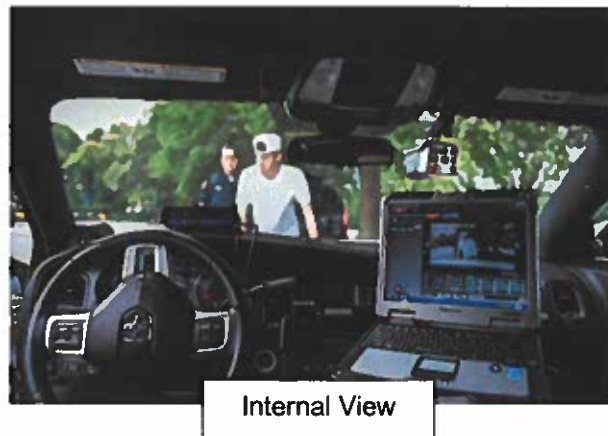
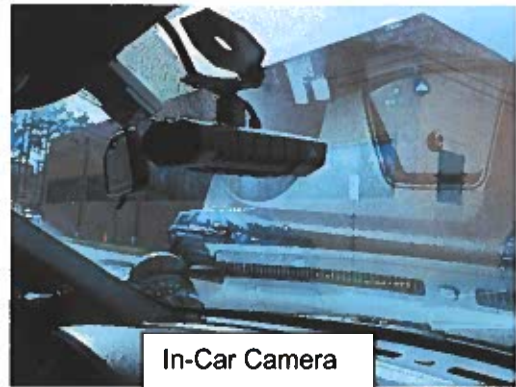
The move to this new camera system has presented enhanced safety features such as GPS location in each BWC so that an officer who separates from his or her vehicle can be quickly located; an automatic-on feature when an officer draws their weapon from the holster; automatic-on features of other BWCs that respond and come within a set distance from an activated camera; enhanced picture quality; ability to review video from the officer's cell phone; automatic activation of the BWC when the cruiser lights are turned on; and enhanced ability to conduct effective and more efficient video audits by supervisors and commanders.

Our new system has a center backseat camera to capture video of subjects being transported. This camera protects officers from allegations of improper treatment or excessive force during transport and documents any admissions a subject may make while enroute to the jail. It also provides officers the ability to watch these subjects more closely during transport for any signs of medical distress or attempts to escape restraints.



Video footage from an officer's BWC and in-car camera that capture use of force incidents or other police incidents that have training value are replayed in roll calls so squads can discuss the incident, including what worked well, what did not work as intended, and what other options could have been utilized to resolve the incident. Videos from use of force incidents are locked down until the review is conducted by a commander, then released for squads to view. These debriefing sessions are meant to educate officers on how to respond in similar situations, and not to criticize the performance of the officers involved.

*In 2019 when one of our officers was involved in an officer involved shooting, our IA commander and lead investigative liaison put together a full debriefing in PowerPoint format and formally presented this debrief of the incident to all department members. The PowerPoint included radio traffic, suspect information, BWC video from the officers directly involved as well as responding officers first to arrive on scene, surveillance camera footage from nearby businesses, and information regarding the investigation. These debriefing on serious incidents have become a part of our culture was done again in 2022 for another officer involved shooting in our department.*



## **Ballistic Vests**

The Herndon Police Department has a mandatory policy regarding the wearing of ballistic vests. Every officer is custom fitted with body armor when hired. The department gives officers the option of wearing their vest in an outer vest carrier or under their uniform shirt. Most officers in the department have chosen the outer vest carrier for greater accessibility to their issued equipment and less strain on their back and hips from carrying all their equipment on their duty belts. The policy applies to patrol personnel and all other officers working in operational assignments. Body armor is also required at the firearms range during qualification and tactical training.

A unique feature of our vests is a pull/drag strap that the department has had sewn on the back under a hidden flap. This strap is placed there so that if an officer goes down, another officer can pull him/her to safety.



Pull/Drag Strap

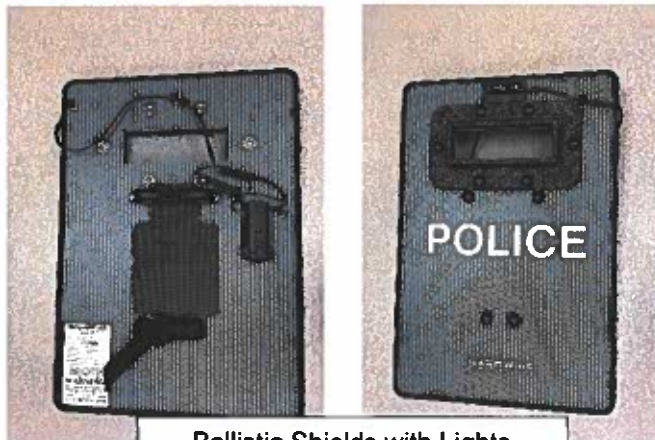


Ballistic Vests Worn at Range Training

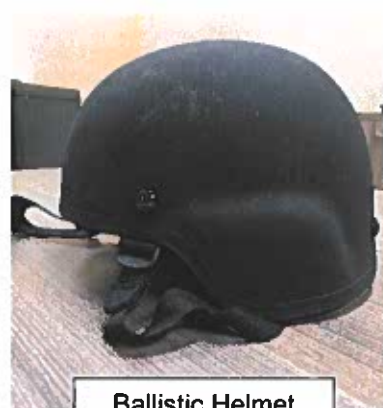
The department participates in the US Department of Justice Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program, which provides reimbursement for a percentage of the costs to purchase ballistic vests. The department equips all sworn officers with a Level III A protective vest. These vests are replaced every five years, as recommended by the manufacturer.

## **Ballistic Shields and Helmets**

The department is equipped with both handgun and rifle shields. These shields are carried in the on-duty supervisor's cruisers so they can be quickly deployed in an emergency or high-risk incident. The shields were recently equipped with forward facing lights (replacing the need for a flashlight), which allows the operator to handle both the shield and a firearm simultaneously. Ballistic helmets accompany the handgun and rifle shields and are also stored in the supervisor's cruisers. Inspections are conducted semi-annually on all equipment.



Ballistic Shields with Lights



Ballistic Helmet

## Less Lethal

The department utilizes a variety of tools to de-escalate volatile encounters and safely resolve high-risk incidents. Policies are in place for all less-lethal weapons that require annual training and/or recertification, guidelines for legal and department deployment, and reporting requirements. Inspections are conducted annually on all less lethal weapons and equipment.

**Electronic Control Weapon (Taser)** - All patrol officers are issued Tasers and are required to qualify annually. Strict policy is in place regarding the deployment, medical care, and reporting of Taser usage. All Taser deployments are investigated as a use of force through our internal affairs process.

Tasers and batteries were updated in the past two years to safer models that automatically shut off after 5 seconds when fired. This ensures that officers do not get distracted during a rapidly evolving and stressful event and unintentionally continue to depress the trigger while continuing to deliver a shock.

*The Taser has been used this year to resolve a violent encounter safely and effectively on a subject under the influence of drugs. Since department Taser policy was amended in 2017 to reflect 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court case law, the department has had only eight Taser deployments. All of these deployments were in compliance with department policy.*



**Transition to less lethal shotguns**— Approximately two years ago, the department eliminated less lethal shotgun rounds from its inventory and reserved the use of shotguns strictly for lethal force. Despite having an appropriate policy that distinguished and maintained separate bean bag rounds for less lethal encounters, it was determined that the risk of mistakenly loading the wrong type of rounds into the shotgun during an incident was too great. As a result, the department eliminated all less lethal shotgun rounds, dedicating the shotguns for lethal force, and purchased a separate 40mm less lethal weapon that posed less risk and provided greater range and accuracy.

Recently, the department has chosen to pivot once again to redistribute the lethal and less lethal tools in our arsenal more effectively. Shotguns have not been proven to be an effective response to the significant threat officers are facing in violent encounters during their shifts, and their use in urban environments do not always make them the safest choice to deploy. As a result, all shotguns are currently being transitioned strictly to less lethal weapons loaded with new and improved bean bag rounds. The stocks and grips for the shotguns are being replaced with orange ones to visibly indicate they are less lethal weapons. This transition will also put another less lethal tool in every officer's cruiser.

To account for the loss of the lethal shotguns, additional rifles were purchased, and new officers have been, and continue to be trained to ensure enough are deployed on every shift to effectively respond to high-risk incidents or violent encounters.

**40mm** – The 40mm less lethal launcher was purchased to add to our less lethal tool kit. Patrol supervisors manage the use of the 40mm launcher, carrying it with them in their cruisers each shift. This weapon system provides a less lethal option that may be used to resolve potentially violent situations or when unsafe for officers to approach within a physical contact range. It provides more accuracy than a shotgun bean bag round and utilizes a foam baton to deliver an effective impact. It also has a longer effective range. Two additional 40mm launchers are being purchased in the upcoming budget that have multi-round capacity so that officers do not have to reload after firing each round.

*This less lethal device was used successfully in 2021 to safely disarm a subject in emotional crisis who was armed with a knife and threatening to harm himself.*



40MM Less Lethal Launcher

**Pepper Spray** – Officers are issued chemical spray as a less lethal tool that presents an alternative to physical control techniques. Pepper spray is not used often due to the additional contamination effect it can have on the officer deploying it and the lack of effectiveness we have seen during deployment.

**Collapsible Baton** – Officers are issued an impact weapon for defensive and control purposes. They receive retraining annually in conjunction with handcuffing procedures or as part of use of force training.



Defensive Tactics/Baton Training

*The department's use of force incidents remains consistently low year over year, as weaponless physical force accounts for most incidents. In 2022, there were four incidents with weapons, and 13 incidents of weaponless physical force. All use of force incidents were compliant with policy.*

## Thermal Imagers

Less than two years ago, department purchased two thermal imagers for patrol use. These devices allow officers to search for hidden suspects more safely in darkness or low light conditions without giving up concealment and/or cover. They can also be used to locate missing persons that may be hiding or in emotional crisis, or to check for recently parked vehicles and other items that emanate heat while investigating crimes in progress.

Recently, six more FLIR Scout III handheld thermal vision monocular devices have been purchased to increase night-time response safety and effectiveness.



FLIR Thermal Imager

## Active Shooter Training

The department has two certified active shooter instructors that train department personnel, as well as assist our academy and other local agencies with training.

The department conducts active shooter training biennially. Training has been conducted independently, as well as jointly with both our county police department and with our county Fire and Rescue Department. Some of the training sessions have incorporated tactical medic response training where officers were instructed on how to use the medical trauma kits they were issued. Exercises were conducted using mannequins that spewed fake blood to simulate an arterial bleed, requiring officers to apply what they learned to pack a wound and stop the bleeding, apply a tourniquet, and address a sucking chest wound. Officers were also trained to apply a tourniquet to themselves in the event they were wounded and had no backup or medical resources available.



Active Shooter Scenario-Based Training

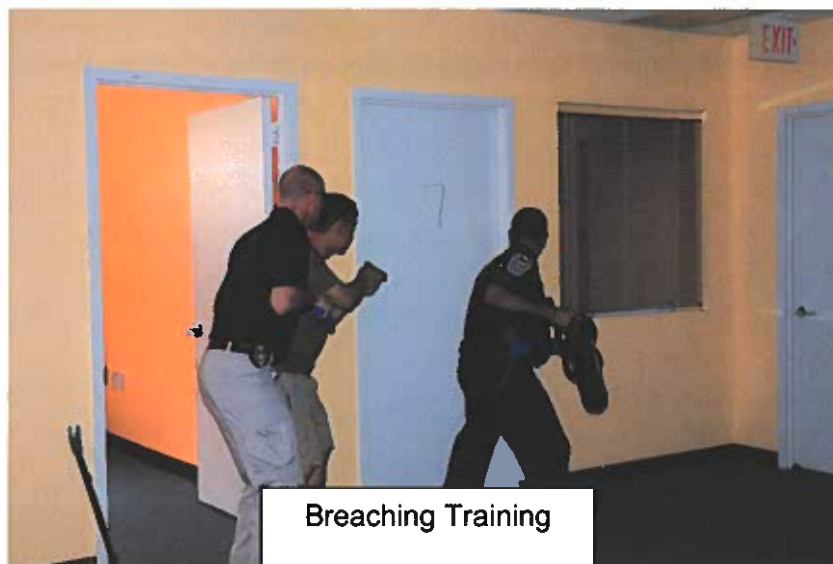


Active shooter/workplace safety awareness training was also conducted in 2022 by our instructors for town staff at our various town buildings within the jurisdiction. In the training, employees were taught how to react during an emergency, where to seek cover and/or concealment, and what to expect from the police during a response. Similar training is also scheduled in March 2023 for town council members

in case of an attack or disruption during a town council meeting. This training was coordinated with the Town's risk manager.

### **Breaching Training**

In 2022, one of our active shooter instructors secured access to a local building that was scheduled for demolition to conduct breaching training for the patrol squads. This training had to be done quickly with short notice over a couple of days, but the department was able to run many officers through this training. This gave officers both hands on training for the department breaching equipment carried in each supervisor's cruiser, as well as techniques to effectively breach different types of doors as safety as possible in an emergency.



Breaching Training

### **Narcan**

The department received its first inventory of Narcan several years ago through a grant. Officers are trained to administer Narcan, an effective opioid reversal medication, by in-house instructors, to individuals experiencing an overdose emergency or an accidental exposure. Officers also carry Narcan for their own safety in case of accidental exposure to the deadly drug Fentanyl during a vehicle or subject search.

The department now participates in the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP) First Responder Naloxone Revive Program, which trains officers to be Naloxone instructors and provides no-cost Narcan spray and carrying cases to law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth. Through this program, the department can replenish our Narcan stock when inventory runs low or is beyond its shelf life.

*During calendar year 2022, our officers deployed Narcan on two individuals who had overdosed and assisted with several other administrations of the drug, saving their lives.*

### **Firearms, Qualifications, and Training**

The department incorporates shotguns, rifles, and handguns into police operations. Officers receive department authorized training designed to simulate actual situations and conditions and enhance officers' discretion and judgment in the use of lethal and less lethal force and weapons. The department also conducts recertification exercises to establish and measure weapons proficiency and officers must demonstrate proficiency with all approved and authorized lethal and less lethal weapons. Officers must qualify with firearms prior to carrying the approved weapon on-duty or off-duty. All department training is monitored by certified weapons instructors. Inspections and inventories are conducted annually or semi-annually, as appropriate, on all department weapons.

**Handguns** - The department transitioned from the Glock 40mm handgun to the Glock 9mm handgun approximately 1.5 years ago after FBI ballistics research indicated the greater effectiveness of the 9mm ammunition in stopping an active threat. Recently, gun lights were added to all patrol handguns for tactical effectiveness in low light or dark conditions. Officers working administrative or investigative assignments were given the option to add handgun lights.

The addition of the gun lights allows officers to keep two hands on their weapon instead of holding a flashlight and handgun simultaneously. The toggle switch for the handgun light was strategically placed on the opposite side of the officer's trigger finger to minimize the possibility of an accidental discharge.

The department is now testing and evaluating new handguns with miniaturized red dot sights (MRDS). Plans are in place for full transition to these new, advanced weapon systems in the months ahead, using a combination of recently released grant funding and seized asset money. These sights have a significant advantage over traditional sights. When using a MRDS, the shooter can focus on the threat more quickly with both eyes open, simply see the dot superimposed on the threat, and squeeze the trigger. As a result, the threat stays in focus and can be seen more clearly, providing better information to the officer on whether and when to use lethal force.



Duty Glock 9MM with Light



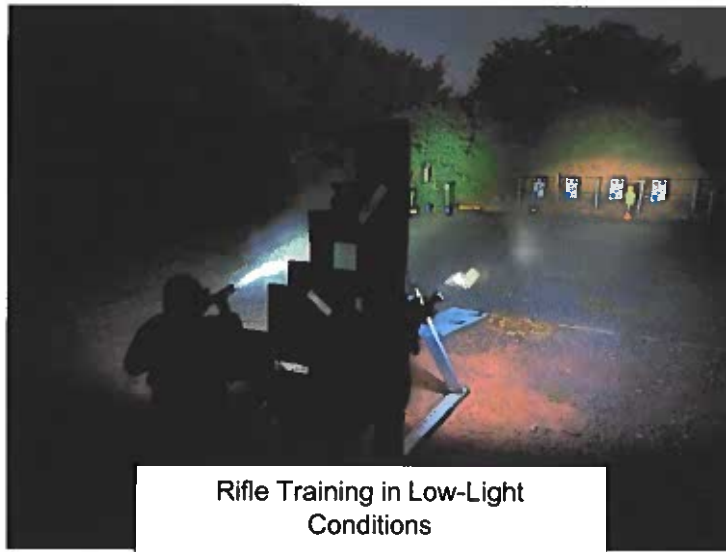
Duty Glock 9MM with Red Dot Sights

**Shotguns** – As previously mentioned, all shotguns are being transitioned to less lethal weapons carrying only bean bag rounds. More rifles and rifle operators have been added to make up for this transition. Orange stocks and grips are replacing the standard stocks on the shotguns to indicate they are less lethal weapons. Officers must still qualify annually with this less lethal weapon.



**Rifles** – The department’s rifle program has traditionally allowed both department-issued rifles and personally-owned rifles. A decision was made almost two years ago to end the use of personally owned rifles for on duty operations due to liability concerns and more importantly, to standardize the platform that is being used in the department. All rifles are now configured using an identical platform and attachments so that anyone who operates a rifle in the program will have the ability to pick one up and be familiar with its operation. This is critical in emergency situations. Additional rifles were purchased over the past year to ensure each rifle operator had access to a department issued rifle and more are in the current budget for purchase in FY24.

Rifle operators must qualify quarterly to remain in the program. Rifle operators are chosen based on their firearms skills and history of past decision making in the performance of their duties.

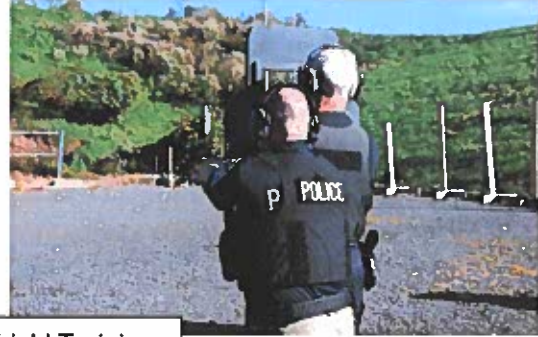


**Backup Weapons** – Officers are permitted and encouraged to carry a backup handgun. Officers must submit a form requesting to carry an approved backup weapon, after qualifying and demonstrating proficiency. Annual qualification is also required.

**Range Training** – Officers are required to wear their ballistic vest to range training. Detectives are directed to attend tactical training in the soft uniform they routinely wear on duty, unless active shooter or other specialized tactical training is being conducted. Two formal range dates are held each year, one for mandatory qualifications and the other for tactical training exercises.

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services mandates that law enforcement officers qualify once each calendar year on issued firearms with a 70% proficiency score. The department, however, requires officers achieve a 75% proficiency score. This higher proficiency score is also a requirement of academy graduates. Tactical training varies and involves exercises covering low light shooting, shooting while moving, tactical repositioning, shooting from behind cover and concealment, shooting behind a shield, tactical advancements alone and with another officer, and use of force decision making, and de-escalation. Weapons are cleaned and inspected by a firearms instructor after each range training.





Firearms and Shield Training



### **High Visibility Traffic Vests**

Officers are required by policy to wear their yellow, high-visibility traffic vests when working traffic assignments or while working accident scenes on the roadways.

### **Threat Assessments Required for High-Risk Events**

Officers must complete a threat assessment form before any planned or high-risk event such as a search warrant or buy/bust operation. This form provides an evaluation of risk elements such as criminal history of the suspect(s), weapons involved, site factors, etc. The form standardizes the safety checks that must be conducted before a high-risk operation and indicates whether a tactical team should be used for the operation. This form must be completed by the lead officer/detective, reviewed by their supervisor, and approved by a commander before the operation is initiated.



### **Incident Command System (ICS)**

Sworn staff and dispatchers are trained on the Incident Command System and utilize this for managing both planned and emergency events. Supervisors and commanders are required to follow ICS protocols and practices when developing operational plans for Town events and work collaboratively with other Town departments to include them in the ICS structure, assigning roles and explaining responsibilities for those involved. All sworn officers are required to take ICS training courses. Supervisors and commanders attend advanced courses to support their roles and responsibilities and work in partnership with the County's Office of Emergency Management on updating the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan and emergency issues such as major weather storms that have an impact on the town.

## **Emergency Response to Town Buildings**

Following the 2019 workplace violence mass shooting in Virginia Beach, VA, the Herndon Police Department initiated an assessment of physical security in town buildings. These recommendations led to the installation of electronic door locks on the offices of the Town Manager and key staff in the Herndon Municipal Center (HMC), as well as the Town Attorney's Office. The doors to these offices and hallways had previously remained unsecured during operating hours and locked with a key during off hours, making entry by officers difficult in an emergency. Changes resulted in electronic locks being installed in town buildings and every officer having access through master key cards/swobs. This ensures that officers can make a rapid entry into Town buildings should it be required for an emergency incident.

Panic buttons were installed at the front desk in the HMC, with cameras that are viewed directly by our dispatchers 24-hours a day. Dispatchers also can lock or unlock electronic doors if a threat incident occurs and can provide real-time information to officers who are responding to the scene. Additional security enhancements to Town buildings are ongoing including the addition of more security cameras and electronically controlled doors in other town buildings.

To enhance a rapid and effective response to workplace violence incidents, the department procured critical incident maps of every town building. These maps, known as Collaborative Response Graphics (CRGs), provide a gridded overlay, high resolution imagery, and floor plans together in one map. The maps provide detailed labeling of each floor, rooms, doors, and key utility locations. They provide a simple, visual communication tool to coordinate emergency response while under stress both inside and outside a building. These maps have been loaded in the officer's mobile computers for immediate accessibility. Enlarged copies of the maps were printed and placed in supervisor cruisers for use in a command post.

The department also added the CRG smart phone app that put these maps in officer's hands so they can access them on foot or from inside a building during response to a high-threat incident. These maps also track in real-time the location and movement of the officer who is using the app on their phone, which assists in both locating an officer during a high-risk incident, but also in setting up perimeters to control a scene. The virtual app tracks all users, regardless of agency, which is incredibly helpful during incidents requiring mutual aid. In the upcoming future, all secondary schools in our region will be mapped using this software, providing officers real-time access during a high-threat school incident.

## **Safety Officer and Safety Matrix Requirement**

A dedicated safety officer is required for all firearms training and other scenario-based training exercises. This officer is responsible for ensuring the safety of all participants in the training exercise. The safety officer assigned to the training exercise must be dedicated to the safety function and not be providing instruction.

A safety matrix form must be completed for all scenario-based training exercises and included with mandatory lesson plans. This matrix ensures that all safety guidelines are properly addressed before training commences. This form must be signed off



Safety Checks during Scenario-based Training Exercises

by a supervisor or commander, depending on the nature of the training. It is used for training at the academy, range, and within our department.

Training signs are also required to be posted when conducting scenario-based training exercises, whether training is held inside or outside.



### **CPR Certification**

The department has both officers and dispatchers trained as CPR certified instructors. Officers first receive this training in the academy. Officers are then recertified every two years by our in-house instructors through scheduled roll call training.



CPR Recertification

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Sworn officers are equipped and fit-tested with gas masks and N95 masks. These masks are personally issued and carried with officers in their equipment bags.

Latex gloves are installed on the walls of several exit doors leading to the secured parking lot so officers can replenish their glove supply quickly on their way out the door.

Tyvek suits are available in the crime scene supply area as needed.

The department has both rifle and handgun shields that are deployed in multiple cruisers during a shift. Ballistic helmets are included with the shields.

For incidents involving civil disturbance, the County provides mutual aid to our department and has a large civil disturbance unit that can be rapidly deployed when requested. The region also works under a mutual aid MOU for civil disturbance and active violence incidents.

### **Spit Masks**

Spit Masks were ordered and put into use in 2022. These devices are used to prevent persons in custody from intentionally spitting on officers and spreading bodily fluids and bloodborne pathogens. A policy was developed on proper use of the masks and officers received training before the masks were placed

into operation. Restrictions were placed on using the masks on juveniles and subjects who may be having difficulty breathing.

### **AEDs**

AEDs are located in the building and in all of the patrol supervisor's cruisers. Officers were instructed on how to operate them and shown the step-by-step instructions that are included with the device.

### **Bloodborne Exposure Reporting Process**

When officers are exposed to a known bloodborne pathogen or infectious disease in the line of duty, it is handled through our on-duty injury reporting system. Supervisors are required to first report the incident to our Nurse Triage Reporting System as well as fill out a Bloodborne/Airborne Pathogen Exposure Report. Depending on the specifics of the incident, the attending nurse provides the officer with additional care advice and works with the exposed employee and supervisor to determine what treatment, if any, is needed.

Supervisors are then required to contact the 24-hour on-call exposure officer with the Fairfax County Police Department. The exposure officer will also arrange treatment with the approved Infectious Diseases doctor on our Workman's Compensation Panel. Having 24/7 access to an exposure control officer who can talk directly with the officer to ease concerns and arrange follow-up care has proven extremely beneficial.

### **All-Hazard Response Plan**

Department members completed an annual review of our department's All-Hazard Response Plan in September 2022. This training was led by a lieutenant, who also serves as the department's deputy emergency manager for the town under the chief of police.

### **METRO Training**

All sworn officers received training from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) during the month of October 2022 prior to the grand opening of the Herndon Metro stop. This training included a walk-through of the new station, a safety briefing regarding operating around the trains and hot rails, jurisdictional boundaries, and threat awareness.

### **Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) and De-escalation**

The department has 29 Crisis Intervention Officers who have received specialized, week-long training in responding and resolving crisis situations involving mental illness or developmental disability. Due to the complexity of delivering this scenario-based crisis intervention class (which is taught only once a month) and the high demand for it at our police academy, our department receives only 1-2 student slots each training class. We will continue to fill all training seats provided to us until our entire department is trained. To date, the department has approximately 60% of its officers CIT trained. We already have officers

scheduled to attend the class each month throughout 2023. Our officers are also provided CIT training in-house that supplements this class.

We have two highly experienced employees who are certified in de-escalation training and teach the topic nationally. Officers receive annual de-escalation training to review strategies and scenarios that may be necessary to mitigate or avoid circumstances that could intentionally increase the risk of a volatile situation. These instructors have conducted multiple training sessions in de-escalation and control tactics, both in the classroom and through scenario-based exercises. The department's training committee has further been instructed to ensure that de-escalation tactics are incorporated into our firearms and use of force training each year.



Mat Room for training at  
Herndon Police Department

### **Field Training Program for Certified Officers and Academy Graduates**

Probationary officers (recent graduates of a law enforcement basic academy and certified police officer new hires) must complete mandatory department field training supervised by a field training instructor. New officers must demonstrate throughout the program sufficient knowledge and skill to perform independently as a police officer. Field training is based on tasks that are most frequently performed by law enforcement personnel and competency is measured in the required skills, knowledge, and abilities.

The department's field training program requires a new officer and a field training instructor to work together to complete a structured training program. New academy recruits must complete a minimum of 240 hours before they can be released for solo patrol. The department hires numerous certified officers from other Virginia agencies. Virginia certified sworn have already successfully graduated from an academy, but some have never performed the duties of a patrol officer. Certified officers that come from a corrections background, working in a jail or court setting, are required to complete the same full field training period as academy recruits. Certified officers that have been police officers in other agencies are required to go through field training, but the length of that training is reduced based on their previous experience and job knowledge.

A Field Training Instructor (FTI) is designated to provide daily guidance, mentoring, and direction during the field training process to develop the probationary officer for independent patrol. Officers in field

training work under the guidance of multiple field trainers with expertise in different areas to expose them to a variety of best practices in performing patrol duties.

All FTIs are selected based on their interest in teaching new recruits and their overall job performance. FTIs are required to attend specific classes for Instructor Development and Field Training Instruction. Those that do not meet the department's expectations for delivering effective field training instruction are removed from the program. FTIs and all instructors must recertify every 3 years.

### **Managing Fatigue at Work**

The department recognizes that fatigue is a contributing factor that affects the safety, performance, and the long-term health of employees. The department has a responsibility to ensure its officers are not placed in a position where working an excessive number of hours creates an unsafe situation for the officer, the town, or the community. As such, our general orders restrict officers from engaging in law enforcement services and security related work for more than 16 hours in a 24-hour period or any combination of overtime for more than 120 hours in any pay period. Law enforcement services and security related work includes time spent on-duty during the officer's normal shift, while participating in planned or unplanned department sponsored overtime and supplemental assignments, court appearances, law enforcement training, and law enforcement services or security related off-duty employment.

Exceptions are made by supervisors due to unanticipated or ongoing critical operations. During such events, supervisors are responsible to make effective decisions to ensure officer safety and request additional resources if necessary. If at any time an employee demonstrates or expresses fatigue, the employee will be released from duty and provided with a rest opportunity. This may include transportation of the member to their residence or other location.

### **National Accreditation from CALEA**

The Herndon Police Department has been nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) since 1986 by demonstrating its voluntary commitment to comply with essential law enforcement standards and adhere to best professional practices. The department is assessed every four years and compliance is reviewed annually. The department is additionally certified as meeting certain eligibility requirements pursuant to accreditation, as set forth by the U.S. Department of Justice, for discretionary grants eligibility.

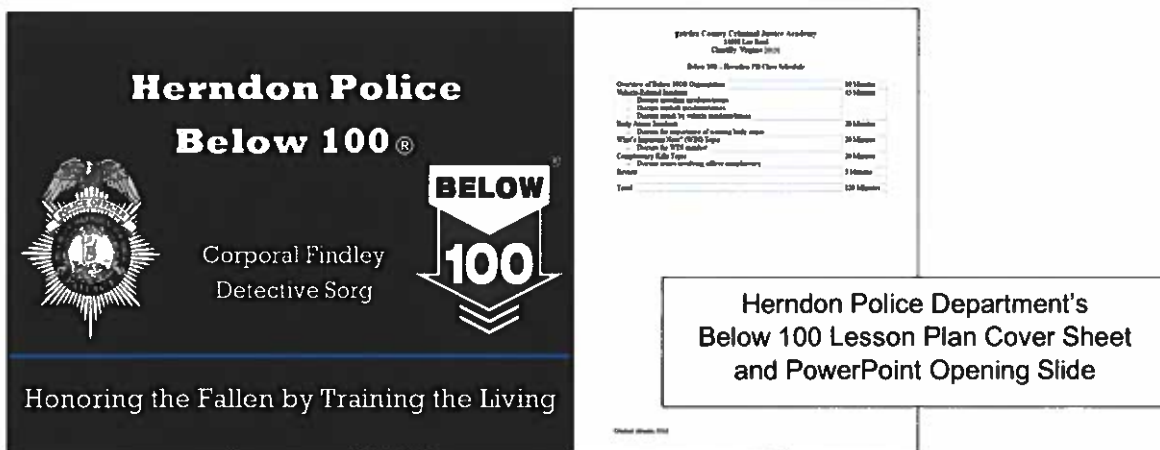
## CATEGORY 2 – OFFICER TRAFFIC SAFETY

Training, equipment, and appropriate policy are crucial elements of officer safety in traffic operations. The department has taken great strides in keeping officer safety in the forefront and has emphasized ongoing training, improved equipment, and updated policy to promote safety through emerging safety tactics. **The department was awarded the Virginia Law Enforcement Challenge Award for three consecutive years for its efforts in traffic safety through enforcement, education, and operational initiatives**, until this competition was suspended in 2019 due to the pandemic. It received the highest award in 2019 for the Commonwealth's top award for best traffic safety program in the state. The following highlights the department's continued focus on safety in traffic operations.

### Below 100 Training

The department sent two sworn members to the Below 100 training in 2018, which is a commonsense training program on safety areas under an officer's control, with particular focus on such elements as seatbelts, vests, driving tactics and proper procedures. The officers then returned and conducted training for the entire department. The two officers used the Below 100 template for the training, but also incorporated our own relevant traffic policies into the instruction.

Over the course of the past 18 months, the department has experienced significant turnover and hired both new officers straight out of the academy and certified officers from other agencies to fill vacancies. As a result, this training was updated and repeated during the 2022 calendar year for all sworn HPD officers.



### EVOC Training and Instructors

Sworn officers attend two weeks of Emergency Vehicle Operations (EVOC) training when they go through the academy. After graduation, **officers are required to attend EVOC training every three years**. Training is conducted at the academy track and officers drive the same vehicles they operate on duty. EVOC training involves high speed driving and decision making, pursuit operations and policy review, cone courses and accident avoidance, and inclement weather driving on a specialized skid pan to simulate icy roadway conditions.

HPD has several trained instructors who assist academy staff in conducting EVOC training for the department. These instructors also assist academy staff several times a year when conducting EVOC training for new recruits. This allows our part-time EVOC instructors to hone their teaching and driving skills in this area. One of our EVOC instructors is also tasked with providing classroom-based pursuit training annually for all sworn department members. This training covers our department policy, liability, and relevant case law. Videos of police pursuits located online are often used to illustrate the dangers involved in pursuit and response driving.

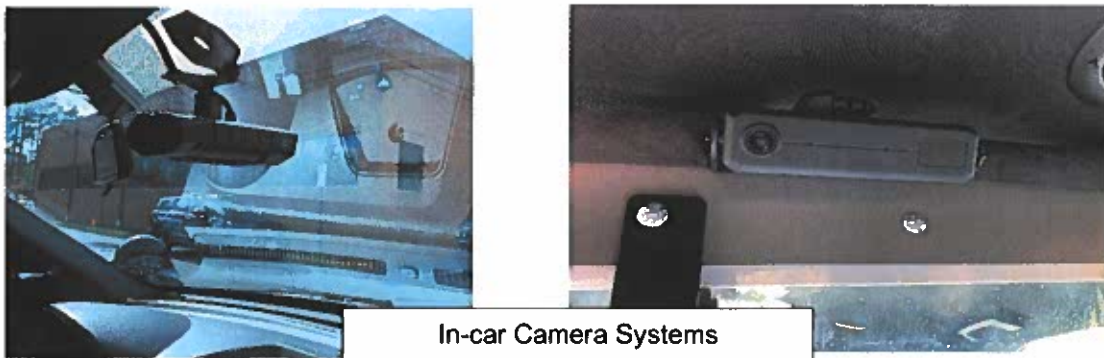


### **GPS in Vehicles**

All police vehicles are equipped with an automatic vehicle locator (AVL) that provides real-time location and tracking management. This helps dispatchers to effectively deploy officers to calls, maximize efficiency and time, and provides a critical safety feature to assist in quickly locating an officer's vehicle when they are not responding to the radio. The new Axon body worn camera system also provides an additional GPS tracking device to assist in quickly locating an officer on foot and away from their vehicle.

### **In-Car Cameras**

The department currently utilizes the Axon camera system, with built in license plate readers (LPR). In addition to the forward-facing front camera, HPD's vehicles are equipped with rear-facing cameras and a back-seat camera so officers can safely watch suspects during transport. In-car cameras automatically initiate when an officer turns on their emergency lights to ensure driving behaviors and citizen encounters are captured on video. The new back seat camera also automatically comes on when a rear door is opened.





## Speed Monitoring and Accountability

Dash cameras in each of the department's cruisers are set to automatically turn on when the vehicle reaches 80 mph. The main purpose of this feature is to ensure pursuits or high-speed emergency response driving is captured on both the violator and the officer. Automatic recording of vehicles traveling at high speeds also serves as an accountability measure. Although these activations are not automatically sent to supervisors, the video is subject to being randomly selected for audit. **Video audits of both in-car and BWCs must be conducted monthly by all squad supervisors.** If policy violations are discovered, supervisors have the option of handling them formally or informally, depending on the nature of the violation, severity of the incident, and past performance of the officer.

*All vehicle accidents are required to be formally investigated through our internal affairs process. Over the past 5 years, from 2018-2022, officers have been involved in a total of only 19 at fault vehicle accidents. **None of the 19 at-fault accidents were the result of excessive speed.** Most of these accidents involved low speeds in parking lots or while slowing or stopped on the roadway.*

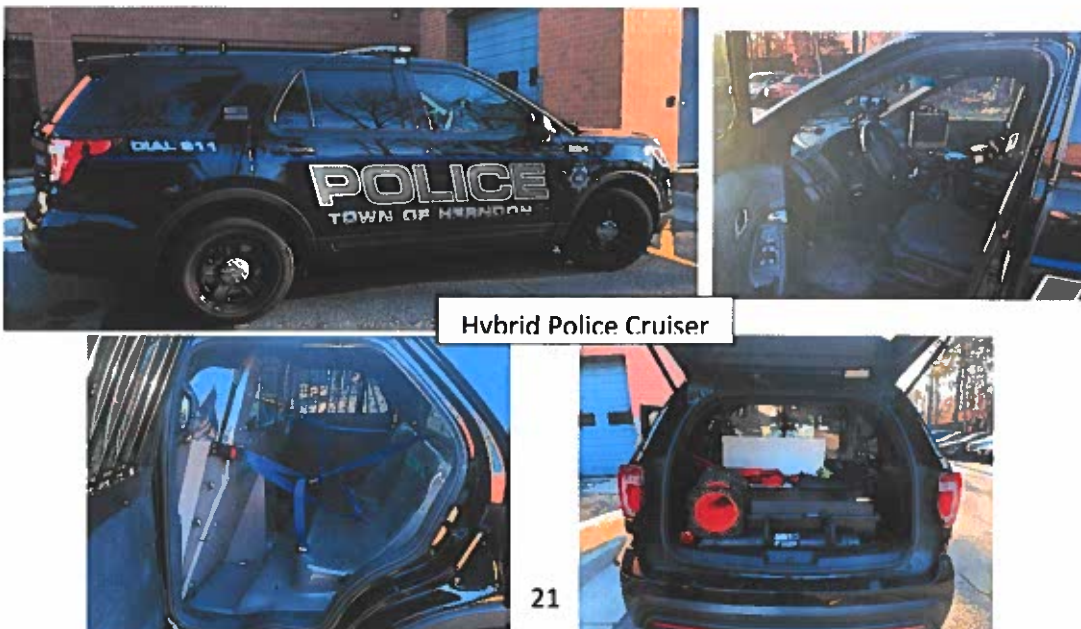
## High Visibility Traffic Vests

Officers are required by policy to wear their yellow, high-visibility traffic vests when working traffic assignments or while working accident scenes on the roadways.



## Cruiser Selection

The department has been purchasing hybrid utility vehicles for use in patrol operations for the past several years. The hybrid utility is pursuit-rated, maintains power and performance, and comes with industry safety features and a generous passenger/cargo space when outfitted. The vehicle is engineered to meet the 75-mph rear-impact crash test and has side protection and cabin enhancement structural reinforcement to provide crash safety. Back seat cages separate the passenger area of the vehicle from equipment stored in the rear cargo area. The larger size of the utility vehicles creates a safer and more comfortable passenger area for two officers. This is especially useful when officers share a cruiser during field training. Vehicles are replaced approximately every 7 years or 100,000 miles.



## Seat Belts

Personnel are required to always wear seat belts while on duty. It is both a department policy and a state law. This applies to both town-owned vehicles and to rental cars being operated by department personnel. Signs were installed on both exit gates to the department's secured parking lot to remind officers to always buckle up and be cognizant of their speed.



Safety Message Signs on all Exit Gates as Regular Reminders

**Pursuits** - Training on the pursuit policy is conducted annually and documented. Training consists of policy review, case law discussion, liability and/or review of video incidents of pursuits that are available for discussion and training.

All pursuits are formally investigated and documented through the department's internal affairs process. When policy violations occur, officers receive discipline in accordance with the seriousness of the violation and past performance. Remedial training is mandated in cases where it is warranted.

*The department's pursuit policy was changed a few years ago to narrow the circumstances when a pursuit can be initiated, limiting pursuits to incidents involving crimes of violence or of an immediate threat to public safety. This has resulted in a significant reduction of pursuits over the past three years from 2 in 2020 to zero between 2021-2022.*

## Elimination of Vehicle Stop Sticks

*According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 14 officers were struck and killed by other vehicles in 2020. In 2021, 28 officers died in "struck-by" events. It is encouraging to see that "struck-by" events decreased nationwide in 2022!*

To reduce the chances of our officers being struck, stop sticks were removed from all department vehicles and eliminated as an authorized tool to stop fleeing vehicles due to the danger posed to the officer deploying them. Roadblocks and pit maneuvers are still permitted as tactics to stop fleeing vehicles if the officer has attended the specific EVOG training courses for these tactics and maintained proficiency through retraining. Officers must be retrained in these tactics every 3 years.

## **Traffic Accident Investigation**

The department has several officers trained in traffic accident reconstruction. These officers investigate accidents resulting in serious injuries or fatalities, as well as serious cruiser accidents.

Recently, a drone was obtained on grant funding that will allow accident reconstruction to be done from the air, eliminating the need to close roadways or place officers in the roadway to conduct accident scene mapping/reconstruction and photo documentation. A policy has been developed and a process is being initiated to select members to this team to operate the equipment.

## **CATEGORY 3 – OFFICER WELLNESS**

The Herndon Police Department has developed a comprehensive wellness program for department members that has greatly improved the mental health and wellness of our personnel, and improved safety and working conditions within our agency. Our goal with this program is not just to react to wellness issues as they arise, but to proactively provide the programs, resources, and tools necessary to prevent physical and mental issues from becoming personally disabling or interfering with law enforcement performance and responsibilities.

The program has a variety of components that help personnel cope with exposure to stressful incidents, as well as deal with day-to-day health and wellness issues. Our program takes a holistic view to mental and physical health and consists of numerous components that are outlined below. No one part of the program is more important than the other. Specific measurable goals to achieve over time are to reduce sick leave and on-duty injuries, and reduce complaints related to the performance of duty. Due to the significant turnover in personnel experienced by our agency over the past two years, it will take additional time to determine overall program effectiveness. What we do know, however, is that our programs are having a significant impact on hiring and recruiting based on input we receive during the application process. People want to work where they are supported and cared for!

Before the various components of HPD's comprehensive wellness program were implemented, two of our lieutenants with significant experience in the mental wellness field conducted roll call training sessions on the various components of our program for all personnel. This was done to ensure officers could ask questions and understand the purpose behind the policies and program. The police psychologists were included in these presentations virtually so personnel could be introduced to them in advance of the mandated wellness checks and before they became involved in a critical incident.

As chief, with the assistance of competent and experienced staff members, I have also taken a proactive leadership role to share our wellness policies with other agencies throughout the state, advocate for participation in the National Public Safety Wellness Survey as well as sharing the results of that survey, work on state and regional mental health projects, successfully introduced new legislation that will support treatment of first responders in Virginia, and assisted other agencies with leveraging mental health resources for their officers and dispatchers. My previous position on the board of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police and current position on the Department of Criminal Justice Services Board has presented me with a visible and influential platform to educate and collaborate on law enforcement mental health issues across Virginia.

## **National Public Safety Wellness Survey**

The Herndon Police Department became the law enforcement liaison for a critical public safety mental health survey that was conducted in 2021. The National Public Safety Wellness Survey, led by the United States Marshal Service, was developed to collect mental health data using verified clinical diagnostic tools tailored towards first responder mental health (law enforcement, fire and rescue, corrections, and dispatchers), to assess levels of PTSD, anxiety, and depression among participants. The survey was disseminated nationwide, which closed at the end of November 2021, was entirely voluntary, and the identity of all participants remained anonymous due to encryption software that the Marshal's Service attached to the survey. As the chief, I became the liaison for this survey alongside my experienced lieutenant, and we began advocating for other agencies in Virginia and across the country to participate.

What we discovered was that public safety leadership in some agencies did not support the survey because they either did not place a priority on mental health issues or did not want to appear to want to know the results for their agency. To educate law enforcement executives, my lieutenant and I conducted numerous in-person presentations on this survey to organizations both in Virginia and out of state attempting to create buy-in from top leadership and get cooperation for distributing the survey to their personnel. These organizations included the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP), Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, National Capital Region Council of Governments (COG), Northern Virginia Chiefs and Sheriffs, and the Attorney General of Ohio Safety and Wellness Conference. Other presentations to out of state groups was conducted virtually by my lieutenant. When the survey closed, over 10,000 first responders had taken the survey.

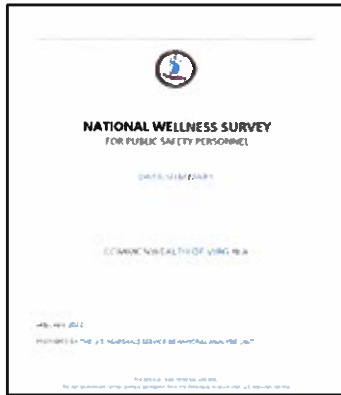
As chief, I also participated in a video for the survey urging law enforcement leaders to distribute the survey to their agency and discussed how they could use the results to leverage mental health resources. That video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/BZfWmmxOfcQ>.

The Herndon Police Department participated in the survey in early 2021 and I received an agency summary quickly due to our lead role in the project. The survey results were concerning and in line with national and state results that showed a significant number of officers were experiencing moderate to severe levels of anxiety and depression. Also alarming from the survey results was a snapshot of those with levels of PTSD and suicide ideation. When I presented our department's summary to the Town Manager, he was immediately struck by the results, especially since the Town of Herndon was a relatively calm, supportive community throughout the challenges of police reform that sparked violent protests and heightened attacks towards law enforcement. As a result, funds were immediately made available for Herndon police officers to have access to wellness checks, with an assurance that the funding would continue in future budget cycles. Those wellness checks were implemented within months of the funding being allocated and continue to this day.

In 2022, the Virginia summary results were released through the VACP. These results further demonstrate the critical need for mental health resources across our first responder communities. I have been presenting the results to the law enforcement community through meetings, conferences, and training seminars. Last September, I presented the survey and its results at the Department of Criminal Justice Service Trauma on Law Enforcement Conference in Arlington, Virginia.

In 2023, I again solicited political support for a bill in the General Assembly that would add workers compensation benefits for law enforcement officers and firefighters who were suffering from anxiety and depression resulting from a work-related traumatic exposure. Currently legislation only supports PTSD for workers compensation. Efforts to pass this amended bill failed in last year's session. This year, the bills were again introduced in both the Virginia Senate and in the House to support the addition of anxiety

and depression. The results of the Virginia survey were used to advocate and advance this legislation without opposition through the 2023 General Assembly. This bill, the first of its kind nationwide to provide workers compensation for anxiety and depression for first responders, is expected to become law on July 1, 2023.



## **Police Psychologist**

Police psychologist services were contracted to assist Herndon officers and dispatchers who were struggling with exposure to traumatic events, as well as the daily stresses of the job. Research has shown that providing first responders access to a known and experienced police psychologist who understands the demands and challenges of the profession can greatly increase their willingness to disclose their struggles and build a trusting relationship. The department hoped to encourage officers to seek help before their mental health issues escalated to problems at work or at home. The department also recognized that a mentally well officer and dispatcher will have more effective interactions with the community, make better decisions, and be better prepared to cope with traumatic exposures more effectively.

The police psychologists that were contracted are two of the most experienced police psychologists in the state and are utilized for annual wellness checks, training, advice, callouts for traumatic incidents, and referrals regarding difficult and/or struggling personnel. Personnel were given their contact information and provided direct access without having to go through their chain of command. This was done to encourage department personnel to reach out confidentially and ask for help without fear of impacting their jobs.

*The critical importance of having a known police psychologist on contract and available for call out became readily apparent in June of 2021 when officers responded to an apartment complex for a welfare check of a family, only to discover the murdered bodies of two young children and their mother. The presence of the police psychologist in the police station all day as this case was being investigated was invaluable. The psychologist, who had her own emotional support dog along with her, met with every officer and dispatcher involved in the incident prior to the end of their shift and upon leaving the station. The psychologist also provided follow up sessions with those who needed it in the days following the incident. Based on her recommendations, several officers were provided additional administrative days off before returning to work to cope with the traumatic incident.*

*Our police psychologists were also used in 2022 for an officer involved shooting and several other incidents where officers needed follow up clinical care after their involvement in stressful events.*

## Annual Wellness Educational Sessions

Annual wellness educational sessions are **mandated** for both sworn and professional staff as part of HPD's wellness program. Mandating these sessions through policy removes the stigma of having to talk with a mental health professional. All employees, including the chief and her executive staff, participate in these sessions. Our administrative support lieutenant worked closely with our police psychologist to schedule all personnel for these wellness sessions in early 2021, which were designed to provide mechanisms and strategies to cope with stress, as well as allow personnel to discuss current struggles. These sessions were conducted virtually with our police psychologists and done in complete confidence. Follow up sessions were conducted with personnel as needed or as requested. These wellness sessions were again completed in the calendar year 2022 for all personnel.

Prior to launching the sessions, roll call training was conducted for the agency to introduce the police psychologists, familiarize personnel with the process and what to expect in the sessions, and demonstrate the need for mental health care in the profession. The police psychologists also answered any questions that arose and explained their professional duty to confidentiality.

Despite some initial hesitancy among a small percentage of personnel, these sessions were well received and quickly embraced by staff. The wellness checks will continue to be conducted annually and remain mandatory for all personnel at HPD. The Town Manager understands the need for these wellness checks and has committed to funding them each budget year.

## Peer Support Team Expansion and State Certification

The Herndon Police Department had previously established a small peer support team, but its members had little experience or training. Additionally, internal policies had not been fully developed for the agency, nor did officers understand the unique role this team played during a critical incident.

Over the course of the last two years, department's administrative lieutenants worked on developing training opportunities for new and current members and expanded the number of team members in the agency. They also connected our peer team with other teams throughout the region for training purposes and to assist with mutual aid requests. State level training in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) was also secured to ensure all team members received this baseline training.

The administrative lieutenants also developed the necessary internal policies governing the proper use of a peer support team and completed the paperwork and steps to have HPD's peer support team Virginia state certified in Richmond. The team's state certification protects the confidentiality of discussions between officers and peer team members so they cannot be called to court and testify. This provides officers with a known colleague to talk to in confidence when they are struggling without fear of that information being released.



The department has a total of 7 officers trained in peer support. A retired police officer who now works as a civilian parking enforcement officer for the department is also trained, as is one assistant supervisor in our dispatch center. Three commanders are fully trained, one of which oversees the program, provides guidance to the first line supervisor in the unit, and assists in coordinating training. Depending on the

scope and size of the incident, our peer support team provides services to our personnel. When incidents exceed the ability of our agency, peer teams from other jurisdictions in the region are called to assist our department.

*Our peer support members are used to respond to the scene of critical incidents and were called to the scene of an officer-involved shooting in 2019 to provide peer support to the officer involved in that incident. In 2021, during a significantly difficult homicide scene involving the death of young children, the department utilized peer support from a neighboring jurisdiction for our officers due to the number of peer team members from our agency directly involved in working the scene. They were additionally used in 2022 for an officer involved shooting involving multiple officers and for officers experiencing significant personal issues at home.*

### **Transcendental Meditation**

Research has shown that mindfulness training is critically important to effectively deal with stress. The Herndon Police Department recognized that meditation could provide personnel with skills to cope with the daily challenges they face. As such, one of our lieutenants developed a contact with the David Lynch Foundation, which teaches Transcendental Meditation™. As a result of that contact, the Foundation offered to donate instructors to teach TM to HPD personnel through a grant at no cost to our agency. Over the course of 2021, the David Lynch Foundation provided an onsite certified instructor to train 25 personnel who had a desire to incorporate TM into their daily lives. The first group that was trained was the chief and her administrative staff. The Town's Risk Manager was also invited to participate in the training to demonstrate the department's proactive efforts to support officer mental health and wellness. Additional personnel were trained in 2022, to add to the number of employees participating in the program. Frequent check-ins occur with our TM instructor to assist us in keeping on track and to answer any questions we have about our practice.

Herndon Police Department personnel are provided on duty time to meditate each workday and a comfortable location in which to do so. Those that have incorporated meditation into their lives have discussed the positive effect it has had on managing daily stress.

In 2022, the David Lynch Foundation produced a professional video regarding their pilot program with the Herndon Police Department. The purpose of the video was to highlight the success of the program and encourage other first responders to consider TM as a wellness tool. That video can be found at:

[\(99\) Developing Resilience at the Herndon PD - YouTube](#)

As chief, I was invited to speak at the David Lynch Foundation's Meditate New York Gala in New York City in September of 2022 to talk about the effects of TM on first responder mental health. This opportunity allowed me to highlight our pilot program and personally talk about the benefits it has provided to those of us who have regularly embraced the practice.

### **Mental Health Diversion Policies**

The department's administrative lieutenants helped to develop best practice policies to provide leadership with opportunities for diversion treatment in lieu of or in addition to discipline for performance issues that arise, where applicable. These avenues for diversion allow division commanders ways in which to treat underlying mental or physical health issues that interfere with performance, so the problems do not repeat themselves, as well as provide officers a path towards post-traumatic growth. Personnel are still held

accountable for performance issues, but through the internal investigation process, diversion policies provide a method to mandate therapy to deal with root causes, instead of simply treating the behaviors.

*This policy was used in 2021 to mandate assistance for an officer who had performance issues but was found to be struggling with significant personal stress. This mandated assistance allowed us to eventually return the officer back to full duty.*

### **Early Warning System**

The department recognizes that poor performance and behavior often has a root cause that can be addressed successfully if discovered early. As a result, the department has established an Early Warning System to identify officers in need of structured intervention measures to address problematic behavior or other potential issues.

The objective of an Early Warning System review is to recognize incidents, practices, or patterns of behavior that negatively impact the department's mission or the officer's performance, and provide structured intervention through monitoring, training, counseling, or other productive means to improve performance. If it is determined that intervention is warranted, the appropriate division commander works with the officer's supervisor to propose an intervention plan that may include training, EAP or peer counseling, or other methods that would support improvement.

*This process was used successfully over the past two years to separate one officer from the agency, and to put another officer on a positive path forward.*

### **Critical Incident Exposure Form**



Our administrative support lieutenants introduced and developed a Critical Incident Exposure Report form that personnel and supervisors are asked to use to document on duty exposures to traumatic incidents such as child death investigations, police involved shootings, etc. These forms simply document the involvement of the officer or dispatcher in an on-duty traumatic incident over the course of a career. They are intended to help support future workers compensation claims of PTSD, depression, or anxiety, should an officer need mental health resources and treatment due to an exposure. These forms will also be invaluable to assist police psychologists in treating those struggling from work-related stress.

These forms are not mandatory, and officers may fill them out themselves, or a supervisor can complete it. Officers are encouraged to maintain a copy for themselves. The forms are not placed in an officers personnel file, nor are they sent up the chain of command or to Human Resources. No HIPAA information is included on the form. If filled out, a copy is sent to the administrative lieutenant in charge of the peer support team, who is also our liaison with our psychologist. These forms remain in that file until the officer separates from the department. At that time, the officer is given the entire file to take with them.

This documentation will be critical due to the upcoming changes in Virginia State Code regarding the ability for law enforcement officers to secure workers compensation for mental health treatment if diagnosed with PTSD, depression, or anxiety. The legislation states that these conditions MUST have resulted from an on-duty exposure to one of five qualifying events such as traumatic exposures to a crime scene, traffic accident, involvement in a use of force incident that leads to death or serious injury, etc. By using some standard format to capture these exposures, officers will be in a better position to support their need to secure workers compensation covered treatment from a mental health professional.



## Critical Incident Exposure Report

<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Herdon Police Department Critical Incident Exposure Report</b></p> </div> <p>This is a report of exposure to a critical incident to be submitted to the Herdon Police Department. This is not a worker's compensation claim form. Employees will be afforded the opportunity to fill out this form if they were involved in a critical incident. A list of events that may be stressful critical incidents are: officer involved shootings, serious crash involving a serious injury or death, officer being the victim of a terrorist assault, death or serious injury of a colleague or partner, death or serious injury to someone in custody, near shoot situations, severe trauma or death involving children, elderly and other vulnerable populations, particularly if officer has a child near scene, rape, homicide involving multiple deaths, or injuries in a short period of time, direct personal contact with victims, unsuccessful rescue attempt, sensitive human acts, perceived personal threat, excessive media coverage or a negative outcome.</p> <p>Each officer's threshold for emotional trauma is different, and there is a cumulative effect to such exposures. Being able to teach exposures following a critical or potentially traumatic incident will help the department to better understand how critical incidents affect officer's mental health and what help or treatment may be needed in the short and long term. Training "to risk" incidents and giving better support to officers "early on" will help officer's mental/emotional wellness as well as reduce absenteeism and suspension status. The form also provides valuable information that may be used later to support a potential worker's compensation claim for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).</p> <p>Remember to employees, if you are diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and you believe the stress could be work related and desire to establish a claim, you must complete and submit the worker's report of injury form within one year of the diagnosis. <a href="#">Link to WSJI Web Site</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Please submit this completed report to the Assistant Support Services Commander</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>It is recommended that you attach a copy of the event or report to this document for future reference.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The form can only be obtained and viewed by the employee, clinicians, and the Assistant Support Services Commander.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Page 1 of 2</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Herdon Police Department Critical Incident Exposure Report</b></p> </div> <p><b>OFFICER INFORMATION</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">First Name</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Last Name</td> <td style="width: 25%;">DOB</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Assignment</td> <td>Unit</td> <td>Rate On Scale</td> <td>How Often</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unit #</td> <td>Supervisor</td> <td>Emergency Contact</td> <td>Phone Number</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cell Number</td> <td>Alternate Number</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Manager/Supervisor's Name</p> <p><b>CRITICAL INCIDENT DETAILS</b></p> <p>Date of Incident: _____ Type of Call: _____</p> <p>Event # _____ Crew # _____</p> <p>Describe Nature of Incident: _____</p> <p>Describe Officer/Employee Involvement: _____</p> <div style="background-color: black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Signature of Employee: _____ Date: _____</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Page 2 of 2</p>	First Name	Last Name	DOB		Assignment	Unit	Rate On Scale	How Often	Unit #	Supervisor	Emergency Contact	Phone Number	Cell Number	Alternate Number		
First Name	Last Name	DOB															
Assignment	Unit	Rate On Scale	How Often														
Unit #	Supervisor	Emergency Contact	Phone Number														
Cell Number	Alternate Number																

### Managing Work Fatigue

The department recognizes that fatigue is a contributing factor that affects the safety, performance, and long-term health of employees. The department has a responsibility to ensure its officers are not placed in a position where working an excessive number of hours creates an unsafe situation for the officer, the town, or the community. As such, our general orders restrict officers from engaging in law enforcement services and security related work for more than 16 hours in a 24-hour period or any combination of overtime for more than 120 hours in any pay period. Law enforcement services and security related work includes time spent on-duty during the officer's normal shift, while participating in planned or unplanned department sponsored overtime and supplemental assignments, court appearances, law enforcement training, and law enforcement services or security related off-duty employment.

Exceptions are made due to unanticipated or ongoing critical operations. During such events, supervisors are responsible to make effective decisions to ensure officer safety and request additional resources if necessary. If at any time an employee demonstrates or expresses fatigue, the employee will be released from duty and provided with a rest opportunity. This may include transportation of the member to their residence or other location.

### Restoration and Recovery Room ("Nap Room")

A Restoration and Recovery Room, or "nap" room as it is commonly referred to, was established in HPD to provide officers and dispatchers a safe place to take a 20–30-minute power nap, meditate, or otherwise use as a quiet space to decompress. Officers and dispatchers work long, varied shifts and are routinely working in states of sleep deprivation. Research overwhelmingly supports the fact that rested first responders are safer and make better decisions in the field. Better decisions in the field lead to better interactions with our community, as well as less chance for accidents.

One of our lieutenants worked diligently to construct this space and make it a comfortable and inviting environment. Recliners, dim lighting, dark paint, and a sound machine contribute to a soothing environment. The lieutenant took it upon himself to paint the room instead of waiting for town personnel to do so. A policy was developed to ensure both accountability and safety while the room was in use.

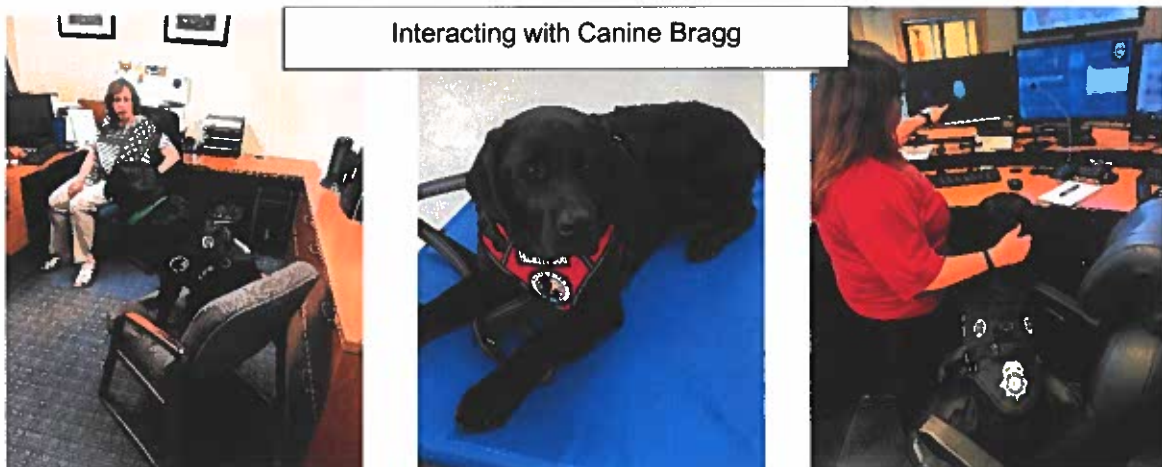
Because the room remains darkened most of the time, a sign was installed on the wall next to the door that slides to "occupied/unoccupied" so those using the room are not interrupted.

Before this room was created, officers would routinely catch short naps in their cruisers when sleep deprived or while waiting to go to court or drive home after an extended shift. This is a reality throughout our profession that most will not openly discuss. The increased targeting of our law enforcement officers, however, makes this practice even more dangerous today. This nap room creates a safe place for officers to take a short nap without judgment. Officers also use this room to catch a short nap while waiting to attend court after their shift or after court before they drive home. The room is also used for meditation by our staff and can be utilized as a private space for female employees to lactate after the birth of a child.



### Facility Dog

A decision was made to add a dedicated facility dog to our HPD family to assist our personnel with daily stress and trauma exposure. One of our lieutenants made contact with a non-profit organization based out of Virginia Beach, VA, (Mutts With a Mission), who trained and placed dogs with veterans suffering from PTSD. The organization had recently begun to place some of their dogs with law enforcement agencies as facility dogs, where they could serve an entire group of first responders as opposed to one individual with PTSD. As a result of the relationship that our lieutenant developed, and the efforts he made to establish our agency as a worthy recipient of a facility dog, the Herndon Police Department was selected to receive a dog for our agency.



In April of 2020, Canine Bragg joined the HPD family and had an immediate positive impact on personnel. One of our captains was chosen to be Bragg's handler based on his regular but flexible administrative shift schedule and his training in peer support. K9 Bragg was embraced by staff from his first day on the job, and leadership quickly noticed the positive difference in the personalities of several employees due to his presence. Bragg can often be found during the day visiting various parts of the station, sitting in dispatch, begging in the lunchroom around noon, or hanging out in investigations visiting with the detectives. Bragg and his handler have also visited some of our local schools for various special events, which has helped break down barriers between the police and our community. He has been an ambassador for us to talk to the community about the impact that stress has on our profession and our need for mental health resources.

### **Chaplain Program**

In 2022, the department formed a partnership with the Herndon United Methodist Church and started a formal police chaplain program with two of their pastors. The pastors have come to roll calls and introduced themselves to the officers and have begun to conduct ride-alongs to learn more about the department and the officers. They will be used to assist our officers with difficult incidents in the community, as well as be another resource for officers who wish to talk privately about difficulties they may be having.

An HPD captain has taken the lead for this program due to his background in theology studies. He has identified recommended police chaplain training for these new pastors to attend and will be working with them to get it scheduled during this calendar year. While they await formal training, they continue to work informally with HPD on various events and incidents.

### **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

The town provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which offers counseling and support services for personnel at no cost. The EAP can assist with a variety of problems whether personal or job-related. Any employee or family member may initiate a request for help by calling EAP without going through the chain of command and the services provided are strictly confidential. Personnel are provided information on how to access EAP during their hiring orientation with the Department of Human Resources and information is also posted in the police department. This information is readily accessible to personnel electronically or by phone.

Supervisors also can make employee referrals to EAP when they determine someone needs services. If a work performance problem continues and the employee does not voluntarily consult with EAP, the supervisor can initiate a formal referral for the employee. The supervisor must contact EAP and register the referral. The supervisor is not entitled to any information discussed between the employee and EAP, but EAP will confirm with the supervisor if the employee has called to schedule an appointment and verify their attendance. The department has successfully used both voluntary and mandatory referrals in the past few years to help employees cope with personal problems.

### **Suicide Awareness Training**

Suicide awareness training has been provided to officers through a variety of training platforms over the years. The department, however, recognizes this growing crisis within the profession and took steps to

conduct formal training to all personnel in in 2022. An additional police psychologist who has been recently brought onto our contract assisted in conducting the training. The training was delivered both virtually and in-person in roll calls using videos that were developed depicting officers from our neighboring jurisdictions that have been personally affected by this growing crisis.

Additionally, our executive staff encourages open discussion about police suicides that occur in our region. Our senior staff also talks about officers we know that have taken their own lives, how those signs and red flags became clear after the officer's death, and how they can engage other officers in conversation when issues of concern are voiced. Our department also encourages our personnel to honor those who take their own life, and not allow the stigma of suicide to diminish their dedicated service.

### **Fitness Facility**

Department personnel have 24-hour access to a well-equipped gymnasium that contains functional fitness, strength, and cardio equipment. Personnel are provided one hour to work out on duty each shift, provided that operational demands allow. Personnel also have full access to this facility before or after work, and on days off. A signup sheet is in the facility to document employee use in the event of a workman's compensation claim.

The Town of Herndon also has its own Community Center with an indoor pool, gymnasium, strength and cardio equipment, tennis courts, and fitness classes. All personnel have free access to this facility and the classes that are offered, on or off duty. In addition, the Town's golf course is free to all employees.



### **Mandatory Fitness and Education Program**

Starting January 2023, the department instituted a mandatory fitness program for all sworn officers that involves three components: monthly to bi-monthly squad workouts, annual fitness assessment, and annual wellness education. The purpose of this program is to promote morale and personal well-being by promoting individual health and fitness, strengthen officers' ability to respond to increasing physical demands of the law enforcement profession, and increase resilience and the ability to manage emotional and physical stress, enhance mental alertness, and reduce tension. The program is optional for all non-sworn staff.

Officers will be asked to volunteer their health measurements such as height, weight, bodyfat, blood pressure, and BMI that will be recorded on a form that will be kept by the fitness coordinators. For those that agree to participate, these vitals will be recorded and used as a baseline in the program. These measurements will be taken once a year at the annual assessment to determine progress and whether individual goals are being met.

### **Monthly Squad Workouts**

Monthly squad workouts are led by one or two of the department's fitness coordinators. These squad workouts typically involve a variety of exercises executed through a variety of stations that the officers rotate through. The fitness coordinators first explain and demonstrate the exercises and offer a modified version for those where needed. The workouts, which include a warmup and cool down, last approximately one hour and are the same for all squads each month. The workouts are occurring either before or at the end of the officer's shift. All sworn officers are required to attend these workouts, up to the chief of police.



### **Annual Fitness Assessment**

Each year, officers will be required to take a physical fitness assessment that rates them in a variety of categories according to age and gender. Each officer will be assessed in the following categories:

- Plank hold (max time)
- Body weight squats (max repetitions in 1 minute)
- Push-ups (max repetitions in 1 minute)

Officers have three choices regarding their preferred aerobic assessment:

- 1.5-mile run
- 300m shuttle run
- 1000m row

Officers do not have to achieve a particular level, but their results will be recorded and compared to next year's physical assessment to determine their individual progress. The first annual assessment is scheduled to occur in late April. Officers achieving the top level in each category will be provided an incentive (the town is still working on options such as a cash bonus or administrative days off). Internally, we are accepting input on how officers would like to be recognized through the department.

## **Fitness Education**

Each year, the department will deliver an educational topic on a particular area of fitness. This year, the Herndon Police Department applied for and was awarded a \$20K grant from the Bureau of Justice Administration (BJA) Training Grant Program. The grant funding is for wellness education from O2X, who will be doing a 4-hour training block at the end of March for all officers. With the training, officers will also be given a 1-year subscription to the O2X app on their smart phones, which contains daily workouts, recipes, mindfulness exercises, and more.

The Herndon Police Department also worked with O2X to host a 2-day All Women's Workshop, which will be held on March 8 and 9, 2023 at the Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy. This fitness workshop will be attended by women law enforcement officers and firefighters from across the country. HPD has two females that will be attending the training.



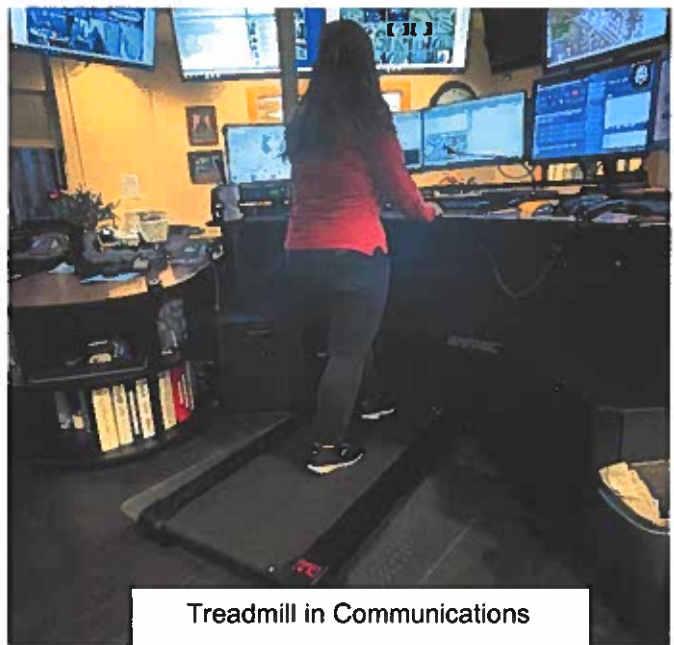
## **Fitness Coordinators**

The department has identified officers who have an interest or strong background in exercise and wellness and sent them to various training courses to increase their knowledge of health and wellness programs and practices. These officers have become the program's fitness coordinators and design and run the squad workouts, as well as coordinate the annual assessment. These officers can assist others with proper exercise instruction, as well as build programs for those with little experience. The department has trained officers in CrossFit, the Cooper Institute's law enforcement fitness standards, and O2X's functional fitness program, as examples of certified courses attended.

The department also has a sworn officer who is highly experienced in jiu jitsu who teaches the martial art to others who have an interest. He is also our lead physical control tactics and de-escalation instructor. The department has a mat room in the building that allows this training to be conducted onsite. This training not only increases physical fitness but teaches officers valuable skills that assist them in handling physical encounters and surviving ground fights on duty.

## **Walking Treadmill in Communications Center**

The Herndon Police Department has a Communications/Dispatch Center within its building. Our dispatchers work long 12-hour shifts, are required to sit, or be tethered to their consoles for much of that time, and do not have the ability to be outside and mobile like our officers. Despite having access to the fitness facility, a walking treadmill was purchased to allow dispatchers to stand and walk at low speeds while carrying out their dispatch duties.



Treadmill in Communications

New command consoles were purchased a few years ago to allow dispatchers to raise the desktops so they can use this treadmill or simply stand to increase their alertness and blood flow while taking calls for

service. A small number of dumbbells were also acquired for the dispatchers to use so they could remain in the Center and remain active and alert.

### **Annual Medical Physicals**

Medical physicals are mandated every 1, 2, or 3 years (depending on the age of the officer) through the Fairfax County Public Safety Occupational Health Center (OHC). The department is preparing to transition to a new occupational health center through the INOVA Hospital system beginning on July 1, 2023, that will provide additional services not previously available through the County's facility. The physical examination for sworn personnel is conducted to determine the employee's continued fitness to perform the tasks of a police officer and to inform them of their general physical health. Information is confidential and is reported to the Personnel and Training Section Supervisor. Officers must receive a Class B or greater rating to remain on active duty. Officers that receive lesser ratings will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may be placed on restricted duty pending resolution of the issue.

In addition to regular medical tests, exams, and blood work provided by the OHC, officers are also given stress tests, vaccines, and chest x-rays at various stages in their career. Officers are encouraged to drop in at the OHC to have blood drawn a week before their scheduled physical so the doctor can go over the results with them at the time of their medical exam.

Officers are also instructed to bring their issued gas mask/air purifying respirator (APR) with them when they come in for their medical physical. The OHC conducts fit testing on gas masks and on N95 masks as part of their exam. The department also has two officers trained to conduct fit testing at the department to ensure fit testing can be done on site when necessary.

Flu shots are made available annually through advertised locations in the County or are provided free of charge through Town insurance at local pharmacies within our jurisdiction.

### **Casualty Assistance Plan**

The department has a Casualty Assistance Plan which establishes guidelines and an operational framework for the department's response to a serious injury or death in the line of duty.

### **Financial Planning Resources**

The Town offers access to financial planning resources to all personnel for their Town 457 plans. Employees can work with the Town's Investment Advisor or use the online Web Education Portal to get assistance. A Financial Wellness section on the portal covers areas such as budgeting, home buying and mortgages, saving for retirement or kids college, and social security strategies. Employees can also sign up online to schedule one-on-one sessions with an advisor. Emails are sent out each year with the contact information for the Town's financial advisor with information on how they can make personal appointments.

The Florian Foundation was brought into roll calls on several occasions to conduct training for officers on the need to create personal wills and medical directives. This non-profit organization provides this service

at no cost to all first responders. Emails were also distributed to all sworn staff about this resource to connect them with this valuable service.

### **Wellness Resources for Spouses and Retirees**

One of the current challenges identified in our comprehensive wellness program is our inability to successfully reach and communicate with our officer's spouses or significant other. Ways to address this have been discussed with members from other local agencies who have made creative but unsuccessful attempts to get spouses to attend informational and educational training sessions. Having officers distribute information to their spouses has also proven to be unreliable. Contact and communication is best made with retired officers through email and social media.

Each year, retirees and the spouses and significant others of our personnel are invited to an annual recognition dinner. This event is always highly attended and is a time for everyone to celebrate the exceptional work of our officers and staff over the past year, as well as relax off duty in a fun and supportive environment that brings our families together. This has been the most productive way for the department to make connections with family and communicate our support for the work their loved ones do.

HPD is working with the Town's risk manager to draft a proposal for a supplemental workers compensation plan that will extend coverage for clinical support to the family members of officers seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. We are also looking to add coverage for treatment of anxiety and depression for dispatchers to this supplemental coverage, since they are not included in the Virginia legislation for workers compensation.

### **Conclusion**

The Herndon Police Department understands the importance of placing a focused effort on supporting our officer's overall health and wellness, for personal wellness and job performance. We also understand the importance of extending these same resources to all our professional staff, who support our daily mission to provide effective public safety services to our community. Our efforts have resulted in a holistic health, safety, and wellness program that has increased the opportunities for personnel to maintain positive mental and physical health in an increasingly difficult and stressful profession, as well as enhance our ability to remain safe on the job. Our program has also contributed to better working conditions and a healthy work culture within the agency, which has been a highly valuable selling point for our recruiting team, demonstrating our department's sincere care and concern for our employees. Our overall goal is to not only keep our officers physically safe and mentally well on the job, but to ensure they leave the profession whole, with the ability to enjoy their lives in retirement after years of dedicated public service.