


FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL POLICY MANUAL

	SUBJECT COMMUNITY RELATIONS	POLICY NUMBER 20.01
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20.01.01 PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for all personnel in promoting community relations between the Division and the public.

20.01.02 POLICY

It is the policy of the Florida Highway Patrol to maintain close community relations. This will assist the Division in better directing its resources toward meeting the needs of the citizens of the State of Florida, its visitors, and in developing public confidence in the Division.

The Florida Highway Patrol recognizes that community relations are an ongoing process. This policy provides general guidelines to allow for adaptation, as community needs change. The goal of this policy is to allow for a continuing development of policies, which improve Division practices related to community relations.

20.01.03 OBJECTIVES

- A. To minimize traffic crashes and the resulting fatalities, criminal activity resulting in injury or death and property loss through educational programs and safety awareness campaigns.
- B. To actively solicit information from the public regarding its perception of the Florida Highway Patrol utilizing a citizen survey. This information, along with official statistical data, may be used to assist the Division in formulating responses to the public's needs. A written summary of the compiled results from the citizen survey will be provided to the Director at least once every two years.
- C. To provide the public with a clear image of the Division through publicizing the Division's objectives, concerns, and successes in serving the public.

20.01.04 RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Each employee shall be responsible for the overall achievement of this policy. The public's image of this Division is often determined by the day-to-day contacts its employees have with the public. Therefore, it is incumbent upon each employee to exhibit professionalism and maintain objectivity in his or her dealings with the public.

- B. Troop Commanders and their Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) will be responsible for initiating and overseeing all community relations functions within their respective troops.
- C. The Chief of Public Affairs will coordinate community relations programs statewide, in consultation with the Director, or designee and the DHSMV Communications Director.

20.01.05 PROCEDURES

A. SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

1. Safety education programs and safety awareness campaigns will be used to promote highway safety, reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes, and reduce criminal acts committed on the highways.
2. Statewide programs and campaigns shall be coordinated through the DHSMV Communications Office and the Chief of Public Affairs.
3. Programs and campaigns will be developed to target specific groups of people. Targeted groups may include, but not be limited to, children, teenagers, aging or vulnerable road users; motorcyclists, commercial motor vehicle drivers, aggressive drivers, distracted drivers, impaired drivers, and safety belt or child restraint violators.
4. Due to the diverse demographics of the State of Florida, the Troop PAOs are encouraged to develop programs and campaigns, which target groups that may be unique to their area. These programs and campaigns shall be approved by the Chief of Public Affairs prior to implementation.
5. Other employees may be utilized to assist PAOs in presenting safety education programs.
6. Safety awareness campaigns should utilize all appropriate media platforms. The Chief of Public Affairs or designee shall be responsible for statewide releases, with the Troop PAOs providing assistance to local media. Other employees may be utilized in safety awareness campaigns when appropriate.

B. COMMUNITY GROUPS

1. Troop PAOs should maintain a liaison with active community groups in their area. Ideally, the community groups should represent a cross section of the area population.
2. Concerns voiced by community groups, which are pertinent to this Division and its mission, shall be forwarded to the respective Troop Commander and Troop PAO, the Chief of Public Affairs, and the DHSMV Communications Office.

3. The Troop PAOs will assist in the establishment of community groups, which have purposes consistent with the mission of this Division.

C. TRAINING

1. Identification of needed community relations training may come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to contacts and interviews that employees have with citizens and community groups.
2. Supervisors should remain cognizant of community relations issues in their daily contact with employees and citizens, particularly when conducting complaint investigations.
3. Community relations issues that may be addressed through employee training shall be forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief Training Officer and the Chief of Public Affairs.
4. The Chief Training Officer will determine whether the issue(s) can be effectively addressed through training. If it is determined that additional training is appropriate, the Chief Training Officer shall direct his/her staff to develop a curriculum. Consideration should be given to training that can be accomplished in the field.

D. PRESS RELEASES

1. Press releases should be utilized to publicize Division objectives, concerns, and successes in serving the public.
2. All press releases of this nature shall be done through the DHSMV Communications Office and the Chief of Public Affairs.
3. The Chief of Public Affairs may utilize the results of the citizen survey to generate a press release.