



SUISUN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

VOLUNTEERS IN POLICE SERVICE (VIPS)

HANDBOOK

This handbook MUST be reviewed and signed by each new volunteer before acceptance into the Suisun City Police Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program. In addition to this handbook, the Suisun City Police Department (SCPD) has specific policies governing the volunteer program which are outlined in the SCPD policy manual. This VIPS handbook is to be used as a guideline and is a supplement to the SCPD volunteer policy.

WELCOME MESSAGE

On behalf of the Suisun City Police Department, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the VIPS Program. We appreciate your commitment and willingness to serve our Police Department and the City of Suisun City. This handbook will outline the expectations and guidelines for the VIPS program. We look forward to getting to know you.

PROGRAM MISSION

The VIPS Program is committed to assisting the Suisun City Police Department with our goal of enhancing community safety, protecting life and property, and reducing crime and the fear of crime.

The Suisun City Police Department's Community Policing Philosophy represents the foundation for the development of partnerships, orientation to the community, effective problem solving and public service. As a volunteer in police services, you have taken an obligation to serve the public and maintain the highest ethical standards in both personal and official conduct.

INTRODUCTION

The Suisun City Police Department VIPS program is an adult, civilian volunteer program that operates out of the Suisun City Police Department. VIPS can be assigned to duties in either the Operations or Support Divisions. Each VIPS volunteer is encouraged to take responsibility for the different facets of the VIPS program's operations and activities. The VIPS personnel will foster within the program a true sense of community, volunteerism and responsibility. VIPS will work in a spirit of partnership and cooperation with the VIPS Coordinator. VIPS will uphold the standards and policies of the Suisun City Police Department and will ensure that all VIPS activities are conducted within safety guidelines and requirements.

The policies and procedures in this handbook are not intended to be contractual by the Suisun City Police Department. The VIPS shall not construe them as such.

The policies and procedures are intended to guide and manage, and are merely descriptive of suggested procedures to be followed. The Chief of Police and his or her designee reserves the right to revoke, change or supplement the guidelines at any time without notice.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Suisun City Police Department VIPS program is to recruit adult citizen volunteers from the community and have them assist the Suisun City Police Department in daily operations that serve the community. These duties include, but are not limited to: support services, field operations, citizen assistance and other functions supported by the City of Suisun City and the Suisun City Police Department. All VIPS are volunteers working in at will positions.

This Handbook is intended to inform you about the Suisun City Police VIPS philosophy, practices, policies, and training, as well as the benefits provided to you as a valued volunteer.

VIPS policies, benefits and rules, as explained in this Handbook, may be changed from time to time as business, volunteer legislation, and economic conditions dictate. If and when provisions are changed, all VIPS will be notified of the changes in writing.

What VIPS Expects from You

Your first responsibility is to know your own duties and how to perform them promptly, correctly, and pleasantly. Secondly, you are expected to cooperate with the management team, all city employees, and your fellow volunteers to maintain a good team attitude. How you interact with fellow volunteers, staff and the public, and how you accept direction can affect the success of our department, as well as the service delivered to the community. Whatever your position, you have an important assignment: perform every task to the best of your ability.

If you ever have a question, or a problem arises, please feel comfortable discussing the issue with the Community Engagement Coordinator or your direct supervisor. We appreciate your time and commitment to the department and the community, and we want you to be happy and productive volunteers.

What You Can Expect From VIPS

1. Be assigned appropriate assignments according to your skill, interests, availability, and training.
2. Be trusted with confidential information that will help carry out assignments.
3. Receive orientation, training, and supervision for the jobs you accept and a thorough explanation of why you are being asked to do a particular job.
4. That your time will not be wasted by lack of planning, coordination and cooperation within the department.
5. Expect that your individual rights will be respected, and that all volunteers will be treated with courtesy and consideration.
6. Discuss any problem with the Volunteer Coordinator to receive prompt and fair disposition of any complaints which may arise.

CONFIDENTIALITY

As a volunteer, you will be exposed to sensitive information. You must treat all information you see, hear, or become aware of while working for the Police Department as confidential. Volunteers may not discuss or give official information to any persons unless directed to do so by supervisors or as required by law. Such information includes (but is not limited to): personal addresses or phone numbers of Police Department staff and all reports dealing with members of the public. The content of any criminal record or investigation in the department **shall not** be shown or divulged to anyone except authorized persons. Do not share or reveal anything to anyone outside of the Department. Any violation of confidentiality will result in immediate dismissal from the program, and the possibility of civil and criminal charges.

VIPS QUALIFICATION

VIPS candidates must meet the following requirements:

- 18 years old or older
- A United States citizen or naturalized citizen of the United States
- Pass an interview with the VIPS Coordinator and Police Commander
- Pass a background check which may include, but is not limited to interviews with family members, friends, neighbors, references, previous or current employers and existing VIPS
- Pass a fingerprint check through the California Department of Justice (CA DOJ)
- Pass a Chief's (or his/her designee) interview

VIPS APPLICATION & HIRING PROCESS

Interested candidates must submit a completed City of Suisun City volunteer application to the VIPS coordinator. An interview will be scheduled with the VIPS coordinator and the Police Commander. If the VIPS candidate is successful in this interview, the VIPS candidate will be required to complete a background packet.

If the VIPS candidate is successful in the background phase, an interview with the Chief, or his or her designee, will be scheduled. Upon passing the Chief's interview, the VIPS will be assigned to the VIPS coordinator for training and receipt of issued equipment.

It should be noted that due to the limited number of volunteer positions, not all qualified candidates will be offered positions. SCPD reserves the right to choose the most qualified candidate to fill the volunteer positions.

VIPS ACCESS TO THE SUISUN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

VIPS have access to the Suisun City Police Department twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. VIPS can enter the building through the front door and the rear entry doors.

In an emergency, VIPS can report to the police department to assist the department's response to a disaster or emergency.

VIPS are not allowed to have any visitors in the police department building unless approved in advance by the VIPS Coordinator or Watch Commander. VIPS should only be in the police building when they are on duty, engaged in a sanctioned VIPS function, or retrieving equipment or information for a VIPS related duty. VIPS should not remain in the building without a VIPS related purpose.

RECRUITMENT

The VIPS Coordinator, Suisun City Police Department staff and current VIPS are encouraged to recruit adult citizen volunteers from the community.

REQUIREMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

VIPS must, at all times, understand they will be recognized by the community and must always keep in mind that they are a direct reflection on the Suisun City Police Department and the Suisun City Police Department's VIPS program, even when they are off duty.

In the event that a report is made to the VIPS Coordinator that a VIPS has presented himself or herself in a manner that is unbecoming to the VIPS program or the community, and/or in a manner that causes the VIPS program or the Suisun City Police Department embarrassment, that VIPS may be placed on administrative leave while the matter is investigated. This investigation may be formal or informal. If the investigation determines that the VIPS represented himself or herself in such a manner, the VIPS could face disciplinary action up to and including termination from the VIPS program.

ATTENDANCE

VIPS must attend all mandatory quarterly VIPS meetings. Quarterly VIPS meetings will take place four times throughout the year, and plenty of advance notice of the meeting will be given. Attendance will be taken at all meetings. VIPS requesting an excused absence shall contact the VIPS Coordinator in advance of any such absence. Excused absences, with the exception of an emergency, are generally permitted.

Acceptable excused absences include:

- Family Obligations
- Illness or injury
- Employment
- Prior engagement

If a VIPS is repeatedly absent from mandatory meetings and events, he/she will be evaluated by the VIPS Coordinator and may be placed on suspension or terminated.

All meetings, trainings, duty hours, ride-a-longs, and other community volunteer hours count as volunteer hours. It is the responsibility of each VIPS to log their volunteer hours in the volunteer hour log binder located in the VIPS office area.

HOURS OF WORK

The goal for the volunteer assignments is a minimum of eight (8) hours per month, but VIPS are encouraged to volunteer more time if they are available. Hours of service will vary based on type of assignment, events, training, etc. Volunteers may work up to 40 hours per week, as long as assignments are approved in advance by the VIPS Coordinator. Volunteers failing to meet the minimum number of hours may be placed on an inactive status or terminated from the VIPS Program. In the event you are unable to perform your assignment (sickness or planned vacation) please notify the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as practical.

LEAVE OF ABSENCES

A leave of absence may be granted when a VIPS is unable to attend meetings, trainings and events for an extended period of time. VIPS shall contact the VIPS Coordinator regarding the reason for the leave of absence. A leave of absence is limited to six months.

If a leave of absence extends beyond a six month period, the VIPS may request an extension of their leave of absence. If the VIPS' leave of absence is going to extend beyond one year, the VIPS must turn in their uniform and issued equipment, which may be reissued upon their return to the program. If the leave of absence is for a medical reason, a medical release will be required before reinstatement into the VIPS program.

VIPS EMAIL

VIPS will be assigned a Suisun City email address. VIPS be required to check their email inbox at the beginning of any volunteer shift.

VIPS TRAINING

After the VIPS complete their initial training, on-going training will be scheduled as needed for the entire volunteer staff. As a volunteer, it is the VIPS responsibility to become familiar with the police department procedures, both written and verbal, that pertains to your job assignment. All volunteers are expected to attend training sessions.

VIPS training sessions may sometimes be scheduled in conjunction with regular department training when relevant to the VIPS duties. Before a VIPS can be assigned full field operation duties they must attend and successfully complete the following four trainings:

- Police Radio Operations
- Police Publication Creation
- Low Speed Driving
- Field Operations

After successfully completing the four trainings, the VIPS will be tested in a scenario training that incorporates these four learning domains. VIPS must attend and pass the Low Speed driving training prior to being authorized to operate a city vehicle.

If a VIPS misses training, make-up training will be offered when reasonable for both the department and the VIPS.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The chain of command established for the efficient operation of the program is as follows:

- Chief of Police
- Police Commanders (VIPS Coordinator)
- Police Sergeants / Civilian Police Supervisors
- Police Department Staff (Sworn or Civilian)
- Community Engagement Coordinator
- VIPS

VIPS shall report to the person directly above them in the chain of command for tasks assignments and direction. If a VIPS is unable to contact the supervisor directly above them (in a reasonable amount of time), the VIPS may proceed to the next person in the chain of command. The VIPS Coordinator has the final say on issues relating to the VIPS program. The determination of the VIPS Coordinator shall be final. The VIPS Coordinator is the VIPS last option in the chain of command. It will be the responsibility of the VIPS Coordinator to extend beyond the chain of command if it becomes necessary. In this instance, the VIPS Coordinator will report to the Police Chief.

When VIPS are assigned to a police officer or community service officer (such as when on a special assignment or a ride-along) that officer or community service officer becomes an interim supervisor for the purposes of the chain of command.

VIPS will not be insubordinate. Insubordination is defined as the act of disrespect and/or being disobedient to a superior in accordance to the chain of command. Any such instances of insubordination may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

EQUIPMENT

VIPS shall bring all necessary uniform items and equipment to all activities. The VIPS Coordinator or a VIPS will complete an equipment check out form when issuing equipment to VIPS. VIPS will be responsible for ensuring that all equipment is returned to its proper place.

Portable radios will be issued to VIPS on an “as needed” basis. Prior to carrying portable radios, VIPS are required to complete Police Radio Operation training and pass a written radio codes test given by the VIPS Coordinator. VIPS will be professional, courteous and brief on the radio at all times and will identify themselves using their assigned call sign.

VIPS will not carry or transport any firearms or other weapons at any time unless directed by a police department supervisor or manager. Weapons are described as follows but are not limited to the following: handguns, shotguns, pepper spray, batons, Tasers, rifles, etc.

Any damage to a piece of equipment or vehicle must be immediately reported to the supervisor on duty or to the Volunteer Coordinator when he/she is on duty.

UNIFORMS

VIPS shall wear their appropriate uniform during all events and volunteer hours, unless directed otherwise by the VIPS Coordinator. Uniforms will consist of Suisun City Police Volunteer polo shirts and clean navy blue pants or blue jeans with black tennis shoes or boots with a black logo. Special assignments in warm months (i.e. 4th off July), will allow VIPS to wear their SCPD Polo with navy blue shorts that extend to the knee. SCPD will provide: (1 Volunteer polo, 1 pair of 5.11 navy pants and one pair of black tennis shoes without a logo) to each VIPS volunteer. Alternate VIPS uniforms including, a VIPS t-shirt may be worn for special assignments, with prior approval of the VIPS Coordinator. VIPS uniforms will always appear clean.

VIPS must follow the VIPS dress code at all times when they are at the police station. When VIPS are at the station in civilian attire, their VIPS identification cards must be worn visibly around the neck on the issued lanyard. VIPS may not wear any badge, insignia, clothing items or hats that identify them as being affiliated with the Suisun City Police Department while off duty.

VIPS Uniform:

- Navy blue VIPS polo shirt with SCPD patch and VIPS volunteer name embroidered on it.
- Navy blue 5.11 pants or blue jeans without holes, rips, decoration or large logo.
- Black plain boots or tennis shoes
- SCPD ID card on issued lanyard when appropriate
- SCPD issued baseball cap or shorts can be worn when appropriate
- SCPD VIPS t-shirt, for special assignment with VIPS Coordinator approval
- Black jacket without visible logos

In the event a VIPS reports for an activity and is not properly dressed according to the uniform designated for that activity, the VIPS will not be allowed to participate and will be dismissed for that activity. Dismissal from an activity will be considered an unexcused absence.

Hair will be neat and clean.

Necklaces must be tucked inside underneath the shirt and may not be visible. A wrist watch may be worn as long as the style is not distracting. VIPS will maintain good hygiene at all times.

RIDE-A-LONGS

- VIPS may participate in a maximum of (1) 4 hour ride-along per month so long as all VIPS requirements and expectations have been met. Hours spent on a ride-along are applicable towards the minimum volunteer hour requirement.
- VIPS participating in a ride-along may not ride past midnight without permission from the on duty supervisor or VIPS Coordinator.
- All ride-alongs must be approved by the VIPS Coordinator at least one week prior to the requested date.
- VIPS will follow the instructions of the assigned police officer. VIPS will treat officers with respect and be mindful of the officer's obligations during the period of the ride-along.
- VIPS may, at the direction of the officer, accompany the officer on non-hazardous calls. During hazardous calls and traffic stops, VIPS will remain in the police vehicle unless directed by a police officer. VIPS will not take any action in the field unless directed to do so by the police officer.
- VIPS will only handle property or evidence in the presence of and at the direction of a police officer or police assistant.
- VIPS will at no time follow police officers to calls in their personal vehicles.

If a VIPS violates any of the rules in this section, he/she will not be permitted to participate in the ride-along program and could be subject to disciplinary action.

CODES TEST

All VIPS must successfully pass the codes test to participate in any field operation functions. VIPS must receive and maintain a score of 80% or higher in order to perform field operations functions.

RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY

If a VIPS working in the field comes across an emergency situation, the VIPS should get to a safe location. Once safe, the VIPS should notify Dispatch the nature of the emergency by radio. VIPS shall not intervene in any emergency call that could place that VIPS in a perilous position (i.e. physical altercation, theft or robbery, domestic dispute, etc.).

VIPS may also be called to the scene of an incident in order to assist with an emergency. VIPS are not allowed to respond to an emergency in a “code 3” manner and will follow all rules of the road while driving a city owned vehicle.

If a VIPS is called to an emergency while they are off duty, the VIPS should respond to the police department in uniform in order to procure the necessary equipment for their anticipated assignment. After obtaining any necessary equipment, the VIPS should respond to the scene of the emergency. Once on scene, the VIPS will check in at the designated area, or with dispatch, before assisting with the incident. It is the responsibility of the VIPS to notify the department if they are unable to assist in the incident due to any impairment before responding to the scene (i.e. recent consumption of alcoholic beverages, ingesting prescribed medication, etc.)

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Performance improvement may be suggested whenever the VIPS Coordinator believes a VIPS’ performance is less than satisfactory and can be resolved through counseling and/or training. Counseling and/or training is completely at the discretion of the VIPS Coordinator. The VIPS program desires to protect its investment in the time and expense devoted to VIPS’ orientation and training. It is the goal of the program to improve the performance of a VIPS if their performance is substandard. The VIPS program reserves the right to terminate VIPS “at will,” which means at **any** time and for **any** reason.

The VIPS Coordinator will determine the course of action best suited for the circumstance. The steps in performance improvement are as follows:

- **Counseling Session**

A counseling session is a step in correcting unacceptable performance and/or behavior. The VIPS Coordinator will review pertinent position requirements and/or expectations with the VIPS to ensure his/her understanding of them. The VIPS Coordinator will consider the severity of the problem, the VIPS’ previous conduct, performance reviews, if any, and all of the circumstances surrounding the particular case. The incident will be documented to improve performance.

- **Suspension**

A suspension may be justified when circumstances reasonably require an investigation of an incident in which the VIPS was allegedly involved or as part of punishment.

- **Involuntary Termination**

Involuntary termination is reserved for those cases that cannot be resolved by counseling or suspension and in these cases a violation has occurred which cannot be tolerated. In this circumstance the VIPS Coordinator will notify the VIPS of their termination. The VIPS will be directed to turn in all Suisun City Police Department VIPS property. VIPS do not have the right to appeal termination.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Whenever people gather together to achieve goals, some rules are needed to help everyone function together efficiently, effectively, and harmoniously. VIPS hold themselves to a high standard of quality where rules and authority figures simply assure the quality is maintained.

By accepting to be a volunteer with us, you have a responsibility to the Suisun City Police Department VIPS Program, and to your fellow volunteers, to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that you understand what conduct in your personal life and in your volunteer position is expected and necessary.

In the event a complaint from a citizen, or another member of the department, is made about your conduct, the Suisun City Police Department reserves the right to review your suitability for the VIPS Program. At any time, the Suisun City Police Department may dismiss any volunteer at will. Any volunteer charged with misconduct has the right to appeal through the appropriate channels.

The following definitions and classification of violations for which a counseling session, performance improvement, or other disciplinary action may be taken, are merely examples and not limited to these specific violations. A particular violation may be minor or major, depending on the facts or circumstances of the incident. Violations of rules of conduct include but are not limited to:

Minor Violations

Minor violations are less serious violations that have some effect on the continuity, efficiency of work, safety and harmony within the VIPS program. They typically lead to a counseling session, unless repeated, or when unrelated incidents occur in rapid succession. Examples are:

1. Tardiness
2. Unsatisfactory performance
3. Accidental damage of City of Suisun City or Suisun City Police Department property
4. Interfering with another VIPS' performance
5. Failure to report to their duty station on time or at all
6. Failure to notify the VIPS Coordinator of an absence before a function or meeting
7. Unprofessionalism
8. Rudeness / Discourtesy

Major Violations

Major violations are more serious violations, which would include any deliberate or willful infraction of VIPS policies, procedures and rules. Examples are:

1. Fighting while on-duty
2. Excessive absenteeism
3. Insubordination
4. Behavior unbecoming a VIPS
5. Unauthorized use of Suisun City telephones, internet or equipment
6. Repeated occurrences of related or unrelated minor violations, depending on the severity of the violation and the circumstances
7. Any act which might endanger the safety or lives of others
8. Leaving any event without notifying the VIPS Coordinator or supervisor
9. Bringing a firearm or weapon onto the premises without authorization
10. Deliberately stealing, destroying, abusing or damaging of Suisun City property
11. Disclosure of confidential information to unauthorized persons
12. Willfully disregarding policies and procedures
13. Willfully falsifying any record
14. Any act of moral turpitude
15. Theft
16. Any volunteer found to be under the influence of alcohol (the odor of alcohol shall be considered presumptive evidence) or illegal drugs when reporting for duty or while on duty shall be immediately dismissed
17. Volunteers using medication that causes drowsiness or hampers the ability to perform assigned duties in any way before or while on duty
18. Any volunteer entering into dangerous or hazardous situations
19. Any volunteer entering an open resident during a house check
20. Any volunteer found to be a participant of illegal activity shall be dismissed
21. Any volunteer releasing confidential department information or found misusing department resources or equipment shall be subject to dismissal
22. Any volunteer soliciting or accepting rewards or gratuities based on their association with the police department, while on or off duty including the acceptance of money, merchandise, personal services, and admission to entertainment
23. Sexual harassment or discrimination of any kid shall have zero tolerance

TERMINATION PROCESSING PROCEDURES

As a volunteer, you may be terminated from service at will. The Volunteer Coordinator will discuss with you the reason and every effort will be made to allow you to discuss the situation. However, it is the final decision of the Volunteer Coordinator.

Terminations are to be treated in a confidential, professional manner by all parties involved. The VIPS Coordinator must assure thorough and consistent termination procedures. Termination procedures are the following:

- **Resignation**

A voluntary termination

- **Dismissal**

An involuntary termination for substandard performance or misconduct

- **Substandard Performance**

A VIPS may be discharged if his/her performance is below standard

- **Misconduct**

VIPS found to be engaged in activities such as, but not limited to, theft of Suisun City property, insubordination, conflict of interest, major violation, or any other activities showing willful disregard for the interests of the City of Suisun City or Suisun City Police Department, will be terminated and notified of the termination.



SUISUN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF VIPS
PROCEDURES HANDBOOK**

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Suisun City
(Print Name)

Police VIPS Procedures Handbook, specifying guidelines, practices and regulations, which I agree to observe and follow during my dedication and commitment with the program. I understand that it is my responsibility to be familiar with its contents and to ask questions on any matters I do not understand. I also understand that in addition to the procedures handbook, I must also familiarize myself with the Suisun City Police Department Policy Manual.

VIPS' Signature

Date

WAIVER AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY / ASSUMPTION OF RISK

I fully understand the dangers involved in the activities for which I volunteer for the City of Suisun City, and hereby agree to accept any and all risks, including personal injury or death and/or property damage resulting therefrom, and I voluntarily and knowingly release and hold harmless the City of Suisun City, its officers, employees, volunteers, agents, and any persons or entities with which/whom the City is now or in the future affiliated (collectively "the City"), from any and all liability, lawsuits, or claims for injuries, death, or property damage resulting from, arising out of, or in any way connected with my involvement in the volunteer program. This waiver and release shall apply even in the event that such personal injury, death, or property damage is caused or contributed to in whole or part through the passive or active negligence of the City (with the exception of sole, active negligence). I further acknowledge that this Waiver and Release Form Liability/Assumption of Risk is binding on my heirs and dependants, as well as myself.

I also certify that I am not aware of any physical/health conditions that would create a likelihood of harm/injury to myself or others should I participate in a designated volunteer assignment. I further understand that no medical insurance is provided by the City which covers me.

I HAVE READ THIS WAIVER AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY/ ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND IT, AND RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS A LEGALLY BINDING DOCUMENT. I SIGN THIS WAIVER AND RELEASE FREELY, VOLUNTARILY, AND WITHOUT INDUCEMENT.

Signature

Date

Print Name

For Office Use Only

Live Scan Appointment: _____ Cleared Not Cleared Date: _____