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| Atlanta Police Department Policy Manual |  | Standard Operating Procedure |
| Effective Date April 15, 2013 | | APD.SOP.3084 Disabled Persons |
| Applicable To: All employees | | |
| Approval Authority: Chief George N. Turner | | |
| Signature: Signed by GNT | | Date Signed: 5/8/13 |

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1. PURPOSE

To establish a policy and procedure regarding the interaction of city of Atlanta employees with persons with disabilities.

2. POLICY

The Atlanta Police Department (APD) shall adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding interaction with persons with disabilities.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Division, section, and unit commanders shall monitor the implementation of this directive.

3.2 Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees are in compliance with this directive.

3.3 All employees are responsible for complying with this directive.

3.4 The Training Unit is responsible for providing entry level and refresher training for all employees regarding disabled persons.

4. ACTION

4.1 Blind or Visually Impaired

1. Visual impairment and blindness is vision loss to such a degree as to qualify as an additional support need through a significant limitation of visual capability resulting from either disease, trauma, or congenital or degenerative conditions that cannot be corrected by conventional means, such as refractive correction, medication, or surgery.

2. Responding to Crime Victims Who are Blind or Visually Impaired.



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- a. Introduce and identify yourself immediately as a law enforcement officer;
- b. Do not speak loudly for most people who are visually impaired hear well;
- c. Identify the person(s) to whom you are speaking when conversing in a group;
- d. Avoid lapses of conversation in your interview without informing the victims;
- e. Offer to fill out forms and read aloud written information for the victims;
- f. Never pet guide dogs without permission; and
- g. Orient the victims to their surroundings.

4.2 Dealing with Deaf or Hard of Hearing Persons

4.2.1 In general:

1. People who identify themselves as deaf or hard of hearing are entitled to a level of service equivalent to that provided to others.
2. APD will make every effort to ensure that its officers and employees communicate effectively with people who have identified themselves as deaf or hard of hearing.
3. Effective communication with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing involved in an incident, whether as a victim, witness, suspect, arrestee, or other persons connected to the situation, is essential in ascertaining what actually occurred, the urgency of the matter, and the specifics of the situation.
4. Various types of communication aids known as “auxiliary aids and services” are used to communicate with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These include: The use of gestures or visual aids to supplement oral communication, an exchange of written notes, use of a computer or typewriter, use of assistive listening devices (to amplify sound for persons who are hard of hearing), or use of qualified oral or sign language interpreters.
5. The type of aid that will be required for effective communication will depend on the individual’s usual method of communication, nature, importance, and duration of the communication at issue.
6. In many circumstances; oral communication supplemented by gestures and visual aids, an exchange of written notes, use of computers, smart phones, tablets, or use of an assistive listening device may be effective. In other circumstances, qualified sign language or oral interpreters are needed to communicate effectively with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. The more lengthy, complex, and important the communication, the more likely it is that a qualified interpreter will be required for effective communication with a person whose primary means of communication is sign language or speech reading. For example:
 - a. If there has been an incident and the officer is conducting witness interviews, a qualified sign language interpreter may be required to communicate effectively with someone whose primary means of communication is sign language.



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- b. If a person is asking an officer for directions to a location, gestures and an exchange of written notes will likely be sufficient to communicate effectively and a sign language interpreter is often not required.
7. To serve each individual effectively, primary consideration should be given to the communication aid or service that works best for that person. Officers must communicate with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Officers shall inquire as to what type of auxiliary aid or service the person needs so communication can proceed. Officers must defer to those expressed choices, unless there is another equally effective way of communicating, given the circumstances, length, complexity, and importance of the communication, as well as the communication skills of the person who is deaf or hard of hearing.
8. APD is not required to provide a particular auxiliary aid or service if doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the law enforcement activity in question and/or if it would cause an undue administrative or financial burden. Only the Chief of Police or his/her designee may make this determination.
9. The input of people who are deaf or hard of hearing who are involved in incidents is just as important to the law enforcement process as the input of others. Officers must not draw conclusions about incidents unless they fully understand and are understood by all of those involved; including persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

4.2.2 Responding to Crime Victims who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

1. Signal your presence to the victims by waving your hand or gently touching the victim's arm;
2. Determine how the victim desires to communicate;
3. Never use a child to communicate with adult victims;
4. Be careful not to assume that the victims hear well because they are wearing hearing aids;
5. Avoid shouting or speaking very slowly to make you heard and understood;
6. Never speak directly into a victim's ear;
7. Do not assume that the victims are unable to speak or use their voice;
8. Observe the victim's facial expression and other physical gestures; and
9. Officers must utilize the following auxiliary aids as appropriate, when available, to communicate effectively:
 - a. Use of gestures;
 - b. Use of visual aids;
 - c. Exchange of written notes;
 - d. Use of electronic devices such as computers, smart phones, and tablets;



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- e. Use of assistive listening devices;
- f. Use of teletypewriters (TTY's); and
- g. Use of qualified oral or sign language interpreters.

4.2.3 On-Call Interpreter Services

1. The Atlanta Police Department will provide access to a sign language interpreting service that will be available 24 hours a day, on an on-call basis.
2. The officer requiring the on-call sign language interpreter will notify his or her supervisor of the need for the service.
3. The supervisor will notify communications that a sign language interpreter is needed, while keeping in mind:
 - a. The need to provide effective means of communications between victims, witnesses, or suspects and the Atlanta Police Department; and
 - b. That use of this service is on a cost-per-use basis and intended for serious law enforcement related matters.
4. When a communications dispatcher or ACIC operator receives a request for a sign language interpreter, he or she will advise a communications supervisor who will make the request to Georgia Interpreting Services Network (GISN), if necessary. GISN can be reached at 404-521-9100 (Daytime Number) or at 678-776-0704 (After Hours and Weekends).
5. All additional notations pertaining to the use of GISN will be notated in the CADs.

4.2.4 TTY and Relay Services

In situations when a nondisabled person would have access to a telephone, officers must provide persons who are deaf or hard of hearing the opportunity to place calls using a text telephone (TTY, also known as a telecommunications device for deaf people, or TDD). Officers must also accept telephone calls placed by persons who are deaf or hard of hearing through the Telecommunications Relay Service.

5. DEFINITIONS

N/A

6. CANCELLATIONS

APD.SOP.3084 Mentally Ill and Disabled Persons, August 16, 2004

7. REFERENCES

OCGA: Title 30 Handicapped Persons

Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) 5th Edition



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State Law Enforcement Certification Program, 5th Edition

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)