



MYRTLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Subject: *Municipal Court Officer*

Number: *406*

Effective Date: *January 24, 2017*

Revised Date:

Rescinds:

Dated:

Approved By:

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and regulations for Municipal Court Officer, MCO, and their responsibilities related to providing a secure environment for Municipal Court Proceedings and other Administrative Events as deemed necessary.

DEFINITIONS

1. Municipal Court Officer: Full-time, Class III Officers of the Myrtle Beach Police Department tasked to perform all necessary duties relating to Court security and related Administrative Events such as City Council Meetings and/or Workshops.

PROCEDURE

1. General

Municipal Court Officers act under the direction of the Chief of Police and within the Administrative Division. While assigned to the Myrtle Beach Municipal Court, officers are to follow the directions of the Chief Municipal Judge in the performance of their daily duties in the Courtroom. MCOs shall obey and be directed by all City of Myrtle Beach policies, rules and regulations and all Police Department regulations and procedures. Failure of a MCO to comply with City and Department rules, regulations, policies, orders and directives may result in discipline up to and including dismissal.

2. Apparel and Appearance

Due to the decorum of these assignments, Officers will dress in a plain clothes manner to better blend into the environment and not to intimidate the general public or take focus away from the event they are providing security for. Municipal Court Officers will wear business attire on a daily basis. This business attire should consist of a suit and tie or sports coat and dress slacks during the week days and business casual on weekends. Officers will reflect a professional image and appearance while in the performance of their duties.

3. Equipment

MCOs will be issued all appropriate duty gear which may include but not be limited to a firearm w/ holster, magazines w/ holder, radio, handcuffs, ballistic vest, o/c spray, baton, Taser w/ holster.

4. Transportation

An unmarked vehicle will be made available to the MCOs as needed. While in their custody, MCOs are responsible for the care and maintenance of the vehicle. The vehicle will remain on Police Department Lot at the end of the officer's tour of duty.

5. Handling of Complaints

Municipal Court Officers will be held to the same standards as other sworn officers. Citizen's Complaints or Administrative Investigations against Municipal Court Officers will be handled as outlined in the Department Regulations and Procedures for full-time sworn officers.

6. Training

- A. Upon hire, Municipal Court Officers will complete basic pre-service training conducted by the Myrtle Beach Police Department training staff. The coursework will be approved by the Chief of Police. Upon successful completion of this training, the Municipal Court Officer will be enrolled into the Limited Duty Basic Program (Class III) at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. After graduation of the Limited Duty Program, Municipal Court Officers will receive a familiarization and on the job training from other MCO staff. MCOs

are required to attend bi-annual Police In-service training. Their Training will be scheduled by the Administrative Division Captain in coordination with the Chief Judge. When available, MCOs will be enrolled in advance courtroom/security related courses.

- B. Duty Weapon -- Officers are required to qualify on an approved range under the direction of a certified instructor on a semi-annual basis. Officers must also show proficiency in the use of the weapon and understand range and home safety.

7. Schedule

MCOs will work a fluid schedule while providing coverage for Bond hearings and Court proceedings. In the event special circumstances arise, advanced notice will be given and a Class I or Class II Officer will provide Security for such proceedings.

8. Job Functions

MCOs are sworn Class III officers and will be the primary officers providing a secure environment to the Court and related functions as specified by the Chief of Police.

- A. Provide security for all Courtroom Proceedings (Bond hearings, Bench Trials, Jury Trials, Pre-trial conferences and other similar events.)
- B. Provide security for City government activities being held in the Myrtle Beach Municipal Courtroom. (City Council workshops, City Council meetings, Ceremonial presentations...).
- C. Conduct security sweeps of –Courtrooms, Judge’s chambers, Jury rooms, Public areas, exterior breezeways, parking lot(s), Victim Advocate’s offices, Solicitor’s area, and around the law enforcement center.
- D. Provide a secure environment for Judges, employees of the Clerk’s Office, City Officials, Solicitors, Victims Advocate, and the general public during court proceedings. Municipal Court Officers will provide a secure environment for victims/witnesses during court proceedings and if needed escort victims about the facility and to their vehicle.

- E. Maintain a current database on active threats to Judges and/or City Officials.
- F. Maintain a current Emergency Situation/Active Shooter Plan.
- G. Municipal court officers will ensure all security equipment (metal detectors, both handheld and stationary) are maintained and in working order.
- H. Store and catalog detailed audio logs from all bond/court hearings in accordance with S.C. law.
- I. When not actively providing security, MCOs may assist in the daily events of the clerk or courts office as approved.
- J. Complete incident reports, warrants, and all other required documentation and reports related to their specific assignment.
- K. Make arrests related to court violations (contempt)

9. Specific Duties

As indicated, MCOs will provide a secure environment in and around municipal court areas and other locations as indicated or directed. To ensure the security of these areas and persons within them, MCOs are tasked with specific duties. These duties include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Pre-event scans and searches. MCOs will conduct pre-event scans and searches of the areas to be protected to ensure the area(s) are free of suspicious devices, baggage, or equipment.
- B. Entry area scans and searches. Prior to the start of designated events, MCOs will operate free standing and handheld metal detectors to ensure that all persons entering the secure areas are not armed with any type of weapon or object which may be used as a weapon. (Law enforcement, certain city employees, and council members may be exempt from scans and searches)
- C. Searches of Persons. In the event a metal detector alert sounds and the officers are unable to determine the offending object with a

handheld detector or a visual search, MCOs will conduct a physical scan of the persons outer clothing. In the event the subject refuses to consent to such a search, the subject will be denied entry to the event and further investigation will be conducted as necessary.

- D. Article searches. All luggage, baggage, and portable storage devices will be scanned/searched prior to being allowed entry into the secure areas. (Attorneys, certain city employees, and council members may be exempt from searches)

10. Contraband

During the above mentioned scans and searches, it is inevitable that prohibited items will be located. These items will be handled in accordance with established MBPD regulations. Certain items may be held in safekeeping until the conclusion of the specific event the MCOs are providing security for. These items may include but not be limited to pocket knives, personal protection sprays, nail care supplies, and other items which have the possibility of being used as an improvised weapon, but are generally used for personal reasons. These items will be returned to the owners after the conclusion of the event. Items not immediately claimed at the conclusion of the event will be considered abandoned.

- A. Drugs. In the event a MCO is conducting a scan or search and illegal drugs are located, the MCO will seize the items and the person in possession of the items and notify a Class I police officer to adopt the drug case. The MCO will complete a witness statement and complete appropriate chain of custody forms.
- B. Firearms. Firearms will not be allowed in the secure events (law enforcement exemptions apply). In the event a firearm is located during a scan or search, the MCO will inquire to determine if the weapon is being lawfully carried. If lawfully carried, the MCO will explain to the subject that the weapon is not allowed in the event and that their entry into the event is refused until such time as they secure the weapon and return unarmed. If the weapon is carried unlawfully, MCOs will secure the firearm and the individual and contact a Class I officer to adopt the case.
- C. Abandoned Property. During scans and searches, items are routinely left abandoned. These items are typically items that the

possessor deems to be contraband and does not wish to pass thru security with, so they abandon the items. During scans and searches of the area, MCOs frequently come into possession of these abandoned items. On a weekly basis, MCOs will prepare a found property report along with a property voucher for the items to be submitted to the Property and Evidence Section and marked to be destroyed per established guidelines.