

## CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

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### PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

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**Purpose:** This policy establishes guidelines for the North Little Rock Police Department's participation, in accordance with our City's commitment to the goals set forth by the Department of Justice, in Project Safe Neighborhoods.

**Policy Statement:** It is the policy of the North Little Rock Police Department to initiate a firearms tracking program to pro-actively reduce gun crimes. The goal is to help citizens feel safer in their neighborhoods and communities thus extending to them a more productive and better quality of life.

#### Summary of Changes:

#### Definitions:

**Project Safe Neighborhoods** is a comprehensive, strategic approach to reducing gun violence in America.

**Specific Approaches** are detailed steps taken toward a particular purpose (**the reduction of gun violence**).

**Strategic Plan** is the designed plan to devise or project the realization and achievement of a program.

#### Procedure

##### 1 Partnerships

- 1.1 Efforts in the reduction of gun violence must be comprehensive. We must build an effective partnership with federal, state, county and other local police agencies to reduce gun-related crimes.
- 1.2 The United States Attorney in each judicial district is uniquely situated to bringing together all law enforcement agencies to ensure a uniform and comprehensive approach to reducing gun violence.
- 1.3 It is our Department's goal, as well as responsibility, to make an effort to enhance our capacity as a police agency to recognize, recover, and analyze crime data in order to help with efforts in reducing gun-related crime.

##### 2 The Department's Strategic Plan

- 2.1 The most important step to the success of any law enforcement partnership is the formation of a strategic plan to attack gun-related crime and violence. Our approach will be to address those gun-related violent crime incidents by implementing a plan or progression designed by the patrol supervisors with the assistance of the Investigations Division supervisors for the reduction of gun-related crime and violence in the affected areas in our City.
- 2.2 Zero Tolerance Plan and Approach:
  - 2.2.1 Our strategic plan will be one of zero tolerance with the intent of full prosecution of persons arrested for gun-related crimes.
  - 2.3 Officers must first identify, arrest and prosecute those who are carrying concealed, prohibited or illegal firearms.
    - 2.3.1 Officers should attempt to recover firearms before they can be used in any crime.
    - 2.3.2 In order to reduce gun-related crimes, officers must identify, arrest, and prosecute violent street offenders, such as robbery and/or rape suspects.
    - 2.3.3 When officers cannot make immediate arrests for firearm's violations, they will write an incident report documenting the facts of the case and forward the report to the Detective's Office.
  - 2.4 Officers must patrol their assigned areas in a proactive manner using zero tolerance enforcement with a more heightened awareness of all firearm's violations.
  - 2.5 Officers should seek support from citizens, such as neighborhood watch members, merchants, and community and religious leaders.
    - 2.5.1 We must partnership with citizens to reduce gun-related rimes within the community in order to promote a better quality of life for all citizens.
  - 2.6 Officers must be mindful of the 4th Amendment and the Constitutional Rights of all people, always bearing in mind that people should be treated with respect, dignity, fairness, and equality.
  - 2.7 Officers must be able to articulate probable cause for searches and seizures that will stand up in court.
  - 2.8 It is imperative that officers notify investigations of not only the gun-related crimes in their areas, but all major crimes in our City.

##### 3 Criminal Investigation Responsibilities

- 3.1 Careful and consistent review of gun violence reduction efforts are necessary for a pro-active gun violence reduction strategy to be effective.
- 3.2 There must be a continual evaluation of the problems encountered, as well as the efficacy (effects) of the response.

- 3.3 It will be the responsibility of the Investigations Division to investigate gun-related crimes and to ensure the prosecution of all gun-related violent crime offenders.
- 3.3.1 The Crimes Against Person's Unit Supervisor will be responsible for assigning the gun-related incident reports to detectives and/or forwarding reports to the appropriate investigating entity.
- 3.3.2 It will be the responsibility of the Investigations Division to review and evaluate the agency's strategic plan for reducing gun-related crime on a routine basis.
- 3.4 The Crimes Against Persons Unit will be responsible for reporting the following:
- 3.4.1 Identification, analysis, and reporting of gun crime data to our agency.
- 3.4.2 Identifying the sources of firearms involved in local crimes.
- 3.4.3 Identifying gun-related crime patterns.
- 3.4.4 Trace guns used in all crimes, not just those used in spectacular crimes.
- 3.4.5 Report violations to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF).
- 3.4.6 When a gun-related incident occurs in our City, which meets federal prosecution criteria, the Crimes Against Persons Unit Supervisor will ensure that a copy of the report is forwarded to the ATF. Below are some examples of the standard prosecution criteria:
- 3.4.7.1 Possession of a defaced firearm.
- 3.4.7.2 Defacing a firearm.
- 3.4.7.3 Criminal possession of explosives.
- 3.4.7.4 Furnishing a prohibited weapon to a felon.
- 3.4.7.5 Criminal use of a prohibited weapon.
- 3.5 Investigations will be responsible for further or more in depth firearms investigations, such as:
- 3.5.1 Interviewing suspects and taking taped statements.
- 3.5.2 Interviewing witnesses and taking taped statements.
- 3.5.3 Interviewing arrested persons and taking taped statements.
- 3.5.4 Obtaining warrants for suspects.
- 3.5.5 Tracing or tracking recovered firearms.
- 3.6 It will be the responsibility of the Investigations Division to work together with the Patrol Division in order for Project Safe Neighborhoods to be a success.

#### **4 Firearms as Evidence**

- 4.1 The recovery of firearms will be in accordance with Policy Directive 31-01, Crime Scene Preservation.

#### **5 Patrol Division Responsibilities**

- 5.1 The success of Project Safe Neighborhoods depends upon the pro-active gun violence reduction strategy which must be addressed by the officers and supervisors who work in the area where gun violence is occurring.
- 5.2 In order for this program to have a successful outcome, it will depend upon officers and supervisors working together during the initial or preliminary firearm's investigation.
- 5.2.1 The preliminary investigation is the evidence collection phase of the investigation. It is during this phase of the investigation when firearms are located, identified, recovered, and/or confiscated.
- 5.3 Patrol officers routinely confiscate firearms and make arrests for firearms violations.
- 5.3.1 In this policy officers are mandated to confiscate all illegal or illegally possessed firearms and to make arrests on all firearms violations.
- 5.3.2 Firearms should be handled as evidence. Therefore, the chain of custody must be documented in detail in order to ensure the evidence has been accounted for at all times.
- 5.3.3 A North Little Rock Police Department Firearms Screening Report will be completed by asking the arrested person or the suspect questions pertaining to the confiscated weapon(s). A screening report will be completed on all firearms that are placed in the North Little Rock Police Department property room for any reason.
- 5.3.3.1 This document will be a supplemental report to the original incident report and will be forwarded to the Detectives Office.

#### **6 Training**

- 6.1 Specialized training is essential for law enforcement agencies to keep current on laws and trends that affect policing.
- 6.2 To maintain an edge in the assault on gun violence our Department must mandate more expansive and comprehensive training.

6.3 The Department's training should be designed to address the following:

- 6.3.1 Firearms identification;
- 6.3.2 Firearms statutes;
- 6.3.3 The 4th Amendment with respect to search and seizure;
- 6.3.4 Crime scene processing, as well as evidence management;
- 6.3.5 Firearms tracing;
- 6.3.6 Firearms tracking;
- 6.3.7 Firearms safety;
- 6.3.8 Strategic planning; and
- 6.3.9 Problem solving.

## **7 Community Outreach**

- 7.1 Community outreach and public awareness constitute essential components of any successful gun violence reduction plan.
- 7.2 Through conveying the priorities, message, and results of this enhanced enforcement effort to the media and community members, our Police Department can help shape the attitudes of law abiding citizens and those who would otherwise believe they can violate our gun laws with impunity.
- 7.3 It will be the duty of all members of this agency to ensure the community is aware of the Department's goal of identifying, documenting, and reducing gun-related crimes in North Little Rock.
- 7.4 There must be public service announcements (PSAs) made to the community through the news media by the Public Information Officer explaining the objectives and goals of Project Safe Neighborhoods.

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Patrick Thessing  
Chief of Police