

What is Citizens On Patrol?

Citizens On Patrol (or C.O.P.s as they are commonly referred) are organized individuals/groups of citizens who volunteer to patrol their neighborhoods and be the “Eyes and Ears” for their local Police Precinct.

What is their purpose?

The C.O.P. groups are a very effective Crime Prevention tool for their community. The presence of a C.O.P. acts a deterrent to crime and shows a solidarity within a neighborhood. In fact C.O.P. groups have helped in reducing crimes in their neighborhoods.

Think about this...If you were a criminal would you want to risk committing a crime in a neighborhood where the members were watching out for each other. C.O.P.s have the option of posting signs, displaying identifiers on their cars and/or wearing clothing that identifies them as a C.O.P. member. Many of these items could qualify for a Baltimore County Crime Prevention Grant. Becoming a C.O.P. group tends to draw communities together which can enhance a sense of solidarity and a partnership in the battle against crime.

Who can have a Citizens On Patrol?

Any community or neighborhood can organize a C.O.P. You can do it with as few as 2-3 individuals or as many that would want to participate.

How does a C.O.P. operate?

Some C.O.P groups conduct patrols in their vehicles, some walk together and others just keep an eye out for anything suspicious. Everyone’s level of suspicion will be different, if YOU feel something is suspicious call 911. Let the Police deal with the situation, do not approach. Be a good witness and give the 911 dispatcher the best description of an individual, their vehicle and the situation, but remember *Let the Police handle the situation.* C.O.P. members are not vigilantes. We do not encourage confrontations with individuals.

How are these patrols financed?

Baltimore County offers Crime Prevention grant funding annually to supplement startup and operational expenses. Some groups have funded the C.O.P. through the community associations and/or fundraisers within their community.

How often does a C.O.P. group patrol?

This is solely up to the individual groups involved. There is no minimal amount of involvement. Each community based on their number of participants can dictate how much time they dedicate to patrol. Is there a right or wrong time to patrol? No, criminals are opportunists and there is no specific time of the day that any individual crime may occur. Just being an observant and concerned citizen in a community and the willingness to call 911 is a deterrent.

“If you have a phone and a desire to improve the safety of your neighborhood, you can be a C.O.P.”

Is there a particular neighborhood that needs a patrol?

No. There are many communities that have active C.O.P. groups. They have created their groups to keep their community safe. The reality is that all communities need some type of crime prevention mechanism in place.

How do you start a C.O.P.?

The first step is to speak with your community members about a C.O.P. Discuss what a C.O.P. may mean for you and your community. Reach out to the Precinct Outreach Unit that patrols/covers your community. Once it has been decided that your community wants to begin a C.O.P., an Outreach Officer will work with you in gathering information and setting up a time for training. The training usually take approximately 1 hour at a neighborhood meeting. The Outreach Officer will go over the basics of what it is to be a C.O.P. and educate the attendees on some of the Do’s and Don’ts of a C.O.P. member and share some of the nomenclatures that are commonly used by your Baltimore County Police Department.

A large part of becoming a C.O.P. is open line of communication with your local Police Precinct.

Is a C.O.P dangerous?

NO. C.O.P. members are observers only. They report suspicious or criminal activities to 911. They are not vigilantes. They **Do Not** carry weapons, nor do they confront individuals engaged in suspicious or criminal activities.

Baltimore County
Police Department
Community Outreach
Units

If you would like more information on a C.O.P. program or any other Crime Prevention program, please contact your local Community Outreach Unit and speak with an Outreach Officer. They can also share information about other C.O.P. groups already active in your precinct along with neighboring precincts.

Baltimore County Police also offer **FREE** Security Surveys of your homes and businesses.

Remember you can be the eyes and ears of your community.

“Together we can combat crime in your community”

Headquarters
410-887-5901

Wilkins Precinct
410-744-1584

Woodlawn Precinct
410-887-4714

Franklin Precinct
410-887-6985

Pikesville Precinct
410-887-6775

Towson Precinct
410-887-5933

Cockeysville Precinct
410-887-1863

Parkville Precinct
410-887-5439

White Marsh Precinct
410-887-5035

Essex Precinct
410-887-0232

Dundalk Precinct
410-887-7337

Citizens On Patrol



"INTEGRITY...FAIRNESS...SERVICE"

Baltimore County Police
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