

Date: April 7, 2025

To: **Standing Committee on Public Safety**

Name and title: Eric Depenau, Director, Administrative Services

Subject: Promotion of Block Watch and Citizens on Patrol Programs

Attachment(s): Citizens on Patrol Policy Manual.

Recommendation(s):

That the Standing Committee on Public Safety RECIEVES FOR INFORMATION the report titled, "Promotion of Block Watch and Citizens on Patrol Programs" from the Director of Administrative Services, dated 7 April 2025.

Purpose:

To advance a work plan item directed by the committee which had staff discuss with local RCMP opportunities to promote Community Policing's Block Watch and Citizens on Patrol programs.

Background:

Prince George RCMP Citizens on Patrol (COP) Program: The Prince George RCMP Citizens on Patrol program was implemented to enable concerned and dedicated volunteers to be of assistance to the Prince George RCMP Detachment. The objective is to promote patrolling of the Detachment areas with trained volunteers. The volunteers, under Community Policing's leadership, patrol and observe and report any suspected criminal activity. This is accomplished by the patrol acting as an observational support team for the RCMP. The Prince George RCMP Citizens on Patrol have great potential for being of assistance in deterring crime within the community (Citizens on Patrol Policy Manual, 2014, p.3).

Note, the Prince George RCMP Citizens on Patrol Program is not intended to replace regular Police or private licensed security patrol services but allow the RCMP to direct their focus to other areas of concern to reduce criminal activity.

The program operates under the direction and guidance of the Prince George RCMP Community Policing Section. Applicants must fulfill the following requirements:

- Be 19 years of age, and be of good character
- Applicants must reside in Prince George
- Satisfy interview board of a genuine commitment to the deterrence of unlawful activity in the community
- Must pass an RCMP security clearance screening
- Applicants must be prepared to appear in court as a witness if required
- Applicants must be able to provide a clean driver's abstract

(Citizens on Patrol Policy Manual, 2014, p.3)

Program Limitations:

A non-exhaustive list of considerations include:

- Patrollers do not patrol alone.
- Patrollers are not trained to use self defence or compliance tools.
- While patrolling, patrollers do not stop, pursue, or otherwise engage with vehicles that are identified as potentially involved in criminal activity.
- Patrollers do not conduct any form of investigation (such as searching areas on foot).
- Patrollers do not handle or disturb anything at a crime scene.

(Citizens on Patrol Policy Manual, 2014, p.3)

As mentioned above, Prince George Citizens on Patrol Volunteers are not to replace or be mistaken as security. They are professional eyewitnesses, that have a link to the RCMP in the event of an incident.

Currently, the Prince George Community Policing Unit has one RCMP Patrol Lead Volunteer and twelve Patrol Volunteers. The program has helped with patrolling at Downtown Business Improvement Association events over the last nine years (e.g. Summer, Fall and Winter Fest and Plaid Friday). The Patrol Volunteers have also patrolled on and off-street parking and left notices indicating what items were in clear view that may attract theft. The Patrol Volunteers also provide Speed Watch, an ICBC sponsored educational program aimed at reducing incidents of speeding. Further, the Prince George COP Volunteers have been deployed in the downtown area to patrol and deter criminality. They have also successfully dissuaded individuals from starting fires and encouraged individuals to extinguish active fires.

There is potential for the Prince George Citizens on Patrol Program to assist other entities with local events.

Block Watch Program

Background

As a proactive approach to reducing crime throughout neighbourhoods, Seattle community policing developed a model using education in conjunction with community support. This led to the development of the 'block watch' concept. In British Columbia, the Block Watch Society of BC officially governs neighbourhood watch activities under the Block Watch program.

The Block Watch program seeks to provide communication, advocacy, resilience and education by streamlining communication between neighbours, providing a platform for neighbourhood advocacy; and, by providing resources and awareness which leverage resilience throughout communities.

In Prince George, the RCMP began to partner with the Block Watch Society of BC in the late 1980's/ early 90's. Over the duration, Prince George has hosted up to 88 local crime watch areas (e.g. Douglas Street, Chief Lake Area, Upper Mud River etc.). Currently, Prince George has 44 active block watch neighbourhoods, that are divided into two veins: rural and urban. There are 19 crime watch areas within Prince George's rural areas and 25 within the City's urban areas.

Benefits of the Program

Block watch involves being alert to your neighbourhood to keep yourself and others aware of suspicious activity, current crime prevention techniques and local crime trends.

- the program brings police and communities together in their common goal of community safety,
- block Watch promotes increased feelings of neighbourhood security and helps build a stronger sense of community,
- a block watch can be set up in residential areas, apartments, condominiums, townhouse complexes, mobile home sites as well as rural communities,
- Block Watch also provides general security and theft prevention tips for homes and vehicles. Such as:
 - Lighting – Visibility is seen as a deterrent for criminal activity, installing a LED or motion sensor light in dark corners can assist as a deterrent. The program also encourages smart lights that turn on with a timer.
 - Visibility – Good surveillance includes having clear sight lines from inside your house to the curb or edge of your property.
 - Locks – Keeping doors and windows locked is a good practice with deadbolt locks recommended.

Limitations to Consider

- Block Watch is meant for residential neighbourhoods.
- When a Block Watch or Neighbourhood Watch is formed, participants do not patrol the neighbourhood or engage potential offenders.
- Someone in the neighbourhood needs to take on the role of captain and act as a point of contact, organize meetings, identify Block Watch Sign locations, organizing referrals of new residents to join the neighbourhood group, organize specific incident notifications, and liaise with insurance company inquiries about the Block Watch discounts.
- Being a leader of a Block Watch, neighbours may bring various neighbourhood issues which fall outside of the captains' responsibilities such as "can you install a traffic light" or "my neighbour's trees are encroaching on my property, can you speak with them" These are not the responsibilities for the captain. It is not a block watch responsibility to deal with neighbourhood conflicts.

Opportunities for Promotion:

Citizens on Patrol

Website: The City may consider hosting on the City website a dedicated Community Policing webpage that highlights the unit's prevention programs and services, including the Citizens on Patrol Program. This is work Police Support Services and Communications would organize internally and would be added to their respective workplans. The immediate investment would likely be limited to time.

Awareness Campaign: The City Communications team could assist with promoting the service that Citizens on Patrol provide (e.g. video promoting foot patrol at events, speed watch at school zones, etc.). The immediate investment would likely be limited to time, although funds could be dedicated to enhancing this effort (advertising, etc.).

Booths and Events: The City currently promotes the program through print promotional materials and event attendance, such as booths at Canada Day and National Indigenous Peoples Day. In the future further emphasis could be put on this type of engagement. There may be financial implications (staffing, registration, higher consumption of materials, investment in display items, etc.).

Investment in Materials: The City could have banners or posters produced that indicate "this event is being patrolled by the Prince George Volunteers on Patrol" or similar as an advertising/awareness tool. Brochures and other print could be revamped to support promotion of the program. It is likely that the design work for these materials could be completed by the communications team pending timelines for production. The cost of printing the materials would vary depending on the quantity produced.

Information Sharing: Staff can place renewed emphasis on engaging with groups like the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Business Improvement Association to determine if they are interested in sharing information about the Prince George Citizens on Patrol Program with their memberships. This is a routine liaison activity and will be actioned by staff following today's meeting.

Recruitment: Staff routinely attend the University of Northern British Columbia job fair; staff could prepare to attend additional local job fairs and work with the RCMP on a job fair campaign to promote the program and related opportunities.

Synergy with Block Watch: It is assessed that there is further opportunity for the COP program to share information with Block Watches on neighborhood specific suspicious activity observed by the COP patrols. Staff will explore this topic with leaders from the two groups.

Block Watch

Website: The City could consider hosting a Community Policing webpage, as mentioned above, that highlights the unit's prevention programs and services, including information on Block Watch, neighbourhood Safety Audits and CPTED assessments. The Block Watch page could host tools and information on how to start and maintain a Block Watch.

Brochures: Brochures could be revamped to support information sharing and the establishment of new watches. It is likely that the design work for these materials could be completed by the communications team pending timelines for production. The cost of printing the materials would vary depending on the quantity produced.

Printouts for Homeowners: Staff could explore the possibility of including information alongside existing mailouts. It is likely that the design work for these materials could be completed by the communications team pending timelines for production. The cost of printing the materials would vary depending on the quantity produced.

The Super Citizen electronic newsletter is an alternate option which reduces printing costs and consumption of supplies. The email list has over 500 current subscribers currently.

Block Party: Historically Block Parties have been arranged where an RCMP/ Community Policing representative, a conservation officer, a fire department representative, bylaws and other applicable agencies have met and shared information. The meetings were designed to disseminate information and awareness over a few hours, and to address any questions or concerns of neighbourhood residents.

Staff from across Administrative Services (Police Support Services, Fire and Bylaw) have connected to discuss collaboration on a series of area specific Block Watch meetings whereby RCMP, Bylaws, the Fire Department and other applicable agencies can meet, share information and contacts while the established Block Watches hold their annual Block Parties. It may be possible to leverage these events to generate new images and materials to promote the program.

CCTV Initiative: We could encourage residents to sign up for the City's CCTV initiative in the event an incident happens on their block.

Lead Volunteer: There is interest from staff in exploring a lead volunteer position that could provide monthly updates, safety suggestions and possibly support quality control functions for the various Block Watches. This position could help draw attention to, and interpret, open-source information such as the analytics available on the PG RCMP Criminal Analyst Statistics site.

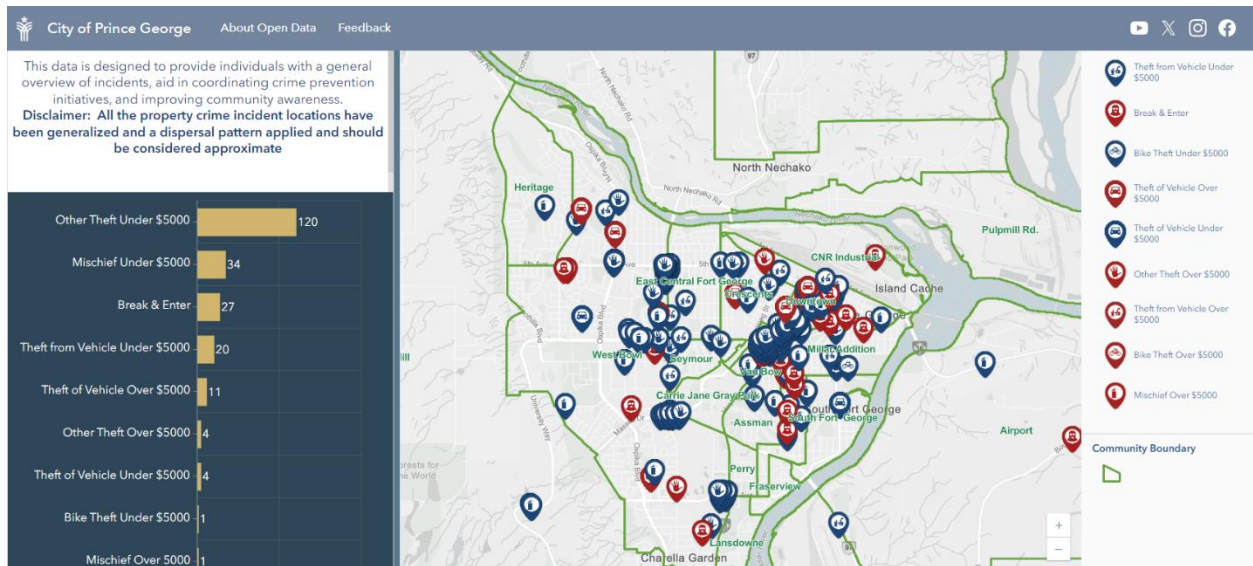


IMAGE 2.1 – City of Prince George – Property Crime Map

(* Informed by the PG RCMP Criminal Analyst Statistics)

Strategic Priorities:

The committee's exploration of possible enhancements and support to the Citizens on Patrol and Block Watch programs may be viewed in alignment with the strategic pillar of social health and wellbeing.

Summary and conclusion:

This report is provided for consideration in response to a work plan item established by the committee.

Respectfully submitted:

Eric Depenua, Director, Administrative Services

Prepared by Krystal Devauld, Assistant Manager, Police Support Services

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2025/04/15



**Prince George RCMP
Community Policing Section
Citizens on Patrol
Policy Manual**



Citizens on Patrol Set up for distracted driving task



Citizens on Patrol assist with Counter Attack Road Check.

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Section 1	Prince George Citizens Patrol Program
Effective Date	2014.01.01

1.1 Who We Are:

The Prince George Citizens on Patrol program was implemented to enable concerned and dedicated volunteers to be of assistance to the Prince George RCMP Detachment. The objective is to promote patrolling of the Detachment area by trained citizen volunteers. The volunteers, under Community Policing leadership, will patrol and observe and report any suspected criminal activity. This is accomplished by the patrols acting as an "Observational Support team" for the RCMP. The patrol has great potential for being of assistance in deterring crime within the community.

The Citizens on Patrol program is not intended to replace regular police or private licensed security patrol services but will hopefully allow the RCMP to direct their focus into additional areas of concern in order to reduce criminal activity.

The program operates under the direction and guidance of Prince George RCMP Community Policing Section.

1.2 Volunteer requirements:

The following criteria are used when considering applicants who wish to participate:

1. Applicants must be at least 19 years of age and be of good character;
2. Applicants must reside in Prince George;
3. Satisfy the interview board of a genuine commitment to the deterrence of unlawful activity in the community;
4. Must pass an RCMP security clearance screening;
5. Applicants must be prepared to appear in court as a witness if required.
6. Applicants must be able to provide a clean drivers' abstract.

The following are the commitments that are expected of volunteers:

1. Members will be required to successfully participate in training sessions and patrol meetings;
2. Members will be required to contribute a minimum two tasks per month, as employment and family allows;
3. Members are responsible for their shift commitments. If a member has to cancel, they must contact their patrol partner(s) and the Volunteer Program Coordinator with as much advance notice as possible.
4. Any Volunteer that fails to notify their fellow volunteer(s) or the program coordinator(s) of their non-attendance to a task three times in a calendar year will be subject to disciplinary action.
5. Members are expected to maintain a suitable dress code while on patrol, by wearing issued COP shirt with black pants and black shoes or boots; with exception for Cell watch tasks.
6. It is the responsibility of the driver of any vehicle used for patrol purposes to ensure that the vehicle is properly and sufficiently insured for such use.
7. All volunteers are responsible for ensuring that any vehicles they may use in the performance of their tour of duty in the Program are maintained in a safe condition. They must also conform to all the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act of British Columbia, and any regulations made under the Act;
8. Any change in personal status, such as emergency contact, a change of address, change of e-mail address, or telephone number, must be reported immediately to the Volunteer Program Coordinator;
9. Confidentiality is required with respect to radio locations and frequencies, identity of past and present patrol members, and all procedures and activities while on patrol. This is for the protection and security of all program members and equipment. All written or spoken information that volunteers come into contact with while involved in COP is CONFIDENTIAL. Violation of this confidence is grounds for immediate dismissal.

1.3 Termination of Membership:

The Citizens Patrol program is a volunteer organization, and as such, no one is under any obligation to become or to remain a volunteer of the program. Likewise, Community Policing is under no obligation to permit any individual to become or to remain a volunteer of the program.

Any member leaving the program is required to advise the Community Policing Coordinator and the Volunteer Program Coordinator by letter or email and must return their photo ID badge, COP Shirt, COP Notebook and its cover and any material or equipment belonging to the program.

In order to ensure that the volunteers of the program and the RCMP are treated in as fair a manner as possible, the following guidelines concerning resignation and dismissal from the Program should be adhered to:

Resignation:

Any volunteer of the COP program who may be considering resigning, or has made a decision to resign, from the program, is to adhere to the following procedures:

1. Notifying the Volunteer Program Coordinator of your decision, and the effective date of your resignation;
2. Notify the Volunteer Program Coordinator of the reasons leading to your decision to resign. This is particularly important in cases where the administration or operation of the program has contributed to your decision.

Dismissal:

Termination of membership will be at the discretion of the NCO i/c Community Policing. This person may terminate any volunteer in the COP program who:

1. Commits any criminal act.
2. Acts in any manner likely to discredit the COP Program or the RCMP.
3. Acts in contravention of any of the rules governing the conduct of volunteers of the COP Program, including but not limited to, failing to maintain a minimum level of participation in the activities of the Program and/or any contravention of the COP policies.
4. Is disruptive to the Program.
5. Is unable to maintain a clean drivers' abstract.

Investigation Prior to Dismissal:

Upon receiving information concerning the activities of any volunteer of the Program and where an allegation is of a nature serious enough to warrant dismissal from the Program, the NCO i/c Community Policing or his/her designate will conduct such investigation as may be required to scrutinize the allegation.

Section 2	Operational & Safety Requirement
Effective Date	2014.01.01

When making patrols, safety must be your primary concern. At no time are you to do anything which might jeopardize your personal safety or cause damage to the vehicle while acting as a member of COP.

2.1 Authorized Patrollers:

1. Single person patrols are not permitted nor are unofficial patrollers allowed. Only security cleared and/or approved individuals are permitted on patrol. Children, relatives, friends, and pets do not fall under this category.
2. There are to be no unscheduled patrols.
3. Basic security clearances will be in duration of one year from the date of issue as per the RCMP policy.

2.2 Weapons:

1. Patrollers will not carry any weapon of any sort in your vehicle or on your person while on patrol. This includes "sprays".

2.3 Consumption of Substances:

1. Members will not consume any alcohol on the day of their patrol or dispatch duties or take over the counter drugs, such as cold medications which may impair their response times or judgment.
2. No smoking in a patrol vehicle.

2.4 Identification Tags:

1. While on patrol, members must keep their photo ID tag on their person.
2. Volunteers will show their identification when confronted by police or a concerned citizen.

2.5 Motor Vehicle Operation:

1. Obey all traffic laws. You are responsible for your driving behavior.
2. At no time will you chase a vehicle that you might encounter. You may follow a vehicle you encounter during the normal patrol provided it is safe to do so. In no case will this following continue if the other vehicle accelerates beyond the posted speed limit, causes the patroller to disobey the Motor Vehicle Act or poses a threat to the patrollers. Patrol members will not chase or follow police vehicles or any other emergency vehicles.
3. Never knowingly place yourself in harm's way (i.e. if at any time during the patrol you encounter a group of youths causing any type of disturbance, do not stop at that point or draw attention to yourselves. Proceed until you are in a safe area then observe and report as necessary.
4. Do not exit your vehicle unless, conducting approved Citizens Patrol tasks, or directed to do so by police. Patrol members will not conduct any form of investigation such as checking odors or searching areas on foot, unless directed to do so by police.
5. Keep your car doors locked.
6. Do not travel down dead ends or single entry parkades. Do not patrol other areas that are designated by the RCMP as non-patrol areas.

2.6 Conduct at Potential Crime Scene:

1. Be sure not to handle or disturb anything at a crime scene.
2. Do not clean up or move debris unless directed by a police officer to do so.

2.7 Awareness of Surroundings:

1. Know where you are patrolling. A thorough knowledge of the geographical area patrolled is essential. For example, know the roads that dead-end, intersecting block or railroad tracks, and any other peculiarities.

2.8 Use of Radios & Other Equipment:

1. If for any reason you lose radio contact, move to a different location and try again.

2.9 Coffee Breaks:

1. Advise fellow patrollers of the time and location of your coffee breaks.
2. Be careful where you park. If you can't see your car, put the equipment in the trunk before you arrive at the meeting place.

Section 3	Complaint
Effective Date	2014.01.01

It is important that the correct process be adhered to.

3.1 Against COP members:

1. If you have a complaint or concern regarding any COP member that you are either unable or do not wish to address directly with that member, or have unsuccessfully addressed with the member, then you are to contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator.
2. If you find yourself assigned to work with a partner who ignores the policies of this Program, or does anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, it is up to you to make contact with the Volunteer Program Coordinator.
3. If the complaint involves the Volunteer Program Coordinator or the Community Policing Coordinator, then you can contact the NCO i/c Community Policing.

3.2 Against Police Officers or RCMP Employees:

1. If you have a complaint or concern with regards to any police officer or RCMP employee, you are to contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator or NCO i/c Community Policing directly.

3.3 Third Party Complaints:

1. No third party complaints will be acted upon. The individual with the concern should be advised to contact the NCO i/c Community Policing or the RCMP Detachment directly and Volunteer Program Coordinator.
2. Third party complaints can be advised to contact Community Policing at 250-561-3366, and the volunteers first name only.

Section 4	Shifts
Effective Date	2014.01.01

1. Shifts are scheduled to start at different times set by the Volunteer Program Coordinator and are usually four to six hours in duration. Shifts are scheduled primarily on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights but are open to any day or time.
2. Patrollers need to arrive 10-15 minutes before the start of each shift.

3. The day, time and duration of shifts may be adjusted upon agreement of the Volunteer Program Coordinator and patrollers or to handle any special assignments from the RCMP.
4. There will be no single member patrols.

Section 5	Patrol Procedures
Effective Date	2014.01.01

5.1 Pre-Patrol:

1. Patrol bags, vehicle keys, equipment and Citizens Patrol jackets must be picked up and signed out, at the detachment.
2. If you are or may be the driver, ensure that both the inside and outside of your vehicle windows are clean and that there is sufficient space in the vehicle to carry necessary equipment.
3. Members are to arrive at 10-15 minutes prior to the beginning of their shift to check the vehicle and equipment needed during their patrol and review information and other assignments from the Community Policing and Volunteer Coordinator.
4. Do a check of the Patrol equipment to ensure it is complete before leaving.
5. Complete necessary portions of your RCMP Detachment Information Sheet:
 - a. Date
 - b. Time
 - c. Driver & Passenger name
 - d. Cell phone number
 - e. Vehicle being driven (make; model; year; color; license number)
 - f. Submit info sheet to RCMP Detachment, front desk prior to patrol.
6. The observer should do a walk around the patrol vehicle to ensure that headlights, license plate lights, turn signals and brake lights are in proper working order.
7. Complete a radio check from the parking lot and ensure your radio is working properly.

5.2 General Patrol Tips:

1. If you see anything suspicious, pull over and observe from a safe distance. For example, if you see someone suspicious and you drive by them three or four times, they will know you are following them. Try to find a spot to park and watch with your lights off.
2. Remember, if an arrest is made based on your observations, you will have to positively identify the individual that is charged when the case goes to court. You may be the only one who saw the criminal act. If you cannot identify the accused, there is no case.

5.3 End of Shift:

1. Complete your report making sure to record the date; start/finish time; patrol members; vehicle km at the start/finish; number of license plates checked; number of crime prevention notices, etc. Email your patrol report as set out in the patrol report instructions.
2. When going off shift at the end of the night, turn the radio off before unplugging it by turning the volume knob until it clicks or push the volume button in depending on the make of the radio you have.
3. After you have turned the radio off, double check by looking at the front of the radio to see that all the lights are off.
4. Unplug the radio from the power source before disconnecting the aerial.
5. Properly "shut down" the laptop. Do not leave the power turned on.
6. Ensure there are no interior lights or headlights left on in the vehicle.
7. Remove all drink cups, wrappers, etc. from the vehicle and clean any spills.
8. Secure and lock the vehicle.
9. Call the Detachment at 250-561-3300 and advise your shift is complete AND ask to be transferred to Dispatch (OCC) to advise your shift is complete. This ensures both the Detachment and OCC are aware you have completed your patrol.
10. Enter time and date in your notebook when you have completed your shift.
11. Ensure all keys, patrol bags, jackets and equipment are returned to Community Policing Unit and signed back in at the end of task.

Section 6	General Radio Guidelines
Effective Date	2014.01.01

6.1 General Demeanor:

1. Be professional.
2. Be clear.
3. Be timely.
4. Remain calm.

6.2 Unclear Communications:

1. If you receive a transmission that is unclear, DO NOT assume you have understood what has been said. Ask the person to "say again" or "10-9" (repeat) or "say again from (the last word you received)".
2. If you are unable to establish contact, after calling base or another unit twice without getting a reply, STOP. Call again in about a minute.
3. If you are asked for information which you do not have immediately at hand, say "Standby" while you obtain the information. This advises the Dispatcher/unit that they are not being ignored and clears the air for anyone else who may need to use the channel while you gather the information.

4. Always respond to radio transmissions, giving a "standby" if necessary, to let them know you have heard the call.

Reporting a Situation to the RCMP:

1. Other sections of this Manual discuss what to observe and report regarding specific criminal/suspected criminal and non-criminal activity. What follows is a more general discussion of reporting guidelines.
2. The most important information to convey about a situation is LOCATION. If further communication is hampered, the Dispatcher can always send a unit to an unknown situation at a determined location. So start your report with your LOCATION.
3. The second important piece of information is the type of call. Advise the RCMP up front of the nature of what you're observing (e.g. "We've got a fight" or "We've observed a suspected impaired driver"). The third important piece of information is any immediate safety concerns – i.e. the gravity of the situation. This may involve:
 - a. Injuries, if so, how serious;
 - b. Weapons involved, if so, what kind, number, where they are;
 - c. Substance involvement (alcohol, drugs);
 - d. Any other potentially dangerous factors.
4. If there is a time delay in your observations, advise the Dispatcher.
5. Report only what you know or have good reason to suspect. If reporting your suspicions, state them as such (e.g. "I suspect the car radio he's carrying is stolen" versus, "I saw him break the window of the car, reach in and yank out the car radio which he's now carrying").

YOUR RADIO IS THE FASTEST LINK TO ASSISTANCE.

USE IT WISELY.

KEEP YOUR STATUS CURRENT.



Section 7	General Suspect/Subject Description Checklists
Effective Date	2014.01.01

The Five "W"s:

Who, What, Where, When, Weapons.

7.1 Describing a Person:

Sex

Race

Nationality – if known

Height

Weight

Color, length & style of hair

Description of clothing, starting with head and working down to feet

Whether person is carrying anything

Unusual characteristics:

Limp

Scars

Unusual haircut

Blemishes

Tattoo

7.2 Describing a Vehicle:

Think of the word "CYMBAL", which stands for:

Color

Year

Make

Body style and

License plate

Also report:

Direction of travel

Number of occupants

Unusual features (decal, damage, bumper sticker, etc.)

Section 8	General Observation Guidelines – What & How to Observe While on Patrol
Effective Date	2014.01.01

8.1 What to observe regarding people:

Movements – crouching

Looking into buildings, vehicles

Clothes out of place

Bags, backpacks with what appear to be sharp corners

Carrying suitcases or large boxes

Going into underground parking lots

Arms held awkwardly, concealing something

Hiding in shadows

People observing your movements

8.2 What to observe regarding premises:

Damage to premises – e.g. broken window

Entry insecure (e.g. door ajar)

Alarm system tampered with

Unusual lighting (flashlight beam, lights on during closed hours)

Vehicles in area (e.g. truck backed up to door or window)

Unusual exterior objects (e.g. ladder leaning against building, garbage bin or other large object obstructing entrance)

People observed inside appear to be out of place

8.3 What to observe regarding vehicles:

See Section of the Manual entitled "Specific Patrol Situations – Involving Motor Vehicles".

8.4 Setting up an observation post:

1. Check the "setting" to be observed before starting your surveillance to determine the most effective vantage point from which to observe and familiarize yourself with the surrounding area (e.g. roads & pathways that access the area, lighting, etc.). Try to be discrete when doing this.
2. Check all of your equipment before commencing your surveillance to ensure everything is in proper working order and is in easy reach, yet out of sight.

3. Make sure everyone involved in the surveillance operation is clear on what you are looking for (e.g. description of subject, vehicle, type of activities you're watching for, etc).
4. The volunteer Program Coordinator will assign radio numbers (i.e. CP1 and CP2) for multiple patrols.

8.5 How to Observe:

1. Shut off your engine so that:
 - a. You do not alert the subject of your observation as to your presence;
 - b. Your exhaust does not destroy a scent track for the police dog.
2. Turn down your radio so you do not alert the subject of your observation to your presence.
3. If this can be done without compromising your safety, open your window so that you can hear and smell, as well as see, what is going on.
4. Slouch down – remember your silhouette from the streetlights.
5. If you must use your radio, do so cautiously so as not to draw attention to yourself and/or fact that you are on patrol.
6. The key is to try to blend in with your surroundings. The best way to do this may not necessarily be to hide. Perhaps it would appear more natural if you looked like you were simply parked and engaged in conversation with your partner.
7. Keep movement in and away from your observation post to a minimum.
8. Be aware of counter – surveillance (i.e. someone is trying to detect if they are being watched). Things to be on the lookout for:
 - a. Check your own surroundings to ensure you are not being observed.
 - b. Someone drives or walks through your area numerous times to see if they get checked by the police.
 - c. Someone breaks a window or does some other minor mischief to determine if police respond unusually quick.

Section 9	Specific Patrol Situations – Crimes/Suspected Crimes Observed
Effective Date	2014.01.01

9.1 Crime Scenes Generally:

1. If you come across a crime scene, DO NOT GET OUT. Report the incident immediately to the RCMP.
2. Maintain a visual security watch of the scene and record any information that may be of assistance to the police (i.e. license plate(s), description of vehicles, persons, and weather & road conditions).
3. Remember, if any arrest is made based on your observation, you will have to positively identify the individual that is charged when the case goes to court. You may be the only one who saw the criminal act. If you cannot identify the accused, there is no case.
4. It is of particular importance to remain in your vehicle to prevent contamination of the scene. If it can safely be done, stay on scene until the police arrive.

9.2 Armed Robbery:

1. If an armed robbery is reported on the radio, either;
 - a. Await instructions from your dispatcher, or
 - b. Ask Dispatcher if he/she would like you to respond and, if so, the nature of the response (e.g. set up perimeter surveillance).
2. Stay away from the scene. It is important to avoid any possible contamination of the scene or neighboring area as the police dog service are regularly called in such complaints. If your Dispatcher directs you to the scene, clarify your instructions in light of this restriction.

3. If you see a possible suspect or possible suspect vehicle, report it to the Dispatcher. DO NOT follow unless this can be done safely.

9.3 Public Consumption of Alcohol/Drugs:

1. When alcohol or drug consumption is apparent, report the matter to the RCMP.
2. Several things must be considered by the patroller in determining whether to contact the police:
 - a. How busy is the shift?
 - b. Are the police already aware?
 - c. How large is the gathering?
 - d. Are other offences involved – e.g. littering, fighting, disturbing the peace, driving?
3. Pass on as much information as you can.
4. If the police are attending, remain in the area to provide information. See section of this Manual entitled, "Police Attendance".
5. If the police are not attending, use common sense. Is it necessary for you to monitor or should the patrol resume?

9.4 Fights:

1. If you see a fight in progress, remember your safety is the main concern. Do not get out of your vehicle.
2. Report to the RCMP with as much detail as possible, including:
 - a. Location of fight
 - b. Whether or not weapons are involved
 - c. Number of people involved
 - d. Description of people involved
3. If there is the ability to observe without putting yourself in danger, do so and keep good notes.
4. Remember that vehicles in the immediate area may be useful to document as a suspect or party involved may leave the scene in such a vehicle.

9.5 Alarms:

1. If you come upon an activated residential or business alarm, report to the RCMP and remain on the scene until the police attend.
2. Record all observations, which may be of note (description of people/vehicles in area, etc).
3. Both residential and business alarms consume a great deal of police time. Many times, police attend and the premises are secure – a false alarm. A property reference or PR is called but their arrival can take time. In such case, COP members can stay on the scene until the PR arrives, rather than the police. Once it is established that the premises are secure, if a COP member is in attendance, he/she can advise the property owner of the police's findings. If, upon closer examination by the PR, there is some problem, the patrollers can advise their Dispatcher to call the police and have them re-attend.

4. The co-operation of the attending officer is a must. If he/she feels the patrollers' assistance is not required, resume routine patrolling.

9.6 Insecure Premises:

1. If you come across insecure premises (e.g. window broken, door ajar), advise RCMP and remain on the scene until police arrive.
2. Never enter the premises. Position yourself so that the point of entry is under observation and, to the extent possible, your presence is not detected.
3. Consider that the perpetrator may still be around. Is he/she in the building? Or perhaps, he/she is hiding nearby and watching to see if an alarm has been tripped or noises detected.
4. Record circumstances and observations in your notebook.

Section 10	Specific Patrol Situations – Involving Motor Vehicles
Effective Date	2014.01.01

10.1 What to look for – i.e. unusual activity:

Be on the lookout for:

- a. Inordinately slow moving vehicles
- b. Excessive speed
- c. No headlights
- d. Issues involving license plates, namely:
 - i. Truck plates on car or vice versa (Letter & 5 numbers, 3 numbers & 3 Letters also 2 Letters number & 2 numbers Letter)
 - ii. No plates
 - iii. Plates wired on
 - iv. Plates over other plates
 - v. Conflict between front and back plates
 - vi. Clean plate on dirty car or vice versa
 - vii. Expired plate
- e. Very young drivers, especially if vehicle doesn't suit them
- f. Vehicle does not suit driver
- g. Impaired driver
- h. Windows smashed out
- i. Rental Vans
- j. Overloaded vans
- k. Vehicle being loaded with valuables, especially if parked in front of a closed business or unattended residence, even if the vehicle is a legitimate looking commercial unit – possibly even bearing a sign identifying it as a repair vehicle, moving van, etc. Possible burglary or theft in progress

- l. Person attempting to attach or detach mechanical parts or plates while parked
- m. Person peering into parked vehicles

10.2 Abandoned/Stolen vehicles:

1. Be on the lookout for:
 - a. Vehicle parked in unusual area
 - b. Doors wide open
 - c. Engine running while vehicle unoccupied
 - d. Unlicensed/expired plates
 - e. Damage
 - f. Improperly parked
2. If you suspect a stolen vehicle, check with SAR on the laptop.
3. If the license plate comes up stolen, advise the RCMP.
4. Maintain surveillance until police attend. Take detailed notes and report.

Section 11	Specific Patrol Situations – Not Involving Crime or an Immediate Crime
Effective Date	2014.01.01

11.1 Young Child Alone at Night:

1. Consider the age of the child, the location, and the possibility he/she may be involved in the criminal element.
2. If concerned regarding the child's safety, advise Dispatcher and continue to observe.
3. If comfortable with situation, speak with the child to ensure he/she is alright. Watch your surroundings.

11.2 Person Down:

1. If you come across someone who is down, consider:
 - a. Does person appear to be alone or is anyone else there?
 - b. Is the person injured and, if so, how badly?
 - c. Is the person under the influence of alcohol or drugs?
 - d. Does this appear to be a crime scene? Take a look at the surroundings – are weapons evident? Is there a vehicle involved?
 - e. Is the person in a dangerous location where further injury to

him/herself or others may arise?

2. Based on your observations, determine whether to advise RCMP to send an ambulance.
3. Take good notes and reports.

11.3 Found Property:

1. If you find property while on patrol, consider:
 - a. What is the value of the property?
 - b. Is it possibly stolen?
 - c. Is it possibly an exhibit?
 - d. Was it maybe used in the commission of a crime?
 - e. Is it a traffic hazard or is it strictly debris?
2. Make good notes and use common sense. Do not compromise your safety or expose yourself to the criminal element.
3. If you are advised by the RCMP to take control of the article, then:
 - a. Be very careful handling it. If possible, use a clean rag or glove
when touching it so as not to leave fingerprints
 - b. Transport item to RCMP officer
 - c. Obtain a file number and the investigating officer's name
4. It is imperative your notes are thorough – you do not want to be responsible for any damage or accused of anything inappropriate.

11.4 Wild Animals:

1. If you spot wild animals within city limits and determine the animal poses an immediate or imminent threat to people, domestic animals or property, advise RCMP of this.
2. A police officer may attend but more likely, an individual involved in that field will be called.
3. Ask the RCMP if they prefer you to remain on the scene, seek directions and obtain file number.

11.5 Injured/Deceased Animals:

1. If you encounter an injured animal, report this to the RCMP.
2. Do not attempt to treat or transport an animal. The police will dispatch the appropriate personnel.
3. If a vehicle was involved in an accident with an animal, follow the guidelines regarding motor vehicle collisions.

11.6 Traffic Hazards:

1. If you come upon a traffic hazard, consider:
 - a. Is it of immediate danger to you? If so, proceed to a safe location
& advise RCMP. If police are attending, remain in the area
 - b. What type of hazard is it (e.g. pot hole, debris, property)?
 - c. Is it possibly a crime scene?
 - d. Is it a danger to motorists or pedestrians, activate amber lights.
 - e. Is the hazard someone's property?

2. In cases such as debris, the City or Dept. of Highways can be called.

3. If the hazard is property, consider that it might be evidence of some sort and do not tamper with it until a determination can be made.
Advise the Dispatcher so direction can be sought from the RCMP.

4. If you notice a dangerous pot hole, obscured stop sign, damaged street lights or traffic lights, call the City of Prince George 250-561-7600.

Section 12	Specific Patrol Situations – Involving Patrol Vehicle
Effective Date	2014.01.01

12.1 Flat Tires:

1. Citizens Patrol has an agreement with BCAA . There are no cards issued and basic Roadside Assistance applies to patrol members who break down while on patrol 7:00 pm – 2:00 am Friday and Saturday only. Patrol members must call BCAA Road Assistance 1-800-222-4357, then remain on the scene to meet the tow truck driver and provide identification. Be sure to have Citizens Patrol photo ID badge available.

12.2 Motor Vehicle Collision:

1. If you are involved in a motor vehicle collision, advise RCMP of location and whether there are injuries involved. Police will not attend unless injuries or alcohol are involved. Advise the Volunteer Program Coordinator, Community Policing Coordinator or NCO i/c Community Policing.
2. If you suspect alcohol on the part of the other individual, make good observations and notes.
3. It is important to exchange information with all drivers. This should include name, address, phone number, date of birth, driver's license number, make, and model of vehicle and license plate number.
4. For any collision a report is required. The RCMP do not attend a collision unless there is an injury or if a vehicle requires towing off the roadway. This consists of both parties attending to the Detachment and filing a report within 24 hours. Both parties do not need to attend together.

5. If the accident is a hit and run, obtain what particulars you can (plate number, description of vehicle, number of occupants, names, addresses & telephone numbers of witnesses, etc). Do not leave the scene or tamper with your car or any debris – remember this is all evidence. The police will attend.
6. If injuries occur, advise the RCMP of the number of injured people and seriousness of injuries. If you are injured, it is important that you say so.
7. All incidents must be reported to Volunteer Program Coordinator and NCO i/c of Community Policing

12.3 People Threaten Your Safety:

1. If at any time you find yourself in a threatening situation, your safety is the priority.
2. Stay in your vehicle, lock all doors and keep your windows closed. Do not participate in any threats, gestures or verbal exchanges.

3. Advise the RCMP of all details. Do not move your vehicle if there is the possibility of injuring or running someone over. Make good mental notes and prepare good written notes and report at your earliest convenience.

Section 13	Specific Patrol Situations – Motor Vehicle Collisions
Effective Date	2014.01.01

13.1 General

1. If you come upon or observe a motor vehicle incident and there are no emergency vehicles on scene activate amber lights, report any injuries and damage to the RCMP. If there are injuries or if alcohol is a factor, ensure all details are passed on to the police, ambulance, etc.
2. COP members will NOT administer first aid unless trained to do so. If the ambulance crew is more than five minutes from the scene, emergency response will send the fire department to deal with the victims.

13.2 Alcohol Involved:

3. If alcohol is or may be a factor:
 - a. Report this to the RCMP
 - b. Make good observations and notes detailing any indications of
Intoxication, full description of suspect and evidence as to his/her status as
driver of vehicle
 - c. Do not try and detain the impaired driver, simply observe & record
 - d. When police arrive, identify yourself and provide your observation
and notes to the officer.

13.4 Hit & Run Collision:

1. If you witness a hit and run collision, provide as many details as possible.
2. Assess the scene for injuries and alcohol and take good notes.

Section 14	Specific Patrol Situations – Impaired Drivers
Effective Date	2014.01.01

1. It is extremely important that you make good observations and excellent notes and reports. Times, street names, path of travel, number of occupants, description of driver and vehicle, license plate, etc. are required.
2. Patrollers may follow an impaired driver if this can be done safely and within the rules of the road.

Section 15	Specific Patrol Situations – Involving the Police
Effective Date	2014.01.01

15.1 Police Officer is struggling with someone:

1. Do not get out of your car.
2. If you feel the officer is in need of assistance, call 911.
3. Provide detail – location, member or car involved, etc.
4. Make complete notes. Observe and record all persons, vehicles, and actions observed, including those of the police.

15.2 Police Officer requests your assistance:

1. Be very clear on what he/she is asking. Try and determine length of time involved and keep your safety in mind.
2. Do not hesitate to ask questions.
3. Make good notes.
4. Record the officer's name, badge number, vehicle ID if possible.
5. Notify Volunteer Programs Coordinator before ending your shift.

15.3 Police Officer on Coffee Breaks:

1. Police officers rarely get regular coffee breaks. This is a time for them to get away from the workload of the shift and converse/strategize with co-workers. They want a break – please respect this.



Section 16	Specific Patrol Situation – Controlled Exit of Vehicle
Effective Date	2014.01.01

16.1 General

The guidelines below outline the requirements necessary to conduct a Controlled Exit of your Vehicle in designated areas.

Designated areas:

Churches

Schools

Parks

Malls

Industrial Areas

Other areas to be determined by Volunteer Program Coordinator.

16.2 Guidelines:

1. Patrols must be conducted in pairs or three members.
2. Safety vests or Citizens Patrol jackets must be worn at all times.
3. Members must have a portable radio and a flashlight at all times.
4. Members are to refrain from conversations with groups, however if an individual approaches members they must introduce themselves as RCMP Volunteer - Citizens Patrol.
5. If for any reason members find themselves in a potentially dangerous situation they must immediately remove themselves from the area, return to their vehicle, and notify the RCMP of the situation.
6. Radio silence must be observed until the Patrollers have safely returned to their vehicle.
7. Compromising safety is not permitted.

Section 17	Notebooks
Effective Date	2014.01.01

Notebooks are considered official documents and may be used as evidence in Court. You may also have to appear in Court as a witness and will want to be able to use your Notebook to refresh your memory.

17.1 General Rules of Notebook Maintenance:

1. All notes should be in your own handwriting.
2. Use black ink. Never use pencil.
3. Write clearly, concisely, & legibly.
4. If you make a mistake:
 - a. Cross it out with a single line & initial with time & date. DO NOT obliterate your previous note
 - b. Make corrected entry either adjacent to incorrect one or on another page with a cross-reference to the incorrect entry
 - c. DO NOT rip out incorrect entry
5. Notes should be made at the time of your observations or as soon as possible thereafter.
6. Use the pages of your Notebook in sequence. If you miss or do not use a page, or part of a page, draw a diagonal line through it or any portion of a page that you do not use.
7. DO NOT make personal notes, doodles or other writing unrelated to your duties in your Notebook.
8. Use professional language; do not use derogatory terms.
9. Use reasonable, well – known abbreviations.
10. Store your notebook in a safe place.

17.2 What to Write:

1. On the inside front cover:

- a. Your name
- b. Contact number
- c. Program affiliation (i.e. Prince George Citizens Patrol)
- d. Book number
- e. Start and end date of Notebook
- f. Telephone numbers & other information that may be of use in the field

2. Information at commencement of shift:

- a. Date
- b. Day of week
- c. Start & end times
- d. Weather, temperature
- e. Road conditions
- f. Patrol partners
- g. Pass on info, assignments received
- h. Watch, watch commander, call manager
- i. Vehicle description & license plate of your patrol vehicle

3. Information regarding an event:

- a. Police car numbers/officers' names
- b. Names of everyone you spoke to
- c. Time at which all events occur (24 hour clock)
- d. Location at which all events occur
- e. Your observations at the time noted
- f. Concentrate on noting evidence to determine the facts

4. Your notebook should record your observations, not those of your partner or anyone else.

17.3 Retention of Notebooks:

1. Notebooks are to be returned to the Community Policing Volunteer Program Coordinator when resigning as a Citizens Patrol member.

Section 18	E-Mail Policy
Effective Date	2014.01.01

The following e-mail policy has been written to encourage members to construct and send e-mail messages within the COPs membership that are meant for the betterment of the COPs program.

- 1) Members shall not forward any COPs email or COP information to people outside of the program. Do not use or disclose personal or confidential information. Do not disclose other members' email without prior consent from the volunteer Program Coordinator.
- 2) If you have a specific concern regarding the COPs program or a fellow volunteer, direct your email to the Volunteer Program Coordinator.

Section 19	Crime Prevention Notices
Effective Date	2014.01.01

Lock It or Lose It is a Crime Prevention program between ICBC, Community Policing and Citizens Patrol volunteers.

Teams of COP volunteers work together to target vehicles in various parking lots throughout the city including; parks, malls, residential areas, industrial areas, school, and special events. This task is usually conducted during daylight hours, in good weather, with teams of two or more people.

At no time are vehicles to be touched with the exception of placing a Crime Prevention notice under the left side windshield wiper.

Vehicles are inspected for: open windows, unlocked doors, license plate decal build-up, expired license decals, valuables in plain view or anything that would attract a potential thief.

After checking the vehicle, a Crime Prevention Notice is placed under the left side windshield wiper, even if no deficient items are noted.

Section 20	Citizens On Foot Patrol
Effective Date	2014.01.01

Citizens on Foot Patrol

The purpose of Citizens on Foot Patrol is to become additional eyes and ears for the Prince George RCMP detachment during daylight hours.

REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the requirements for volunteers in vehicles, it is necessary that a volunteer foot patroller be physically fit to be able to participate in the program and must be able to operate a cellular phone or radio.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

As a member of a foot patrol, volunteers may be more readily identified with

the police and therefore may be considered a representative of the police. It is important that the volunteers act in a professional manner at all times. Usually, volunteers are asked to report activities of a criminal or suspicious nature to the police by way of cell phone, by dialling 911. It must be emphasized that foot patrol volunteers have no special authority to contravene any section of the Criminal Code, Motor Vehicle Act or Regulations, and are not to intervene directly in any situation they may

encounter while on foot patrol, unless authorized by a police officer.

Volunteer foot patrollers must not reveal the phone numbers of the cell phones used, or radio frequencies.

ASSIGNMENT

Volunteer foot patrollers are always assigned in pairs. If a partner does not

report for a scheduled shift, and no replacement is found, the patrol is cancelled. Volunteers are normally assigned a specific area at the beginning of a shift. Where possible, volunteers are advised of any concerns noted in the area prior to setting out. Volunteers may not include a non-member in their patrol unless authorized by the program coordinators or NCO i/c Community Policing. At no time is a non-member allowed to accompany only one program member. There must be a minimum of two program members on patrol at any time. Shifts are normally 2 - 4 hours in length.

IDENTIFICATION

Volunteers shall carry their volunteer ID tags with them at all times while on duty. Volunteers shall show their tags when requested by police or a concerned citizen. Foot patrollers will be highly visible, especially when patrolling parking lots. Not only does this act as a deterrent to thieves, police can easily identify the patrollers. Patrollers will wear either a shirt with a Citizens Patrol logo or, patrol jacket and possibly both.

SOME TIPS WHEN ON FOOT PATROL

1. When volunteers start their shift they should record in their notebook the time, date, weather, who is on patrol, and what they are wearing.
2. Volunteers should also record cell phone numbers of other participating volunteers patrolling at the same time.
3. Volunteers should have proper clothing for inclement weather.
4. Volunteers should check their radios and cell phones to ensure the equipment is working.
5. Volunteers should always know where they are when on patrol. If they are in a lane, they should know which 2 streets they are between and what block they are in. In a parking lot, they should know the area or the number of the parking lot they are in.
6. Volunteers should try to patrol as much of their designated area as they can during their shift.
7. If volunteers see someone who is suspicious and that person sees them walking by several times, they will know the patrollers are following them. Patrollers should try to find a safe observation point and watch the suspicious person.
8. Volunteers should know their call signs and call signs of other patrol members.
9. In parking lots, volunteers must use extreme caution when walking around vehicles and should not assume a driver sees them.
10. Volunteers can also be considered as "Ambassadors" and should be up to date on the area they are patrolling to be able to answer questions, provide directions and identify local services.
11. Foot patrol guidelines are very important for the safety and protection of the volunteers.

WHEN TO CONSIDER CALLING FOR HELP

If a volunteer sees something suspicious - observe for a while.

THINK and ask, does this really require the attention of the police?

If something warrants the attention of the police, before calling 911, make sure you know your location.

Identify yourself immediately to the 911 operators as CITIZENS ON PATROL.

Know the suspect's location and direction of travel; describe what you have in view.

The police will be already on their way while you are still on the phone.

Wait for the arrival of the police and keep updating the 911 operator with any new information.

Stay as close to the scene as is safely possible and maintain contact with the 911 operator until you are requested to clear the scene by the operator or by the attending police officer.

Be aware there are locations where cell phones have no reception, such as underground parking lots. All calls to 911 are recorded, so remain calm and professional when providing information. Listen and obey instructions from the 911 operator.

Section 21	Citizens On Patrol Amber Light Operation Policy
Effective Date	2016.01.01

1. Amber Lights are only to be used by authorized Citizens on Patrol Members during authorized tasks and Amber lights will only be operated through the Amber light operation policy.

2. Amber Lights will only be activated while the patrol vehicle is stationary;
Or while the patrol vehicle is travelling less than twenty (20) km per hour.
(i.e. participating in parade)

3. Amber lights will not be operated as emergency equipment.
(i.e. like police, ambulance, and fire)

4. Amber lights will be used while the patrol vehicle is required to be stopped in a roadway due to a motor vehicle incident or any other blockage/hazard in the roadway. (i.e. highway, side street, parking lot or ally being blocked by tree, vehicle(s) or injured person(s))

5. Amber lights may be used while stationary in parking lots, roadways, and any area your patrol vehicle can be stationary while conducting approved Citizens on Patrol tasks. (i.e. checking license plates, issuing a Crime prevention notice, ICBC survey in a high traffic area)

6. Should Amber lights be operated outside the policy listed above disciplinary action may be taken. Disciplinary action may include termination from Citizens on Patrol and Community Policing Unit.