

BEMIDJI POLICE DEPARTMENT

Bemidji Police Reserves

POLICY #115

Purpose

The Bemidji Police Reserve Program provides training and experience to adults interested in the law enforcement profession. Further, the Bemidji Police Department recognizes the valuable resource citizen volunteers can offer to assist the police department in fulfilling our mission.

Policy

It is the policy of the Bemidji Police Reserve program to recruit, training and utilize the talents of citizen volunteers to support the mission of the Bemidji Police Department.

Scope

This policy governs the selection, training, duties, operations, performance and discipline of Bemidji Police Reserve Officers.

I. Recruitment and Selection

- A. Recruitment and Selection will be in accordance with the policy on the Volunteers in Police Services policy.

II. Duties of Reserve Officers

- A. Assist the Bemidji Police Department
The Bemidji Police Department Reserve Unit shall provide assistance to the police officers of Bemidji in the performance of their assigned duties when requested by a supervisor.
- B. Traffic Control
To provide traffic control when requested at traffic accidents, parades, and special functions.
- C. Crime Prevention
The Bemidji Police Department Reserves will participate in crime prevention activities such as home and business checks while on active duty.
- D. Emergency Situations
The Bemidji Police Reserve Unit may be utilized in emergency situations such as natural or manmade disasters, searches, rescues or any other emergency as needed.
- E. Special Duties
The Bemidji Police Reserve Unit may be utilized to perform special duties requested by the Chief of Police or designee
- F. Security
The Bemidji Police Reserve Unit may provide security duties at such locations as city celebrations, crime scenes, or other locations. Such security will be provided at such locations where minimal risk of serious injury or harm exists.

III. Operations

- A. Reserve Officers in their probationary period must conduct patrol functions with at least one partner between the hours of 7 pm to 6 am. Reserve Officers who have successfully completed their probationary period may conduct all functions without the partner requirement unless otherwise ordered by a supervisor.

- B. Reserve Officers who have contributed 200 hours or more of Patrol and/or Special Duty time, have not fallen below attendance requirements in the past 12 months, and have not received any discipline actions in the previous 12 months will be removed from probationary status.
- C. Reserve members will adhere to the Bemidji Police Reserves Policies and Procedures and the Bemidji Police Department's Reserve Manual.
- D. Reserve members will operate in full compliance with the laws of the State of Minnesota, the ordinances of the City of Bemidji and any other written procedures supplied by the Bemidji Police Department.
- E. The primary function of volunteers is to observe and report suspicious and/or criminal activity. Such actions shall be reported to the dispatcher
- F. Reserve members are not peace officers. At no time shall a member of this program indicate, or infer, that he/she has any more authority than the average citizen.
- G. At no time will any member pursue, make contact with, or become involved in the physical arrest of a suspect unless specifically directed by law enforcement officer.
- H. Reserve members shall not enter private property without permission or being dispatched.
- I. Never enter into a hazardous situation.
- J. Reserve members are not first responders. At no time will a Reserve respond to a scene that has not been secured. After arriving to an event that the Reserve feels is a threat to his/her safety or is above his/her level of experience, the Reserve will advise the dispatcher and leave the scene.
- K. Reserve members shall not respond to traffic accidents until the scene is secured or unless directed to do so by a Supervisor.
- L. Reserve members shall not transport suspects or arrestees. Volunteers may transport citizens, victims and witnesses following the department policy and at the request of police officers if approved by a supervisor.
- M. If a Reserve Officer is approached by citizens reporting a crime, members shall explain they are volunteers only and not authorized to take any enforcement action. If the citizen is reporting an emergency, the Reserve Officer shall contact and advise dispatch immediately. If the citizen wants to report a non-emergency event, they shall be told to call dispatch at 218-333-9111.
- N. Should a Reserve Officer be approached by anyone he/she feels is a threat, he/she shall immediately leave the area and notify dispatch.
- O. If a criminal offense is observed by a Reserve Officer, a Bemidji Police Department Officer or personnel from another law enforcement agency may request the Reserve Officer to make a citizen's arrest in those instances where the offense did not occur in the Police Officer's presence. Police Officers on the scene will handle the physical aspect of making the arrest and preparation of all documents.
- P. Reserve Officers may be required to appear in court to testify as witnesses.
- Q. In the event of an on-duty injury, the on duty Supervisor must be notified immediately and a first report of injury must be completed.
- R. NO WEAPONS OF ANY KIND ARE TO BE CARRIED WHILE ON DUTY.

IV. Vehicle Operations

- A. A valid Minnesota Driver's License must be carried by all Reserve Officers at all times when a Reserve Officer is operating a department vehicle.

- B. When operating a Department vehicle, each Reserve Officer is a representative of the Bemidji Police Department. Drivers shall be courteous and obey all Minnesota vehicle codes at all times.
- C. Reserve Officers shall utilize all vehicle safety equipment for which it was designed and as required by law. Drivers of department vehicles are responsible for the proper use of safety equipment by their passengers, including child safety seats. Use of seat belts is mandatory.
- D. Members shall not attempt vehicle operations or maneuvers that create an unreasonable hazard to themselves, other people or property. At no time shall a member commit any traffic violation in an attempt to observe or report a suspicious activity or criminal offense.
- E. Reserve vehicles are not emergency vehicles.
- F. The overhead light bar is for the purpose of alerting traffic to exercise caution. They are not to be used while driving unless you have been directed to do so for traffic control.
- G. When in possession of a regular marked police unit, Reserve Officers shall not operate the on-board computer. The red and blue emergency lights may only be operated at the direction of a police officer.
- H. Personal vehicles are not to be used for any official department function.
- I. When leaving the vehicle parked on the street or in a parking lot, the windows shall be rolled up, the doors locked. Ignition keys may not be left inside the vehicle.
- J. At the end of each shift, reserve officers shall allow sufficient time to fill the gas tank, check engine fluid levels, clean the interior of trash and wash the vehicle if needed.
- K. Any traffic accident or damage to the vehicle shall be reported immediately to the on duty Supervisor.
- L. Reserve Officers shall not use department vehicles for personal/business use at any time.
- M. Smoking and pets are prohibited in all city vehicles.
- N. The non-driving patrol Reserve Officer will keep the log of all activities and operate the radio during the patrol shift.
- O. Reserve officers may use fully marked police squad cars for events and details in limited circumstances that are *specifically authorized by a supervisor*.

V. Uniforms and Equipment

- A. Reserve Officers will wear a uniform and equipment authorized by the Bemidji Police Department when performing most public duties.
- B. The uniform and equipment may be worn only on duty and going directly to or from an assignment.
- C. The uniform will be neat, complete and clean at all times.
- D. Some portions of the uniform and equipment shall be purchased by reserve officers and others will be purchased by the Bemidji Police Department.
- E. All uniforms or equipment purchased by the Bemidji Police Department, and issued to a Reserve Officer, shall remain the property of the Bemidji Police Department.
- F. All department owned uniforms and equipment shall be returned to the department upon resignation or termination or by order of the Police Chief or face legal action.
- G. The authorized uniform and equipment and a list of items provided by the department are outlined in the Police Reserve General Operating Manual.

VI. Conduct

- A. Reserve Officers will not conduct business, or create debts in the name of the City of Bemidji, nor the Bemidji Police Department, unless authorized by a department supervisor.
- B. Gratuities shall never be accepted by any reserve officer.
- C. Reserve Officers shall behave in a professional manner at all times. Foul language or any behavior that brings discredit to the City of Bemidji or Bemidji Police Department is strictly prohibited and grounds for removal.
- D. Derogatory comments, ethnic/sexual humor or other actions regarding age, race, creed, religion or any personal attribute is strictly prohibited.
- E. Reserve Officers shall treat all other members with the utmost respect and shall be civil, courteous and professional in their relationships with one another regardless of rank or assignment.
- F. Any conduct or action by a member of this unit while on duty that will bring disrespect, ridicule, or criticism of the reserve program, or the Bemidji Police Department, shall be in violation of this section.
- G. No Reserve shall use any form of tobacco while on duty or in uniform.
- H. If a Reserve Officer is arrested or cited for a felony, gross misdemeanor or misdemeanor, the police sergeant overseeing the reserve program must be notified within 24 hours.
- I. If a Reserve Officer becomes the subject of a restraining order and/or an emergency protective order, the police sergeant overseeing the reserve program must be notified within 24 hours.
- J. Any Reserve Officer reporting for duty with the odor of an alcoholic beverage on his/her breath, or under the influence of alcohol or any drug which may impair his/her ability to perform the duties as required will not be allowed to complete their shift and will be terminated. No Reserve Officer shall consume an alcoholic beverage while in uniform either on or off duty. Any violation of this section shall be cause for immediate termination.
- K. The Reserve Program is not a political program. Members of the Police Reserves are prohibited from attending any political function, or participating in any political activity, in uniform unless for authorized purposes.
- L. If a member of reserves is contacted by a City Council Member, or other elected official, concerning the reserve program, he/she is to be referred to the Chief of Police.
- M. Reserve Officers are not restricted in any way from exercising their political rights concerning any activity which does not affect the reserve program.
- N. No Reserve Officer, while off duty, shall present their identification card or badge for any purpose except to identify themselves as a Bemidji Police Department Reserve Officer. The identification card or badge will not be used for personal gain or considerations not afforded the ordinary citizen.
- O. Failure to immediately comply with any legal command or order, written or verbal, issued by any sworn Police Officer constitutes a violation of this section. Whenever any question arises as to the wisdom of an order issued by a police officer, the order shall be obeyed and any question regarding it submitted to a higher-ranking officer.
- P. Any member of the reserve unit, while on active duty, who refuses to give their badge number, name, or produce their official identification card upon the request of any citizen shall be guilty of violating this article.

VII. Attendance

A. Minimum Requirements

1. Reserve Officers must attend 8 of 12 monthly training meetings.
2. No Reserve Officer may miss more than 2 monthly training meetings consecutively.
3. All Reserve Officers must contribute at least 10 hours of patrol or special assignments per month and volunteer at least one Friday or Saturday patrol shift per calendar month.
4. Any Reserve Officer who does not meet the minimum requirements can be terminated from the program.
5. Any Reserve Officer who experiences an emergency situation which will lead them to fall below the minimum requirements must notify the police sergeant overseeing the reserve program.
6. Leave of Absences may be granted after review by the Chief of Police. A Reserve Officer requesting a leave of absence must submit the request in writing to their supervisor at least 30 days prior to the requested leave.

B. Unexcused Absences

1. Any Reserve Officer who is unable work a patrol shift or special assignment in which he/she has previously signed up for must notify the on-duty supervisor as soon as possible. The Reserve Officer must give a valid reason (ie: emergency or illness) for the absence or the absence will be considered unexcused.
2. A Reserve Officer may not remove his/her name from the schedule less than three days prior to the shift unless the Reserve Officer locates a replacement Reserve Officer to take his/her place or the absence will be considered unexcused.
3. Two unexcused absences in a twelve month period can result in termination from the Reserve Program.

VIII. Confidentiality

- A. Confidential personnel issues shall not be discussed among other reserve officers or the public.
- B. No Reserve Officer shall give to any person information regarding any case or accident in which the information cannot be gained legally through regular or official channels.
- C. All information released to news media must come from the Chief of Police or the Chief's designee. No Reserve Officer will volunteer or give information to the press regarding any police or reserve matters.

IX. Discipline

- A. In the event the Bemidji Police Department receives a complaint from a citizen or other member of the Department about the conduct of a Reserve Officer, an investigation shall be conducted under the direction of the Chief of Police.

- B. Members violating their oath and/or trust by committing an offense punishable under the laws or statutes of the United States, the State of Minnesota, the ordinances of the City of Bemidji, provisions of the Reserve Manual, or who disobeys or fails to execute any lawful order, or who are incompetent and/or negligent in performing their duties are subject to counseling or disciplinary action.
- C. The Bemidji Police Department may take the following corrective measures in any order:
 - 1. Oral counseling.
 - a. Oral counseling is not to be considered as a disciplinary action. It is used when the problem is a lack of understanding of the policies, regulations, procedures and requirements of the position, rather than intentional and unintentional disregard thereof.
 - 2. Written reprimand.
 - a. A written reprimand is used for minor offenses arising from the intentional disregard of policies, regulations, procedures or requirements of the position. A written reprimand may also include a warning that if the problem persists, termination from the program may result.
 - 3. Suspension.
 - a. Suspension is the temporary removal from the Reserve Program for a specified period of time. Reserve Officers on suspension may not participate in Reserve events, but will be required to attend monthly training sessions.
 - 4. Termination.
 - a. Reserve Officers are “At Will” volunteers and can be removed from the program at the sole discretion of the Chief of Police.
 - 5. Disciplinary actions shall be documented and permanently retained in the member’s file.

X. Police Reserves Chain of Command

The chain of command establishes a position for each member of the police department within the organization and a level of authority for that position. See attached diagram of the department chain of command.

A. Command Authority

The Police Reserve Sergeants are responsible for conducting their assigned duties as listed in this section and have authority in assigning duties, tasks, or assignments to reserve officers. The Police Reserve Sergeants shall not have powers of discipline and shall report issues to the assigned police officer. The assigned officer oversee the day-to-day activities and functions of the police reserve unit. A patrol sergeant shall oversee the assigned patrol officer and be responsible and accountable for the Reserve unit’s performance. The patrol sergeant shall make all recommendations to the Police Chief and/or Police Captain..

B. Recognition of command authority

Bemidji Police Department Reserve Officers are required to follow all lawful directives of a Police Reserve Sergeant. The directive can be an order, assignment, or direction. Directives

relayed via a peer or subordinate from a higher ranking supervisor shall be followed as though the directive were delivered directly by the directive's originator. If the validity of a relayed directive is in question, the Reserve Officer receiving the directive shall either verify the directive by making contact with the originator or obey the directive. In the event a Reserve Officer receives conflicting directives, the member shall tactfully bring to the attention of the supervisor giving the latest directive the conflicting nature of the directive. If the supervisor does not rescind the latest directive, it shall stand. The Reserve Officer is not responsible for disobedience of the former directive when this procedure is followed. The supervisor issuing the latter directive is responsible for notifying the initial directive originator of the change in directives. If there is a question about a matter, it is the responsibility of the Reserve Officer to take this question to his/her Reserve Sergeant, assigned officer, or on-duty Patrol Sergeant. If the question cannot be answered, the assigned patrol sergeant will be consulted.

Disputes, disagreements and questions can hopefully be brought to a conclusion at the Reserve Sergeant level. If this is not possible, then the proper procedure should be followed to the next highest level of command. Any Reserve Officer who fails to obey lawful directives issued in accordance with this policy shall be deemed insubordinate and subject to disciplinary action.

C. Accountability

Reserve Sergeants are responsible for ensuring this and all policies and procedures of the Reserve unit are followed. The chain of command shall not and is not intended to prevent access by any reserve officer to the Chief of Police. However, following the chain of command is required if the subject is related to the police reserve unit's policies, rules in dispute, or disciplinary action. If there is a personal problem at home or otherwise, an officer wishes to discuss with the Chief of Police or a particular supervisor, the chain of command will not apply.

XI. Reserve Sergeant Qualifications and Duties

A. Reserve Sergeant minimum qualifications:

- a. Must have served on the Bemidji Police Reserves for at least one year.
- b. Must not have received any disciplinary actions in the past 12 months.
- c. Must have completed the probationary period.

B. Duties

1. Perform all duties required of a Reserve Officer.
2. Set a positive example to Reserve Officers.
3. Be a team leader while performing duties with Reserve Officers.
4. Plan and coordinate all monthly training/meeting sessions once approved by the assigned officer.
5. Review all reserve officer squad checks to ensure that they are being completed and all issues have been properly addressed or resolved.
6. Review monthly time sheets to ensure that all Reserve Officers have met their requirements.
7. Ensure that all Reserve Officers are in compliance with the Bemidji Police Department Reserve Manual and Policy.
8. Report any issues of non-compliance of policy or procedure.
9. Perform various tasks as assigned by supervisors.