

Columbus Police Division Directive	EFFECTIVE	NUMBER
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Surveillance/Stakeouts/Encountering Out-Of-Uniform Personnel		



I. Policy Statements

- A. Except in exigent circumstances, Division personnel recognizing and encountering possible covert personnel shall not:
1. Give any verbal or physical sign of recognition to covert personnel unless covert personnel speak first.
 2. Speak to covert personnel when there is any doubt as to whether the covert personnel has given a sign of recognition.
 3. Disclose the presence or identity of covert personnel to any non-police personnel.
 4. Engage in any act that could in any way jeopardize a **covert** police operation.
- B. The responsibility for a safe response **is shared by all parties** in situations involving sworn personnel encountering an individual claiming to be an off-duty, undercover, or a plain-clothed law enforcement officer. The challenging personnel have a responsibility to use reasonable tactics and sound judgment in approaching the situation, whereas the challenged individual has the responsibility for a safe response to the challenge.
- C. When practical, out-of-uniform personnel responding to a request for police service shall notify the dispatcher and provide a description of themselves and/or their vehicle. When there is a reasonable belief that the call for service involves the infliction of, or threatened infliction of serious physical harm, personnel shall provide police service as soon as practical. Otherwise, the preferred course of action is for **the** out-of-uniform personnel to observe the scene until uniformed personnel arrive.
- D. Surveillance/Stakeout Notification
1. The Division has an interest in maintaining confidentiality and officer safety. Investigations or arrests may be hampered if too many people have knowledge of a situation. In weighing these competing interests, officer safety shall outweigh the need for confidentiality.
 2. In order to guard against unintentional interference by other officers, to have assistance available when it is needed, **and/or** to ensure officer safety, it may be necessary to inform others within the Division that a particular activity is taking place. If working outside the City of Columbus, the applicable police agency should be notified.
 3. When sworn personnel reasonably anticipate that **a** stakeout and/or surveillance activity may create a situation in which there is a risk of

serious harm to law enforcement personnel, or **that** a dangerous felony may occur, the unit supervisor shall ensure the Patrol Administration Sergeant is notified before any operations begin.

4. The sworn supervisor in charge of any major raids or planned events shall ensure the Patrol Administration Sergeant is notified prior to the event.
5. Upon notification of any of the above, the Patrol Administration Sergeant shall inform the appropriate precinct supervisor and the Communications Bureau supervisor. The Communications Bureau supervisor shall forward the information to **the** precinct officers, dispatcher, **and if necessary, any adjoining foreign agency**. The information should not be broadcast over the police radio, nor **shall** it be forwarded to individuals who do not need to know.
6. Bureau commanders may authorize deviation from the above policies if the circumstances of the surveillance, stakeout, or major raid are highly sensitive or demand a higher degree of confidentiality than usual.

II. Procedures

A. Personnel Challenging Possible Out-of-Uniform Law Enforcement Personnel

1. Approach cautiously and identify yourself as a police officer.
2. Give clear, concise, **and** non-conflicting orders.
3. Instruct individuals claiming to be law enforcement personnel, whose identity you are not able to immediately confirm, to disarm in a safe manner and then produce their agency's identification. If the individual refuses to comply, treat the situation as any other encounter with an armed individual.

B. Out-of-Uniform Personnel Being Challenged

1. Remain motionless and react professionally. Respond to the commands of the challenging personnel even if it means allowing a suspect to escape.
2. Identify yourself as a police officer, inform the challenging officer whether you are armed, and where your weapon, police badge, and ID are located.
3. When instructed to do so produce your badge and ID, or inform the challenging officer that you are going to retrieve your badge and ID. Reach for your badge and ID using slow deliberate motions.
4. Avoid turning and facing the challenging personnel until told to do so, especially if doing so would reveal a firearm in hand.