

Public Safety

Goal:

Maintain a safe community with appropriate numbers of public safety services, that are prepared for emergencies and serve the Town in a personal and efficient manner.

The safety of its citizens is one of the Town's major concerns. The threat of crime, fire, as well as individual or community disaster, calls for the placement of considerable emphasis on the facilities and services related to the protection of citizens and their property.

Front Royal Police Department

The Town of Front Royal Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency providing the community with professional law enforcement, traffic control, crime prevention, protection of life and property, recovery of stolen property and community awareness. It is administered and managed by the Chief of Police, who reports to the Town Manager. In addition to the Chief, the department is staffed with two police captains, five police sergeants, four investigators, seventeen full time police officers, four auxiliary officers including the police chaplain, and administrative and dispatch support. All of the civilian employees are certified for dispatching.

The Front Royal Police Department operations are headquartered at 24 West Main Street, in Front Royal. Persons incarcerated by the department are held at the Warren County Jail in Front Royal. The jail is currently located within one block of the police station.

The Police Department has a total of 14 marked and unmarked cruisers. Each of the vehicles has emergency lights and a siren, cameras, evidence kits and first aid kits. Two of them have been on the road for more than 6 years. In addition, all Town police vehicles are equipped with a two-way radio capable of monitoring police communications throughout the Front Royal-Warren County area and with the State Police.

Although the Town Police Department has a communications system separate from the Warren County Sheriffs Office, the two systems are compatible. All Town officers have portable two-way radios for communicating on both the Town and the County systems. Town police records are computerized through the Systems Innovation Inc. Xcalibur system which assists in dispatching and records management. The Town is also a member of

the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) and Central Criminal Records Exchange (CCRE).

In addition to initial training required at hiring, all police officers must participate in continuing education and training. Every two years they are required to complete a 40 hour In-Service training program at the Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Center in Waynesboro. Also, all Town officers are required to meet firearms qualifications two times annually. The dispatchers complete an 8 hour recertification course every two years by an in-house instructor for the VCIN System.

The Chief of Police regularly assigns officers to attend specialized schools and training seminars. Assignments are based on the Town's needs, with consideration given to a particular officer's experience, expertise and interest. This supplemental training has allowed the department to enjoy the benefits of a number of on-staff specialists. Included are State Certified instructors in the following areas: Firearms, Self-Defense, First Aid and CPR, Defensive Driving, Radar, General Instruction, and Detection of Drunk Drivers. In addition, twelve town officers are certified as Breathalyzer Operators, a status which requires re-certification every other year. In 1995, Town officers received 1,397 hours of training, professional development seminars and continuing education.

Of the Town's 29 full-time officers, three are general investigators. One of the Town's officers is a narcotics officer and works closely with the Northwest Regional Drug Task Force (NWRDTF) agency stationed in Shenandoah County. The Front Royal Police Department is one of seven agencies in seven jurisdictions that are members of the NWRDTF.

The Town also has a one-man Honda Motorcycle Patrol unit whose duties include the entire town area, except on rainy days and this officer walks the "beat" on Main Street and in the shopping centers.

The Town's Police Department has two daily patrol shifts which run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The shifts have a shift sergeant. Dispatching services are provided as well, with two shifts. Each department shift runs from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. and from 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. The Police Department responded to 11,625 calls for service in 1995, many of which were non-emergency calls.

Quality crime prevention and detection services are the focus of the Town's police department. In an effort to make the Town and surrounding community as safe as possible, the department provides, sponsors and/or supports a number of valuable services and programs which go above and beyond traditional law enforcement. Below is an outline of some of these services and programs.

a. Neighborhood Watch Associations. These programs encourage Front Royal citizens to keep a watchful eye on their neighbors' property. It is a program widely recognized as one of the most effective means by which citizens, in concert with law enforcement officers, can collectively reduce or remove the opportunity for crime. Neighborhood Watch signs are at the entrance to residential communities identifying particular neighborhoods. At the present time there are 4,699 households in the Town of Front Royal, and we have four active Neighborhood Watch Programs.

b. Crime Solvers/Stoppers. Front Royal and Warren County combined have an organization called Crime Solvers/Stoppers of which a member of the Front Royal Police Department and Warren County Sheriffs Office acts as a sponsor. This organization is composed of business persons in the community who are interested in seeing that crime does not pay but will pay fees for information leading to the arrest and conviction of persons involved in crimes.

Funding

Providing adequate funding for law enforcement services is important. In terms of total dollars spent, Front Royal is 15th in the State among the 32 reporting Towns with police departments, which is just about the median for the State. When compared to the size of the population, Front Royal spends \$151.24 annually, per citizen for police services. This is approximately 10% above the state average for per capita spending on law enforcement and traffic control.

In contrast to many other Towns, Front Royal maintains its own dispatch operation, which represents about one-third of its overall budget. When compared with other similarly situated towns who operate their own dispatch services, Front Royal maintains a lower per capita cost than the average.

**Law Enforcement *
Per Capita Spending, 1995**

<u>Locality</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Cost Per Capita</u>
Front Royal	12,500	\$1,890,447	\$151.24
Culpeper	9,140	1,375,152	150.45
Herndon	17,480	2,644,785	151.30
Vienna	16,060	2,747,331	171.07
Warrenton	5,080	1,358,888	267.50

*includes only those towns with budgeted dispatch services.

Number of Officers

The Front Royal Police Department currently employs 29 sworn officers, which equates to 2.32 officers per 1,000 population. This figure is slightly below average when compared with other towns in nearby jurisdictions. The overall national average is 2.2 officers per 1,000 population. Front Royal falls just slightly above the national average.

Sworn Law Enforcement Officers, 1995

<u>Locality</u>	<u># of Sworn Officers</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Sworn Officers Per 1,000 Pop.</u>
Front Royal	29	12,500	2.32
Culpeper	29	9,140	3.17
Leesburg	34	20,370	1.67
Vienna	39	16,060	2.43
Herndon	36	17,480	2.06
Strasburg	10	3,950	2.53
Warrenton	20	5,080	3.94

Crime Rate

Front Royal's overall crime rate is on the high end at 5,413.13 crimes per 100,000 population, when compared to other area localities. In fact, Front Royal ranks 8th highest in its crime rate over the 108 towns with police departments in the Commonwealth.

The nearby cities of Winchester and Charlottesville have rates considerably higher than Front Royal.

There are no strong trends in the types of crimes committed in the community. Violent crimes remain relatively low. Occurrences of property crimes are more frequent and have remained at a relatively constant rate. The Town's arrest clearance rate

(solved crimes) is higher than the national rate of 21%, fluctuating from year to year from a high of 46.19% in 1992 to 25.25% in 1996.

Response Times

It is a priority of the Police Department to minimize the length of time it takes an officer to reach the site of a call. Response times are measured as an indicator of how quickly officers respond to calls for assistance. The Police Department exhibits very good response times to both routine and emergency calls. Emergency calls require quicker response times because there is an immediate threat to the life or health of a citizen. In the most recent month available (March 1997), the response time for emergency calls averaged 2.6 minutes, and for non-emergency calls averaged 4.2 minutes. Response times are calculated from the time the Front Royal dispatcher receives the call to the time that the officer responds that he is on the scene.

Crime Rate per 100,000 Population, 1995

<u>Locality</u>	<u>Crime Rate</u>
Front Royal	5413.13
Culpeper	5568.93
Leesburg	3637.70
Luray	1208.33
Strasburg	3265.82
Warrenton	5118.11
Winchester	7048.03
Charlottesville	7022.22

Violent Crimes Select Years, 1985-1995

	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>
Murder	1	1	3	0	0	0
Rape	10	6	2	3	9	7
Robbery	3	4	11	10	5	5
Assault	22	15	9	11	17	14

Property Crimes Select Years, 1985-1995

	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>
Burglary	66	60	63	70	59	90
Larceny	426	448	376	455	538	531
Auto Theft	31	24	21	25	32	54
Arson	6	5	5	4	4	2

Juvenile Crime

Crimes committed by juveniles is of particular concern to the community. The Town and County have been experiencing an overall rise in the percentage of total crimes in the community for which a juvenile is arrested. In 1990 the percentage was 25.8%, rising to 42.1% in 1995. Comparable statistics were not available prior to 1990, and are not available for Front Royal separately.

WARREN COUNTY Juvenile Arrests for Violent and Property Crimes					
	1990	1992	1993	1994	1995
Number of Arrests	50	63	92	55	69
% of Total Crimes	25.8%	37.7%	38%	37.2%	42.1%

In May 1995, The Citizens' Action Committee on Juvenile Crime, a committee appointed by the Town Council, produced a "Plan of Action" in an effort to help reduce juvenile crime. The committee adopted a goal of reducing juvenile crime by 50 percent within five years.

"An overriding concern for committee members during the development of recommendations was to remember that typically, less than eight percent of juveniles in the community are involved in creating the crime problem. The overwhelming majority of juveniles are good citizens. Tough recommendations aimed at curbing criminal behavior among the minority must avoid treating or characterizing all juveniles as potential criminals. Additionally, the most effective means of deterring juvenile crime is early intervention aimed at removing the influences most likely to cause juvenile

*delinquency before a child adopts criminal behavior."*¹

The Plan of Action offers a series of recommendations, including:

- ◆ **Community-based Solutions:** *"It is widely recognized that the best solutions for dealing with juvenile crime are home grown."* The plan recommends utilizing existing resources in the community for counseling, treatment, mentoring, recreation, etc. to help juveniles deal with problems, and recommends that the courts, law enforcement, education, health care and government agencies become familiar with and provide referrals for families in need of assistance.

In implementing this recommendation, a "Juvenile Community Resource Guide" has been developed and distributed in the community.

- ◆ **Identification and Intervention Coordination:** *"One of the most effective means of controlling juvenile crime is to provide early identification of juveniles at risk of falling into certain patterns ..."* The plan recommends the creation of a formal group of representatives from local courts, police, health care, social services, probation and education systems, and drawing from local volunteer resources, to help identify at-risk children.

A group called the Administrators Committee on Juvenile Delinquency has been formed and has been meeting monthly since September 1995 to open lines of communication between the various groups and to identify early intervention needs.

- ◆ **Detention Center Availability:** *"... the single most mentioned deficiency is the lack of adequate juvenile detention space in the state."* The committee recommended increased participation in a regional juvenile detention

¹ from Citizens' Action Committee on Juvenile Crime, "Plan of Action", May 15, 1995, page 3.

center or building a center in Warren County, with the first option being the preferred solution.

The Warren County Board of Supervisors has acted to be a partner in the new regional center in Winchester.

- ◆ **Curfew Laws:** *"The majority of juvenile crime occurs in the late night hours and during the school day when adult supervision is low and juveniles are expected to be either in school or at home."* The committee recommended the adoption of curfew laws to cover each time period.

The Town of Front Royal already has a night-time curfew ordinance in place. A daytime curfew law was enacted, with opposition from many home-schoolers in the community. It was subsequently repealed when the Warren County School system hired a truancy officer.

- ◆ **Confidentiality Laws Repeal:** *"The single greatest advantage the juvenile criminal has over the community is his/her anonymity. Under this legal cloak of invisibility, the juvenile offender is virtually free to repeatedly victimize an unsuspecting community."* The plans recommends that the local governments support/sponsor state legislation attempts to have the juvenile confidentiality laws repealed in Virginia.
- ◆ **Juvenile Offender Processing:** *"The juvenile justice system has its greatest impact when the time between arrest and the end of the court process with sentencing is accomplished quickly."* The plan recommends that the Town and County governments, in concert with the State representatives, petition the State to increase manning in the In-take and Probation Office.
- ◆ **Sentencing:** *"There is a pervasive belief in the community that juvenile crime is growing in frequency and severity because the consequences for juvenile criminals are not sufficient to deter them even if they are caught*

and punished." The Committees' plan recommends some specific sentencing guidelines.

- ◆ **Parental Fines:** *"Too often the courts and police encounter parents unwilling to make an effort to properly instruct, correct or control their delinquent children."* The plan of action recommends that laws be enacted requiring parents to be fined and to attend family counseling when their children are brought up on repeat offenses.

Community Policing

In the last year, the Town has begun a community policing approach to its activities. This program promotes a new partnership between people and their police. It is based on the premise that both the police and their community must work together to identify, prioritize and solve contemporary problems such as crime, the fear of crime, illegal drugs, social and physical disorder, and overall neighborhood decay, with the goal of improving the overall quality of life in the area.

"I have lived in Front Royal for over sixty years, and have never talked with a police officer. I think it's great to have one sitting in my home now answering questions about juvenile problems, drugs in our community, how the police are trying to protect its senior citizens with seminars on flim flam and how to feel secure at home."
A Front Royal Citizen

In 1994, the Front Royal Police Department conducted a survey out in the community to solicit input from citizens about problems in their neighborhoods, and what ways the police could help in solving the problems. Almost two-thirds (62.3%) of the respondents felt that they did not have any neighborhood problems. Speeding, kids in the streets/yards and loud music/cars were the most frequently reported problems among residents. About one-quarter (26.5%) of the citizen respondents felt that the police providing more patrol in the neighborhood would help to alleviate the problems. Through the survey, the Police were able to uncover

Traditional Policing versus Community-Oriented Policing

Traditional Policing

- Police are a government agency responsible for law enforcement
- Conflicting priorities
- Focus on solving crimes
- Efficiency is measured by detection and arrest rates
- Highest priority is on crimes of high value (e.g. bank robberies) and those that involve violence
- Police deal with incidents
- Police effectiveness is determined by response time
- Police take service calls only if nothing else is happening
- Police professionalism is measured by swift effective response to serious crime
- Crime intelligence (study of particular crimes or series of crimes) is the best intelligence
- Police accountability is legalistic and bureaucratic
- PD headquarters role is to provide necessary rules and policy directives
- Press role is primarily to keep the "heat off"
- Prosecutions are regarded as an important goal

Community-Oriented Policing

- Police are the public and the public are the police
- Improving the quality of life
- Focus on broad problem-solving approach
- Efficiency is measured by absence of crime and disorder
- Highest priority is on the problems that disturb the community the most
- Police deal with citizen's problems and concerns
- Police effectiveness is determined by public cooperation
- Service calls are considered a vital function and a great opportunity
- Police professionalism is keeping close to the community
- Criminal intelligence (information about the activities of individuals or groups) is the best intelligence
- Police accountability emphasizes local accountability to meet community needs
- Police headquarters roles is to support and legitimize organizational values
- Press role is to facilitate communication with the community
- Prosecutions are regarded as but one tool among many

Adapted from Malcolm K. Sparrow, "Implementing Community Policing", *Perspective in Policing*, No. 9 (November 1988), National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice.

those areas and streets where the residents needed some public improvement, such as better street lighting. The Police Department anticipates conducting another community survey in the near future.

Enhanced 911

Warren County has recently completed a program for Enhanced 911 services in the County. Detailed mapping, property addressing and computerization of the information have now made it easier to locate structures and people in need of assistance who call the 911 number. The dispatch services of the Warren County Sheriff's Office are now computerized to show the address and location of the particular phone number from which the 911 call was made and enable the dispatcher to quickly provide that information to the appropriate emergency agency. All locations with phone numbers in the Town and County now have specific street addresses associated with them. The Town Planning and Zoning Office provides updated information on town addresses on a regular basis to the County's consultant, MSAG, Inc. who maintain the maps. The E-911 project was funded through a \$1.00 surcharge per month on each telephone line.

Front Royal Fire Department

Fire protection in Front Royal is provided by approximately 68 volunteers who staff the Front Royal Volunteer Fire Department (Company 1). The Department also includes four, full-time paid employees trained in firefighting and emergency medical response. One of those paid firefighters serves as a fire prevention coordinator, providing liaison and education in the community. The Fire Department provides emergency response 24 hours per day, seven days a week. The fire station is centrally located along Commerce Avenue, providing easy access to major streets.

Classification

The State of Virginia provides a classification of fire protection services. The most efficient and comprehensive fire coverage in cities of high intensive development with paid firefighters is Class I. Class II includes smaller cities with less intense

development with a paid force. Class III is reserved for incorporated towns or municipalities that provide community protection through a volunteer department. Class IV applies to cities or towns that are incorporated but have no adequate fire department, water supply or water distribution system. Front Royal falls under Class III in the state classification system.

The adequacy of fire protection in a jurisdiction is determined by comparing fire defense facilities to the standard grading schedule of the Insurance Services Office. The grades range from 1 to 10 with a grade of one being the highest attainable score. Fire defense standards are based on criteria such as water supply, equipment, fire prevention and building floor area. The Town has a grade of six for residential areas and five for commercial areas. A better rating in the standard grading schedule results in lower fire insurance rates for the community.

Personnel and Equipment

The Front Royal Fire Department maintains three Class A pumpers and one aerial ladder truck. Each volunteer is equipped with protective clothing and equipment. Costs for necessary equipment average about \$4,500 per firefighter, with an equipment life expectancy of about four years. Volunteer firefighters must complete a minimum amount of general firefighter training. Additional training courses and drill activities are held periodically. The Front Royal Fire Department has been working to provide pagers for volunteers in order to allow elimination of the siren that is used to call the volunteers. Not all volunteers are yet equipped with pagers.

The Town of Front Royal has had several paid firefighters for several decades. There are advantages and disadvantages to having a primarily volunteer force. The advantages are that the volunteer status saves citizens of the Town the expense of paying the personnel costs of a paid crew.

These savings can then be put towards improving equipment or may be used for other community priorities. Volunteers also exhibit a high level of pride in their work because they donate their time and expertise to the community. One of the drawbacks that we are experiencing is that an increasing number

of volunteers no longer work in the community, and are unavailable during many peak hours. In 1979, it has been estimated that over 90% of the volunteers lived and worked in the community. By 1997, an almost complete turn-around has taken place, with about 78% of the volunteers working elsewhere—principally in the Northern Virginia/Washington metropolitan area. In addition, of the total 68 volunteers on the roll, only 30 (44%) actually live in the town. Consequently, the Fire Department is experiencing an average of only 15 active volunteers at one time.

Public education is also a priority of the Front Royal Fire Department. The Department sponsors a fire prevention week annually, which consists of open house at the fire station, visits to area schools to talk about fire safety and fire extinguisher classes. In addition, the Fire Department provides inspections of commercial facilities and motels to aid in their fire prevention needs.

The mission of the Front Royal Fire Department is to provide a high level of fire protection to Front Royal, and areas of Warren County surrounding the Town. The Fire Department provides back-up support to the other fire companies in the County.

Response Time and Number of Calls

The Fire Department has good response times to emergency calls within the Town of Front Royal. The Department has a target of four minutes from the time the call arrives to the time the equipment leaves the station. Their daytime response is generally less than three minutes, and nighttime is less than the four minute target.

In 1996, the Front Royal Fire Department responded to 823 calls for fire-related incidents. Of that number, 54% were in-town calls and 46% were out-of-town. In 1990, the number of calls totaled 581, resulting in a 41.7% increase in activity between 1990 and 1996. Approximately 39% of the calls occur between the hours of 12:00 Noon and 6:00 p.m. and 28.7% of the calls take place between 6:00 p.m. and midnight. The average number of personnel on each incident call is 8.7 people. The average length of time per incident is 0.52 hours.

Emergency Care and Rescue Service

Emergency care and rescue services in Front Royal are provided out of the Fire and Rescue station on Commerce Avenue. As with fire protection, emergency care and rescue services are provided 24 hours a day. All of the four paid firefighters are trained in emergency care—with one Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), one EMT skilled in shock trauma and two paramedics. Nine of the 68 volunteers on the roll are trained as cardiac technicians. In addition the department has personnel qualified to provide service for swift water rescue, confined space rescue, hazardous materials and other fields of emergency care.

The Fire Department operates three ambulances and one heavy rescue squad. The emergency equipment necessary to operate at the Advanced Life Support level is installed in the ambulances. The Front Royal company is the only one in Warren County with Advanced Life Support capability.

In 1996, the Front Royal company responded to 2,418 medical calls, of which about two-thirds (67.5%) originated in town. The 1990 level of service was 1,799 calls, resulting in an increase in medical calls of 34.4% during the six year period from 1990-1996. As with fire calls, the largest percentage of calls took place between 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m. (33.5%).

Future Organization

In 1994, a study of the fire and rescue services in Warren County was prepared by the Fire and Rescue Study Commission, appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Commission was charged with defining adequate and appropriate levels of fire and rescue services for the County, evaluating existing services and developing findings and recommendations necessary to bring services to the "adequate and appropriate" standard. The Board of Supervisors has hired a County Fire Chief to assume responsibility for fire and rescue services in the entire County and are currently working, in cooperation with the Front Royal Town Council, on policy issues regarding the future organization and provision of fire and rescue services.

Assets/Opportunities

- ◆ The Police and Fire Departments both maintain good response times.
- ◆ Neighborhood Watch presents a good programmatic opportunity to have citizens be active in public safety programs.
- ◆ The Police Department, through the Community Policing program, has open lines of communication with the community.
- ◆ The Town has an established and well-trained volunteer fire and rescue crews that are prepared for many situations.
- ◆ The Administrators Committee on Juvenile Delinquency has begun to open lines of communication among the providers of juvenile services.

Liabilities/Challenges

- ◆ The Fire Department is challenged by its number of active volunteers, that are not constrained by the rigors of commuting to work in the metropolitan area.
- ◆ Juvenile arrests are on the rise as a proportion of all crime arrests in the community.

Policy Recommendations

- ◆ Provide citizens with the highest quality public safety services available.
- ◆ Maintain a high level of and expand training opportunities for Police, Fire and Rescue personnel.
- ◆ Ensure the safety of emergency response personnel and the citizens they serve, at all times.
- ◆ Maintain the community policing concept in the workings of the Police Department.
- ◆ Maintain public safety facilities at a level that meets community needs.

Action Strategies

- ◆ Continue to implement the concept of "Community Policing" to provide more police visibility in our neighborhoods and to help eliminate undesirable activities.
- ◆ Encourage the use of Neighborhood Watch programs to ensure safety in residential areas.

Through the Police Department, develop and implement a training program for citizens to help them in working out a neighborhood program.

- ◆ Use auxiliary police to assist patrol officers in maintaining a public presence at playgrounds and other public areas. Develop a junior auxiliary police program with high school students, if feasible.
- ◆ Through the court system and Police Department, explore innovative programs and establish a program for community service among first time, non-violent offenders.
- ◆ Continue to seek grant monies to implement non-traditional programs.
- ◆ Work with Warren County on policy issues regarding the future organization and provision of fire and rescue services.
- ◆ Seek innovative incentives to encourage fire volunteers to live within the Town's corporate limits.
- ◆ Continually work to upgrade existing fire hydrants and water lines to provide adequate fire protection as new road and utility work takes place.
- ◆ Provide incentives, such as the reduced tap fees currently in place, for development that provides an on-site fire suppression system.