



# COTTAGE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

## GENERAL ORDER

### SUBJECT: **HOUSE CHECKS**

### NEW REVISED RESCINDS

APPROVED: *GM*  
GEORGIA MILTENBERGER  
ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE

Effective Date 8/22/2018

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#### I. **POLICY**

One of the services provided to residents of Cottage City is "house checks" particularly when resident are away and their homes are vacant. Upon request by a Cottage City resident for a "house check", it is the policy of the Cottage City Police Department to check each house, including those homes with alarm systems, at least once each shift.

#### II. **PROCEDURES**

- A. Residences in Cottage City that are vacant, or from which the resident(s) are away for a period of time greater than twenty-four (24) hours are eligible for house checks to be performed by Cottage City police officers.
  - 1. Residents who request "house checks" may do so in person, by telephone, by e-form or to either a member of the Cottage City administrative staff or a member of the police department.
  - 2. The employee will record the relevant information regarding the house check on the appropriate form.
- B. House check request forms will be placed on a clipboard in a location known and readily accessible to all patrol officers and station clerks. Any department member receiving a house check request will ensure the house check form(s) are placed on the clipboard.

- C. Officers will go out of service on the police radio on a Signal-18 when beginning each house check, and will return to service on the radio at the conclusion of each house check.
- D. All homes in the house check clipboard will be inspected thoroughly by the on-duty patrol officer at least once each shift unless an incident of a higher priority involving public safety should prevent the completion of the house check
- E. When inspecting houses, officers will check all reachable doors and windows to determine if they are secure. Officers will also comply with other reasonable requests from residents that would directly impact the physical security of the residence.
- F. After a house check is completed, officers shall note any circumstances discovered that he/she reasonably believes to be suspicious or important, including, but not limited to, open garage doors, broken window or door glass, property missing from the residence or yard, damage to the residence, vehicles not listed on the house check form, security alarms that have been activated, or unsecured doors or windows. As soon as reasonably possible, an officer discovering any circumstances such as those described above shall advise the homeowner or the emergency contact individual provided by the homeowner to ensure that the security and integrity of the residence will be maintained. The date, time, and name of the individual contacted shall be noted on the house check form as well as any response(s) by the contacted individual to resolve the suspicious or important circumstance(s).
- G. In some circumstances, (for example someone residing in a home) residents will request some extra coverage. A routine check will include, at a minimum, a spotlight inspection of the residence after dark and a slow drive-by inspection during the day. A detailed inspection of the accessible residence perimeter is not absolutely required unless suspicious circumstances discovered during the routine inspection would reasonably dictate that a more detailed inspection of the residence should be conducted.
- H. Patrol officers performing house checks should vary their patrol pattern, "double back" to some of the residences, and conduct spot checks of the residences, if reasonably possible, throughout their patrol shift.
- I. More pressing police business and severe weather are among the few reasons which justify not doing assigned house checks.