

COLLABORATION IS THE KEY

Personal Safety



The common mission of the campus or University Police Departments is to provide a safe and secure environment for a University Community. Embracing the principles of Community Policing, the University Police Department works collaboratively with the University Community to achieve the mission of the University as a whole. This article contains information about University Police Departments and safety and security tips that are similar from campus to campus. A full service University Police Department, for example, is usually nationally accredited and fully staffed by sworn state certified police officers that monitor the campus 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Many University Police Departments are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). CALEA accreditation demonstrates that the Department has met vigorous National Standards for Police Professionalism.

As a reference, under Virginia law, University Police Officers are empowered with the same powers and duties as the Police Officers of the Cities, Counties and Towns of Virginia. University Police Officers are empowered to make arrests, carry firearms, and to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth. University Police Officers undergo a rigorous background investigation, including a complete search for criminal history, a complete review of educational and employment history, a polygraph examination, physical examination, and a psychological assessment, before being selected for employment. New recruits are then assigned to the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Academy for 6 months of instruction certified by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) for their Virginia Law Enforcement Certification. Following the training academy, the new officers are assigned to experienced, Field Training Officers for 8 weeks of on the job training before being released for solo patrol. Officers must qualify annually on their firearms and must receive at least 40 hours of DCJS approved recertification credit every other year.



Patrol is the backbone of any policing organization. Most University Police Officers perform Uniformed Police Patrol functions. Patrol Officers provide a visible deterrent to crime. Patrol Officers enforce the criminal and traffic laws of the state or county of the University, and provide emergency first responder services. Patrol Officers are usually easily identified by their uniforms, silver police badges, and shoulder patches, prominently displaying the Seal of the state and the word, POLICE. University Police vehicles are also easily identified by their emergency light bars and the prominent display of the word POLICE.

University Police Officers fulfill many roles and have developed specialties to deal with special circumstances. Some University Police Departments have a team of Bicycle Patrol Officers to closely interact with the community and an Honor Guard for special events and ceremonies. The Department may also have full time Detectives, which are commonly supervised by a Detective-Sergeant handling complex and serious investigations. University Police Officers direct traffic and provide crowd control for both large and small University events. All University Police Officers are trained in civil disturbance control techniques and have been equipped with the appropriate gear to deal with civil disturbances. Most University Police Departments are supplemented by non-sworn security officers and police cadets. Usually, the administrative functions of the Department are performed by non-sworn support staff.

The University Police Department usually operates an emergency, 911 Communication Center staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by full time professional Communications Officers. University Police Officers, security officers, and police cadets vigilantly patrol University property and work collaboratively with units such as, Housing and Residence Life, the Physical Plant, and the Safety Office to address safety and security concerns and to deter and prevent crime. The University Police Department encourages employees, students, and visitors to be active participants in their own safety and security. There are numerous programs and services in place to empower members of the University Community to promote safety and security. Some of these programs might include: RAD (Rape Aggression Defense), a walking escort program, a police cadet program, Operation, and Crime Solvers. RAD is a free hands-on, dynamic women's self-defense program offered to the University Community several times each semester. RAD is a 12 hour course that teaches a common sense approach to women's self-defense.

The University Police Department recommends using the "buddy system" when walking on campus at night. There is safety in numbers. If you do not have someone to walk with, you don't have to walk alone. Ask for HELP by calling the University Police Department to request a walking police cadet escort to any on-campus locations. The police cadets are employed, screened, and supervised by the University Police Department and maintain a constant radio link to the Communication Center. Police



Cadets wear an identifiable uniform that usually designates them as a "Police Cadet" and should have a University Police cadet identification card.

At one Virginia campus, the University Police have a program of identifying property called "Operation ID". Members of the University Community are encouraged to secure their property by engraving identification numbers onto their property and by recording serial numbers. This will help to deter would be thieves and assist in the recovery of items that are stolen. The University Community is reminded to maintain control over their property and to avoid leaving items unattended and unsecured. Always remember to LOCK IT OR LOSE IT! Crime Solvers works! Crime Solvers is a program to collect anonymous tips from the University Community. Tipsters may be eligible for rewards of up to \$1,000 for information that results in the arrest and conviction of offenders. All tips always remain confidential.

Pedestrian safety is a major concern on any University Campus. The University Police Department reminds you to play it safe when walking on campus or in town. Use sidewalks and always follow the directions of Officers assigned to direct traffic.

Other University Police Departments employ a full time Crime Prevention Officer, who conducts orientation sessions, crime prevention presentations, training, and security surveys to assist the University Community in implementing and maintaining security and safety focused programs, activities, and services. The University Police reaches out to the University Community through multiple methods that include the internet, printed brochures, posters, and flyers, and even through Television Public Service Announcements, which air on the University TV station. For more information about these programs and services, log on to the University Police web site or call the information desk on your campus.

Overall, the University Police are there to protect and serve the University Community by building lasting, meaningful relationships with Academic Departments, Administrative Units, Faculty, Staff Members, Students, and the surrounding community. The University Police Department encourages members of the University Community to empower themselves, by being active and vocal participants in their safety and security.

Detective P.E. Millan
University Police Department

