

POLICE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF

The Old Saybrook Department of Police Services provides diverse traditional and nontraditional law enforcement services to our community, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. For the better part of each day, our Department is the *only* municipal government agency open to serve the citizens and visitors of our community.

Old Saybrook citizens and those who visit our community expect, demand, and deserve prompt, professional law enforcement services. Business owners and residents alike depend on the police department to create a safe and sound environment. This environment, preserved by the Department of Police Services, enhances the local economy by making our community attractive to new businesses, patrons, and tourists. Parents demand that their children live in a safe community where they are befriended by the police. This includes the delivery of proactive services to students and faculty within our public and parochial schools. Our senior population requires nontraditional programs that provide them with crime prevention programs and prompt response to a medical crisis with superior equipment and well-trained personnel. As a police agency we are proud to meet the challenges presented and partner with the Old Saybrook community each day.

The quality of life we enjoy in Old Saybrook begins with the safety and security of our community.

The Old Saybrook Department of Police Services is responsible for the operation and administration of the Town's Emergency Communications Center. The center is staffed with trained, certified personnel that meet state mandates maintaining various state and national emergency communication certifications. The Emergency Communications Center is responsible for all emergency and non-emergency telephone, radio, and facsimile communications for Old Saybrook's law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, and emergency management agencies. In addition to these duties, the center is the only after-hours point of contact for municipal departments including those that assist our agency in emergencies such as the Building Department, Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD), the Office of the Fire Marshal, the Office of the First Selectman, and the Department of Public Works. Public Safety Dispatchers serve as the vital link between those who need help and those that can provide help. The services that are provided by the Emergency Communication Division are unparalleled in the area and are essential to the success of Old Saybrook's first responder community. In the past fiscal year, the emergency communications center received 29,499 telephone calls. In addition to receiving phone calls Dispatchers placed 10,143 phone calls. Out of the calls received, 4,907 were 911 calls. Additionally, our Public Safety Dispatchers serve as our vital records clerks, processing and transmitting paperwork to court, satisfying records requests, and ensuring vital, confidential records are properly safeguarded. Our Dispatchers are also responsible for monitoring prisoners in the detention facility.

Traditional Law Enforcement Services

In the Department's traditional law enforcement role, we continue to provide superior service. This past year, the Department logged 22,361 incidents. An "incident" is any type of call for service and/or self-initiated activity by a police officer, excluding motor vehicle enforcement. As an example, an "incident" can be the directing school traffic, responding to a burglar alarm, an actual burglary, providing emergency medical services, an accident investigation, a domestic violence matter, checking on the well-being of a prisoner, caring for a suicidal person, conducting a narcotics investigation, administrative matters, a parking complaint, performing a security check, and/or the investigation of a serious assault. There were 228 custodial arrests last year. (An individual involved in a custodial arrest is transported to the

police department, processed in our detention facility and then either released on bond or transported to the Middletown Superior Court on the next available court date.) Only 9 persons under the age of 18 were arrested last year.

Law enforcement services are a very personal and private issue for those individuals involved. We remain discreet in the public reporting of matters to maintain as much privacy as possible for crime victims that reside in our small community.

Motor Vehicle Enforcement

In addition to calls for services last year, Old Saybrook Police Officers conducted 2,113 motor vehicle stops. Of these stops, 479 drivers were given verbal warnings, 1,326 received written warnings, 232 were issued an infraction and 75 were given a summons to appear in court for their motor vehicle violation. 52 motor vehicle stops resulted in arrests for Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The men and women of the Department of Police Services are proud to be the community's primary emergency medical first responder. When a medical emergency occurs in Town, our Old Saybrook police officers are first to arrive with lifesaving knowledge, skills, and equipment. Police officers who are Emergency Medical Technicians can provide advanced care, administer lifesaving medication (including Epinephrine and Narcan), all within minutes from a call for help. In the past year, we responded to 1,805 medical emergencies. We are proud to offer this level of service, which is unmatched in our area and enjoy working with the members of the Old Saybrook Ambulance Association and the Middlesex Health Paramedics.

Policing Ourselves

It is important for law enforcement agencies to ensure that their personnel are held accountable for their actions, just as we hold members of the public accountable for their choices. This past year, we chose to investigate and arrest by warrant one of our sworn officers for (allegedly) committing Computer Crime in the Third Degree, a violation of Connecticut General Statutes 53a-254, which is a Class D Felony. The now former Officer is accused of illegally accessing the Connecticut On-Line Law Enforcement Teleprocessing (COLLECT) System to obtain vehicle registration information which was then used for personal gain.

While we are not proud of this moment in time, we hope it demonstrates to the community that we take our responsibility to ensure that Department Employees are adhering to workplace expectations and the law very seriously. Old Saybrook Citizens must be assured that they can trust their Police Department to provide superior services every day. They must also trust their Police Department to maintain high standards, swiftly address internal matters, and possess the ability to properly police our own. The police officer involved was terminated by the Police Commission at the request of the Police Chief. As of June 30, 2023 the former employee is appealing his termination.

Animal Control

The dedicated members of the Animal Control Division continue to work tirelessly to ensure that domesticated animals' rights are protected, lost animals are reunited with their rightful owners, and great homes are found for those looking for a new family. All Animal Control Division members are per diem

employees, who are compensated only when they are called to work. This fiscally efficient program requires the dedication of special employees, each of whom is dedicated to the welfare of domesticated animals and works in conjunction with our sworn law enforcement staff to complete sensitive investigations concerning cruelty to animals and/or animal bites.

Marine Patrol

The Marine Patrol had a very busy and successful season. We continue to appreciate the support of the marine community and their positive voices encouraging the continuation of proactive patrols during the boating season. During the season, we performed countless safety inspections, impromptu boating education “seminars,” and emergency responses to vessels and/or persons in distress.

Giving Back

Department members spent much time this past year volunteering to assist those in need.

In February, our “It’s Time to Do your Duty” campaign was back again seeking donations of wipes and diapers to help Old Saybrook families with newborns. Working with Social Services, the Shoreline Diaper Bank, and Bare Necessities, we collected thousands of wipes and over 200 cases of diapers! These donations assist with preserving the health of our newest residents! We are happy to do our duty!

Over the summer months, the Department held three community picnics. The first picnic honored the business community, the second welcomed residents and visitors to the Department as part of a community appreciation event, and the third was for Old Saybrook’s youth at the park and Recreation camp. Each picnic was very well attended. With Captain DePerry on the grill, K-9 Skye greeting the crowd, and our police officers and dispatchers interacting with all in attendance, these community outreach events were very successful.

In November, our annual “Give the Cops the Bird” campaign yielded much success once again. Department members collected more than 800 turkeys and over 3,000 lbs. of food that provided Old Saybrook Families in need with all the fixings for both a Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. Those in need picked up their turkey and all the trimmings at the Police Department. Remaining turkeys were donated to similar charities around the state. The Department thanks Youth and Family Services, Stop & Shop, and the Connecticut Food Bank for their support with this important community service project.

In December, the “Make a Child’s Wish Come True” campaign yielded success once again! The Police Department was used to collect, sort, store, and then deliver new unwrapped toys. Once again partnering with Youth and Family Services, the collected toys, games, books, and stuffed animals were distributed to those in need at the Police Department.

We are appreciative of the generosity of all citizens who make these community give-back campaigns an enormous success! The Department is very thankful for those employees who gave their own time to participate in these valuable and necessary community events. Everyone’s efforts have made a true positive impact on the lives of our citizens in need and demonstrate the Department’s bond with the community.

Data Driven Transparency

Last year we celebrated the implementation of our new records management system after migrating from the previous system that was more than two decades old. The new records management system, in addition to maintaining all vital records, permits Agency Administrators to capture data never recorded before, and then use the data to administrate the Department and seek operational efficiencies. The process of capturing the data posed a difficult transition for personnel, but thanks to their dedication, the process is now part of our culture. As an example, the Department now tracks employee “time on task”. We now know how long each employee assigned to Patrol works on a specific task, investigation, etc and what type of task they are performing. This information can be used to change procedures and to make a police officer’s day more efficient. It also allows us to share this information with the public when asked.

The data captured through our new records management system also allows for the automatic publication of data to the community through our Department website. The first enhancement came to the press release section of the website. Now community members can search online press releases that are queried from a live database that is reflective of court dispositions. This means that when a person who has been arrested has had their case nollied and/or erased it will automatically no longer appear in the press release, or “virtual press room”, section of our website. The second enhancement now allows the public to view an “interactive activity dashboard” that includes current statistics regarding calls for service. Website visitors can change parameters to research call types, frequency, create heat maps based on call types, and review daily call logs. We are very pleased to provide this level of transparency to the community we proudly serve.

The Department is proud of our police officers, public safety dispatchers, and support employees for their professionalism, dedication, and superior service to the citizens and visitors of the Town of Old Saybrook. We will continue to work hard every day, not only providing traditional and nontraditional law enforcement services, but to maintain, enhance, and earn our positive relationship with those we serve based on a foundation of trust, service, transparency, and compassion.

As always, the Department of Police Services wishes to thank our fellow public safety agencies, municipal government departments, the public school district, and regional and state partners. Without their assistance and collaborative efforts, it would be difficult to deliver superior services. Most of all we wish to thank the citizens of Old Saybrook for their continued support and well wishes. We are proud to be YOUR police department.

Michael A. Spera, *Chief of Police*