



# Fairfax County, Virginia, Police Department (FCPD)

## Safety Officer Program

Fairfax County Police Department



### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Open during regular business hours 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

703-691-2131 | TTY 711 (Non-Emergency)

chief@fairfaxcounty.gov

12099 Government Center Parkway  
Fairfax, VA 22035

Colonel Edwin C. Roessler Jr., Chief of Police



### WHAT WE DO

Welcome to the Fairfax County Police Department. The Department's vision is to provide ethical leadership through engagement with the community to prevent and fight crime, improve the culture of safety at work and within the community to preserve the sanctity of all human life, and to keep pace with urbanization. To visit the Chief's Page, click the "Learn More" link below.

[Learn More](#) →



## David Kuhar (571) 641-7239

- FCPD **30 years**
- Hostage Negotiations **25 years**
- Peer Support **22 years**
- Honor Guard **20 years**
- Safety Officer/  
Exposure Control Officer **15 years**
- **Academy Instructor Since 1996**



## Objective

- Topics to be covered include:
  - What the safety officer position specifically covers in the department
    - Duties, responsibilities, and assignments
  - The history of the program, its origins, and where it fits in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS)
  - How the program promotes safety issues and what concerns have been addressed during the program's existence

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## Program Origins

- Initially established in **2004** under the umbrella of the department's **Civil Disturbance Unit**
- The Safety Officer Program was formed to maintain officer safety while law enforcement personnel were wearing **personal protective equipment (PPE)** for situations involving **weapons of mass destruction (WMD)**

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## Integration of International Association of Chiefs of Police SafeShield Principles

- The Safety Officer Program is supported by other established programs within the agency
  - Special Operations Medical Program
  - Injury Care and Prevention Program
  - Exposure Control Program

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## What Are Safety Officer Responsibilities?

- ICS component
- Environmental concerns on major incidents
- Exposure control
- Safety messages
- Training programs
- Risk management
- Officer rehabilitation

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# What Is an Athletic Trainer?

- “Athletic trainers (ATs) are health-care professionals who collaborate with physicians. The services provided by ATs comprise prevention, emergency care, clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention, and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions”—National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA)

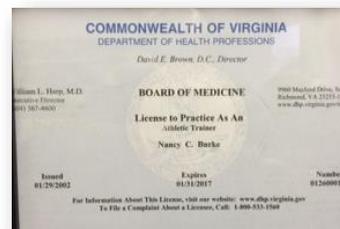


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# What Is an Athletic Trainer?

- ATs are **NOT** personal trainers
- ATs **ARE** certified by the NATA Board of Certification and licensed by the Board of Medicine under the Virginia Department of Health Professions



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# Strategy

- Team approach inclusive of patient, physicians, athletic trainer, risk management, and commanders
- Early intervention
- Expectation of recovery
- Function-oriented treatment



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# Interactions



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## Job Tasks

1. Provide clinical assessment and immediate care
2. Referrals to the appropriate workers' compensation physician, private physician, or health-care provider
3. Expedite many physician visits
4. Develop a medical care plan with the physician and/or health-care provider

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## Job Tasks

5. Administer the medical care plan
6. Monitor the progress of the officer (case management)
7. Administer physical performance tests to advise physicians on duty status
8. Administer the FCPD and Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy Concussion Management Program

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## Wellness Clinic



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## Safety Officer Special Projects

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## What Are Special Training Programs?

- Involve equipment or practices that were identified by the safety program in which no standard of training was being used

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## Why Change?

- Risk management
  - Reduce risk
  - Reduce injury
  - Minimize payout for injury and property damage

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## Why Change?

- Liability
  - Government actors, in their individual and official capacities, are not immune if the evidence establishes that (1) **they committed intentional torts, irrespective of whether they acted within or without the scope of their employment** (*Elder v. Holland*, 208 Va. 15, 19, 155 S.E.2d 369, 372\_73 [1967]), or (2) **they acted outside the scope of their employment** (*Messina v. Burden*, 228 Va. 301, 311, 321 S.E.2d 657, 662 [1984]).

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## Main Programs Identified

- Vehicle-Mounted Winch
- Chain Saw
- Trailer Hitch
- Snowblower

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## Old Way

- Officers with personal experience
- Officers who were shown by someone on their squad
- Squad supervisor would decide level of competency
- Who could use

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## New Way

- Standardized training
- Must receive the training prior to use
- Everyone provided with the same information
- Uses best practices
- Sets procedure for use

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## Beginning Steps

- Research use of the equipment within the department
- If needed, consult with Risk Management/county attorney
- Research best practices for use
  - Manufacturer, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), industry specialists, other agencies
- Consult with a subject-matter expert

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# Exposure Control Officer

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**Blood-borne pathogens**

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## Rights and Responsibilities

- Employer's Responsibilities
  - Provide training
  - Provide screening
  - Offer vaccinations where appropriate
  - OSHA Code Section 1910.132 requires employers to provide the needed PPE and training
- Employee's Rights
  - Accept or decline offered vaccinations
  - To decline, the employee must sign a waiver in accordance with Virginia Code 65.2

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## What Is a RISK or NON-RISK Exposure?

- Risk exposure
  - There is a potential risk of transmission of infectious bodily fluids with a penetration of the skin through events such as needle sticks, human bites, cuts, and abrasions. Transmission may also occur when a source's body fluid is introduced through the eyes, nose, or mouth of an officer
- Non-risk exposure
  - There is **NO** risk associated with the transmission during the exposure event when an officer has no opening in the skin such as cuts or abrasions

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# Conclusion

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The safety program is constantly looking at various types of equipment and practices being utilized by the department.

When the need for specialized training exists, the safety program will take the lead and create training that will enhance the safety of the department.