



Office of the Sheriff County of Madison



Todd M. Hood, Sheriff

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New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative

Madison County Sheriff's Office FAQ:

Below are questions that were raised during the public comment period about the Madison County Sheriff's Office. Madison County Sheriff Todd Hood wanted to address some of the questions.

- *Do members of the Madison County Sheriff's Office receive any training on how to handle mental health situations?*
 - o The Madison County Sheriff's Office Criminal Division is accredited by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Service. Part of that accreditation deals with training.
 - o Our deputies receive the following training in this area:
 - Mental Health Training – 14 hours in the academy
 - Implicate Biased Policing – in academy and yearly training for patrol and supervisors
 - Excited Delirium – yearly review
 - Cultural Diversity training – 8 hours in academy
 - Transgender – yearly review
 - o The Madison County Sheriff's Office also has deputies and supervisors who specialize in areas of mental health, the elderly, dementia and special needs. These deputies work hand in hand with social workers and therapists on calls and cases.
 - o The Madison County Jail has on staff a full-time social worker and a part-time psychiatric nurse practitioner to deliver mental health services to inmates.

- *What is a Crisis Intervention Team?*
 - o A group of **experienced** officers specially trained, on a **voluntary** basis, to deal with emotionally disturbed individuals in a variety of situations in the community.
 - o These situations may include suicidal persons, persons exhibiting irrational behavior, handling psychiatric patients, the homeless, addressing various mental health concerns and/or referrals, and any other situations that deal specifically with the needs of the mental health community and emotionally disturbed persons.
 - o **40 hours of specialized training that includes:**
 - Indicators of Emotional Disturbance
 - Mental Illness-Signs and Symptoms
 - Communication Skills
 - Specific Mental Illnesses
 - Trauma
 - Role Plays
 - Mental Hygiene Law

ACCOUNTABILITY

INTEGRITY

PROFESSIONALISM

- Veteran's Issues
 - Elderly Mental Health
 - Mental Health Court/Probation
 - Juvenile Mental Health
 - Police Stress/Mental Health
 - Medications
 - Suicide
 - Community Resources
 - Family Members and Personal Stories
- In 2016 and 2017, the Madison County Mental Health Department hosted a CIT team training; the training was offered to all police departments in Madison County. Several police departments have trained CIT officers, including the Madison County Sheriff's Office. The CIT team also includes representatives from local behavioral health agencies (Madison County Mental Health, Family Counseling Services, Liberty Resources and others). The team meets monthly to discuss high needs individuals that the police have had contact with, and to discuss potential service referrals that can be made if the individual is interested. In 2020, the Mental Health Department planned to host another CIT training, but due to the pandemic, this will be offered in 2021. Our hope is that as many officers as possible can be trained in order to de-escalate mentally ill individuals in the community and to avoid jail or unnecessary hospitalizations.
- Lastly, the CIT team and police work closely with Liberty Resources Mobile Crisis Program. The purpose of the Mobile Crisis program is to de-escalate and address mental health crises in a person's home versus in the hospital. The Mobile Crisis Team can be dispatched via the Madison County Mental Health Department, or any police officer can contact them directly if they are interacting with a mentally ill individual in crisis. The hours of the mobile crisis team are 5pm-12am. During day time business hours, the Madison County Mental Health Department is contacted directly by individuals, or by local police who may have concerns, and department staff work with the individual to de-escalate the situation.
- *Many believe community responders, not police, are better equipped to handle situations where a person's wellness is concerned (mental health, homeless person, elderly neighbor, etc). What is your response to this?*
 - When someone is out of control while on drugs or during an abuse situation, usually the first individual on the scene is a member of law enforcement. This is because the situation may not always be clear until someone arrives on scene. In some cases, it is unknown what we are responding to. You do not know if that individual is harming someone else or themselves. Madison County Sheriff's Deputies are trained to de-escalate the situation verbally. Deputies work hand in hand with social services, caseworkers, mental health and our EMTs to bring them into a situation if they are needed. It does not make sense to put a caseworker or counselor in a dangerous situation. Once people are out of harm we make sure to get them the proper care they need.

- Also, our deputies are trained in basic first aid, CPR and other life saving techniques. They are the first line of life saving techniques until the EMTs can arrive.
 - The Madison County Sheriff's Office is always lobbying Albany for legislation and funding to help with other means of assistance and care for those who suffer from mental health issues that are outside of policing.
- *Use of Force Policy needs to be changed.*
- The Madison County Use of Force Policy can be found here: <https://www.madisoncounty.ny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12908/Use-of-Objectively-Reasonable-Force>
 - Madison County Sheriff's Deputies are trained in de-escalation at both the academy and then a refresher course is taken every year.
 - The Use of Force is a pyramid. Madison County Sheriff's Deputies are trained to use verbal forms of de-escalation and non-lethal forms of force before resorting to any physical forms of force. Use of deadly or physical force are only used when it is a last resort or the life of the officer or others are in danger.
- *It is important that our youth have a positive impression of law enforcement. Is the Madison County Sheriff's Office out in our community? Do they do community outreach?*
- The Madison County Sheriff's Office throughout the year does different programs in the community, many of which are with our youth. We are always looking for additional ways to interact with the community.
 - [Project Lifesaver](#)
 - [Car Seat Safety Checks](#) (partnered with Health Department)
 - CRASE training (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events)
 - [Child Advocacy Center](#)
 - [Operations SafeChild Card](#)
 - Yellow Dot Program
 - [Bike Helmet giveaway](#)
 - Safe Halloween Trick or Treating
 - Special Patrol Officers in Schools across Madison County
 - Reading Day at schools
 - [Sheriff Summer Camp](#)
 - Christmas Angel Tree (partnered with DSS)
 - Shop with a Sheriff
 - The Madison County Sheriff also attends the monthly Superintendent of Schools meetings.
 - The Madison County Sheriff's Office is present in many community parades and at ceremonies as well for events such as Memorial Day, July 4th, Veterans Day, and Winter holidays.
 - The Madison County Sheriff's Office is in constant contact with the community through social media. We answer questions, follow up on tips, and receive countless appreciation messages. In the past two years, the Madison County Sheriff's Facebook Page has doubled the number following to nearly 9,000.

- *Will you be forming a Citizen Review Board? How does someone put in a complaint about the department or a deputy?*
 - o At this time, the Madison County Sheriff's Office does not have and is not looking to create a Citizen Review Board. This is something that is set up for police agencies that are for more densely populated areas and cities. The Madison County Sheriff's Office works hard to be a presence in the community and hold open dialogues. If anyone does have a concern or a complaint about the department or a particular deputy they are free to contact the sheriff's office directly.

- *Mental Health of deputies and First Responders is also important to think about. Is this a priority of the department?*
 - o The mental health and wellbeing of our deputies and staff is a top priority. It is no longer taboo to take care of your mental health. We take this matter very seriously. The department offers counselling services, as well as the Madison County EAP. If someone does not feel comfortable using our in house services they also have the ability to use those of the New York State Police Troop D.

- *The Sheriff's Department looks to have a military style vehicle. It is difficult to believe that there is a need for such a vehicle. Has it ever been used? What other military surplus equipment do we have and why do we need it?*
 - o The Madison County Sheriff's Office has two armored vehicles. The need and reason for these vehicles is to keep our deputies and citizens safe. The armored vehicles have been used as an asset during several armed-suspect incidents. It has been used to safely protect and transport our deputies and citizens (neighbors) during residential barricaded gunmen. For example, during an incident at a school or business, it can be driven up to a doorway, and bystanders can gain access to vehicle and be transported to a safe location without being exposed to the threat. The presence of this vehicle alone, has also peacefully resolved an incident when it showed up to the scene. Both vehicles came at no cost to the Madison County Sheriff's Office or the Madison County taxpayers.

- *I disapprove of no-knock warrants. What is our policy and why are they used?*
 - o No-knock warrants are used for officer safety issues. When dealing with a potentially dangerous subject, it affords officers the opportunity to gain control over a situation that could possibly be volatile.

- *Provide body cameras for all deputies. Why does Madison County Sheriff's Office not have them?*
 - o The Madison County Sheriff's Office did a trial for 6 months for body cameras in our jail. The Corrections Officers seemed to really like using them. The problem we have come up to is budget. The Madison County Board of Supervisors makes sure the Sheriff's Department is fully funded with all they need for safety and training. However, body cameras for both corrections staff and criminal division would come at a high cost, as well as the cost to retain and store the information. We hope that

New York State through this idea of reform looks at that option and can help local departments afford such equipment.

- *We see the Blue Line Flag being displayed by deputies, did you know this is a sign of racism and of hate?*
 - o The Blue Line Flag is not a sign a racism and hate. It represents support for the men and women of law enforcement across the United States of America who put their lives on the line every day to protect us. Our agency is comprised of different races that all have the same mission: to serve as an example for others and follow the oath of our profession with honor, integrity, and pride.

The Madison County Sheriff's Office's top priority is the safety and well-being of the residents of Madison County. Our agency is always looking for additional training, for ways to improve our skills, and to be a positive presence in the community.