


<p>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</p>  <p>General Order Number: 7.09</p>	<p>Date of Issue</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Effective Date</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Revision Date</p>
<p>Subject: <b>COVERT OPERATIONS</b></p>	<p>Amends:</p>	<p>Rescinds:</p>	
<p>Index as: Covert Operations</p>	<p>State Certification Standards:</p>		
<p>Special Instructions:</p>			

**PURPOSE**

To establish guidelines to be followed in covert operations including vice and organized crime investigations.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The Rabun County Sheriff's Office shall, as it becomes necessary and is authorized by the appropriate Sheriff's Office staff members, conduct covert operations including surveillance, undercover operations, and decoy operations. The Sheriff's Office will also conduct raids as provided by law in support of the covert operations.

**DEFINITIONS**

**SURVEILLANCE** — The covert observation of persons, vehicles, places or objects to obtain information concerning the activities and identities of individuals.

**DECOY OPERATION** — The placing of an undercover deputy in an area or situation which enables them to covertly blend in with the surroundings and/or events occurring in an area, with the purpose of having the undercover deputy appear as a potential victim.

**UNDERCOVER OPERATIONS** — Investigative techniques involving the use of law enforcement deputies acting in a capacity where the deputies identity is undisclosed. Its objective is to gather evidence of a crime or merely to accumulate evidence about suspected criminal activity.

## I. SURVEILLANCE

A. The following are some of the objectives of surveillance:

1. To protect undercover deputies or to corroborate their testimony;
2. To obtain evidence of a crime;
3. To locate persons;
4. To check the reliability of informants;
5. To locate hidden property or contraband;
6. To obtain probable cause for search warrants;
7. To prevent the commission of an act, or to apprehend subjects in the commission of an act;
8. To obtain information for later use in interrogation;
9. To develop leads and information received from other sources;
10. To track the movements of an individual;
11. To obtain evidence for court.

B. The following are procedures, which shall be used in surveillance operations:

1. No surveillance operation will be initiated unless there is an articulable suspicion that the person or location placed under observation is engaged in criminal activity.
2. Prior to initiating a surveillance operation, the Criminal Investigation Division Commander, Criminal Investigation Division Supervisor, or designee shall:
  - a. Analyze all available intelligence information pertaining to the operation (e.g. crime and victim analysis);
  - b. Identify and analyze probable offenders and their habits, associates, vehicles, methods of operation and any and all pertinent information;
  - c. Familiarize assigned deputies with targeted areas for surveillance;
  - d. Establish operational procedures, for observation, tails, and effecting the arrest;
  - e. Provide expense funds for surveillance teams (e.g. admission fees, cover charges, etc.);
  - f. Establish a means of communication (e.g. car radio, portable radio, etc.);
  - g. Select needed specialized equipment or vehicles;
  - h. Provide adequate relief for surveillance team;
  - i. Contact the District Attorney's Office for legal advice when appropriate.
3. A chronological log of the surveillance shall be kept by at least one deputy, making note of descriptions of vehicles, people, etc.
4. Electronic Surveillance

- a. All electronic surveillance (wiretaps or other mechanical devices) shall be conducted pursuant to a valid court order.
- b. Normally, before a wiretap is sought, all other investigative means should be exhausted. Investigators must show that they have attempted to infiltrate and break a particular illicit operation through traditional means.
- c. In order to gather information or evidence on a suspect, conversations between the suspect(s) and informant(s) or undercover deputy(s) may be recorded with the consent of the deputy(s) or the informant(s).

## II. UNDERCOVER OPERATIONS

- A. Undercover operations will only be initiated with the approval of the Sheriff or his designee
- B. Undercover operations shall only be conducted while under the direct supervision of the appropriate division supervisor or other designated supervisor.
- C. Prior to initiating any undercover operation, the Criminal Investigation Division Commander will be responsible for addressing the following:
  - 1. An analysis of suspect(s) and their identity;
  - 2. Provisions for initiating contact with suspects;
  - 3. An analysis of the neighborhood surrounding the target area;
  - 4. False identities for surveillance deputies with appropriate credentials (if applicable);
  - 5. Maintenance of confidentiality of false identities;
  - 6. Expense funds;
  - 7. Securing necessary equipment to carry out the operations;
  - 8. Determination of communication channel(s) or other appropriate communication methods, especially emergency communications;
  - 9. Determining legal ramifications of the operation seeking advice from the District Attorney's Office when appropriate;
  - 10. Plans and guidelines should an arrest result;
  - 11. Ensuring that adequate personnel are available for the safety of the undercover personnel involved in the operation;
  - 12. Ensuring that close supervision is provided throughout the operation.
- E. Personnel acting in an undercover capacity shall not participate in prohibited activity, which shall

include, but not be limited to the use of illegal drugs, engaging in sexual activity with suspects and/or informants, and establishing relationships with suspects/informants, which would be considered as inappropriate by the Sheriff's Office.

### **III. DECOY OPERATIONS**

- A. Decoy operations will be initiated in response to identified repetitious criminal incidents. A decoy operation will only be initiated with the approval of the Sheriff or his designee.
- B. Decoy operations shall only be conducted while under the direct supervision of the appropriate division supervisor or other designated supervisor.
- C. The Criminal Investigations Commander will be responsible for addressing the following concerns prior to initiating any decoy operations:
  - 1. An analysis of victim profiles, crime M.O., and crime location;
  - 2. Providing appropriate disguises for participating deputies so that they resemble previous victims;
  - 3. Provisions for sufficient back-up for deputy security;
  - 4. Develop an operational plan consistent with the activity, determining points of observation and methods of arrest;
  - 5. Determine legal ramifications of the operation, seeking advice from the District Attorney's Office when appropriate;
  - 6. Determination of communication channel(s) or other appropriate radio communication methods, especially emergency communications;
  - 7. Identify all involved personnel, issuing appropriate radio communication call number and operational assignments;
  - 8. Advisement of on-duty patrol watch supervisor(s) of operational assignments;
  - 9. Ensure that close supervision is provided throughout the operation.

### **IV. CONDUCTING RAIDS ON ORGANIZED CRIME AND VICE TARGETS**

- A. Raids on organized crime and vice targets should only be conducted pursuant to a warrant, but may be conducted without a warrant upon necessity and with legally and judicially sufficient cause. A raid will only be initiated with the approval of either the Sheriff or his designee.
- B. All raids will be conducted in a legally justifiable manner and shall only be conducted while under the direct supervision of the appropriate division supervisor or other designated supervisor. Before conducting any raid, the following provisions will be met:
  - 1. Designation of the person to be the Raid Coordinator;
  - 2. Establishing strategies and tactics for approaching, entering, securing and leaving the target;
  - 3. Establishing plans for searching and seizing evidence and/or contraband;

4. Selecting and securing or any specialized equipment needed to carry out the raid (e.g. sledge hammer, battering ram, etc.);
5. Arranging for assistance from specialize support units (e.g. canine units, emergency medical units, etc.);
6. Arranging for the processing of arresting suspects;
7. Authorizing, if necessary, the use of force.
8. Documentation of actions taken shall be on approved Sheriff's Office forms.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**  
Sheriff, Rabun County