



York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office

An Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

"Where Independence Was Won in 1781"

J. D. DIGGS, SHERIFF

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To whom it may concern:

Please let this letter serve as justification and formal request for an Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) for the York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office.

The York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office, an accredited agency through the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission since 2003, protects approximately 65,500 citizens and 26,000 households in addition to the numerous businesses, tourist attractions and roadways of the County. To aid the Sheriff's Office in the safe performance of their duties an Emergency Response Team (ERT) was established that operates within a set of standard operating procedures under the authority of the Sheriff. The team also provides direct assistance to the City of Poquoson, and the Tri-Rivers Drug Task Force, which includes York County, Gloucester and Middlesex counties along with the National Park Service Ranger Division. The ERT has assisted with tactical situations in Gloucester County and the city of Williamsburg and is committed to provide its services to other agencies in Hampton Roads when requested. The ERT has also worked on large scale incidents involving two national white supremacist groups who staged rallies in York County. These two incidents required tactical teams for numerous agencies in the Hampton Roads area, the State Police and the US Park Police to ensure that citizens remained safe from the supremacist group and the many citizens on scene to protest these rallies. The ERT consists of members of the York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office and the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety, totaling 18 members. The ERT has trained with the Virginia State Police, Newport News Police Department and Gloucester County Tactical Teams.

Located within the boundaries of York County are several potential target hazards for foreign and/or domestic terrorist attacks. Examples of such hazards are:

- Military bases - U.S. Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, U.S. Naval Supply Center Cheatham Annex Yorktown Naval Weapons Station, United States Coast Guard Training Facility Yorktown, Camp Perry Armed Forces Experimental Training Activity, Langley Air Force Base and U.S. Naval Weapons Station Housing and accessory buildings/functions.
- U.S. National Park Service Yorktown (historically significant as the place where America's independence was won in 1781)
- Plains All American Pipeline (a large storage and transfer facility for fuel and other petroleum products that uses rail, cargo ships and the Colonial Pipeline)
- Railway for hazardous/non-hazardous cargo and Amtrak

- Water County USA (a large water themed amusement park that drew approximately 748,000 tourists during the summer of 2013)
- Dominion Virginia Power Yorktown Power Station
- Newport News Water Works (water treatment and distribution facility)
- George P. Colman Bridge (crosses the York River just down river from U.S. Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, and U.S. Naval Supply Center Cheatham Annex Yorktown Naval Weapons Station)

The York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office has faced several recent incidents involving the ERT in which an APC would have been very beneficial. In one case, an APC had to be borrowed from a surrounding jurisdiction in order to make a safe entry to a property and gain entry to the residence. In another case, a suspect that originally was barricaded in his residence came out the front door and threatened law enforcement personnel with a potential improvised explosive device. While the suspect was neutralized, having an APC available to the ERT may have resulted in a more favorable outcome.

Currently, the team responds in an issued police cruisers and/or general-purpose vehicles that offer little or no protection against explosions, projectiles or other similar hazards. The ERT also utilizes a modified Ford Econoline Van. This van provides somewhat adequate carrying capabilities, but lacks blast and/or bullet proof protection for rescuers and victims. Therefore, the ERT, our only personnel trained to resolve such issues, risks elimination during an approach and potentially before an organized response can even begin. The use of an APC would allow special weapons personnel and Emergency Medical Services personnel to operate in places where they could not safely travel in our van. Additionally, an APC would provide for safe and rapid access to and extraction of wounded and non-wounded persons from an active shooter situation in a school, or other mass gathering/large assembly areas.

The requested vehicle would be made available to the nine cities, nine counties and two towns in the Hampton Roads Region. Due to our location on the Peninsula we are capable of responding to all but the two counties on the Eastern Shore within one hour.

The York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office has searched for available funding to secure an APC, however, local funding is not available and is not anticipated in the near future. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office has not been successful with obtaining grant funding through federally funded state programs.

The vehicle will be added to the fleet of vehicles assigned to the Sheriff's Office. This fleet is maintained by York County funds through our vehicle maintenance department. They have received the Blue Seal of Excellence award from the Institute for Automotive Service Excellence consecutively for the past nine years. They have a 97% Operational Availability Readiness for both Law Enforcement and Fire Apparatus equipment.

The York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office is responsible for providing for the safety of all citizens, visitors, and businesses of York County to include the mitigation of hostile situations that may put law enforcement personnel in grave danger. The acquisition and implementation of an Armored Personnel Carrier for our Emergency Response Teams capabilities would provide a much needed resource to enable us to meet this responsibility.

Respectfully,



J.D. "Danny" Diggs
Sheriff, York County & Poquoson