Major Incident Notification

327.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to members of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office in determining when, how and to whom notification of major incidents should be made.

327.2 POLICY

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office recognizes that certain incidents should be brought to the attention of Command personnel or other specified personnel of this office to facilitate the coordination of activities and ensure that inquiries from the media and the public may be properly addressed.

327.3 CRITERIA FOR NOTIFICATION

Most situations where the media show a strong interest are also of interest to the Sheriff, Command Staff and the County. The following list of incident types is provided as a guide for notification and is not intended to be all inclusive:

- Officer-involved shooting, whether on- or off-duty (see the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths Policy for special notification)

- Homicides, death investigations or any deaths related to law enforcement activity

- Crimes of unusual violence or circumstances that may include hostages, barricaded persons, home invasions, armed robbery, sexual assaults or hate crimes

- At risk missing children or endangered missing adults

- In-custody deaths

- Aircraft, train, boat or other transportation accidents with major damage and/or injury or death

- Traffic accidents with fatalities or injuries requiring transport to a trauma center

- Death of a prominent Saint Mary's County official

- Significant injury or death to a member of the Office, whether on- or off-duty

- Arrest of a member of the Office or prominent Saint Mary's County official

- Equipment failures, utility failures and incidents that may affect staffing or pose a threat to basic sheriff's office services

- Major incidents on School/County Property

- Impending natural disasters

- Major hazardous material incidents

- Search and Rescue Missions

- Large-scale criminal/security incidents

- Personnel matters or matters of a confidential nature

- Departmental Vehicle Accidents with Injury

- Any other incident, which has or is likely to attract significant media attention

327.4 DUTY OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES
The Duty Officer is responsible for making the appropriate notifications. The Duty Officer shall make reasonable attempts to obtain as much information on the incident as possible before notification, and shall attempt to make the notifications as soon as practicable.

327.4.1 COMMAND STAFF NOTIFICATION
For most notifications made by the Duty Officer an email is an appropriate form of notification. However; the Duty Officer will make notification to the on-call Commander for serious incidents which may include:

- Homicide

- Officer Involved Shootings

- Departmental Accidents with Injury

- Personnel matters or matters of a confidential nature

- Contact with public officials (State, Local, and Federal)

- Significant events that may cause public or media inquiry

327.4.2 INVESTIGATOR NOTIFICATION
If the incident requires an investigator, the on-call supervisor of the appropriate detail shall be notified, who will then contact the appropriate investigator if one is warranted at that time.

327.4.3 CRIME LAB NOTIFICATION
If the incident requires a Crime Lab Technician during normal working hours the Duty Officer will contact the Crime Lab Supervisor, and if unavailable a CID Supervisor. If the incident requires a Crime Lab Technician after normal working hours, the on-call CID Supervisor will be contacted, who will based on the information provided make a determination to authorize the call out or not. If authorized the Duty Officer will be responsible for contacting the on-call Crime Lab Technician based off the Crime Lab on-call schedule.

327.4.4 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
After members of the command staff have been notified, the Public Information Officer shall be called by the Sheriff or designee if it appears the media may have a significant interest in the incident.