

PUBLIC SAFETY

OVERVIEW – FIRE COMMISSION

The Board of Commissioners created the Kent County Fire Committee in April 1942; the group's name was changed to the Fire Commission in 1949. The Commission is permitted by MCL 46.301 to oversee the purchase of fire extinguishing apparatus and equipment for townships without adequate fire protection. The law permitting such an activity also limits the County's contribution to 50 percent of the cost of such equipment, with townships required to contribute the remaining 50 percent.

The County also administers the Fire Commission Fund and serves as staff to the Commission, performing the managerial, clerical, and purchasing functions required to purchase and maintain the equipment. These activities are not required by resolution or the law to be performed by the County, and are therefore, considered discretionary.

Fire Commission

Function	Mandated						Non-Mandated							
	Statute	Fully Funded	Un-Funded	Partially Funded			Board Authorized Agreement	Board Resolution	Necessary	Discretionary	Funding Source			
				Designated State/Feds	User Fees / Fines	Other					Gen. Fund	User Fees	State/Fed Grant	Other
Administer the Fire Commission fund and provide staffing for Fire Commission operations									X	X				
Appoint representatives to the Commission							1-5-99							
Purchase fire fighting vehicles and equipment for members							04-14-42			X				

OVERVIEW – SHERIFF

The County Sheriff is an elected office mandated by Article 7, Section 4 of the Michigan Constitution.

ADMINISTRATION AND ROAD PATROL

A number of administrative and operational functions are mandated to be performed by the Sheriff, including patrolling and monitoring traffic violations on County Roads, providing emergency assistance on County Roads, transporting inmates to and from court, and providing for Court security when requested. In addition, the Sheriff may be required by state statute to perform services in support of court operations regarding a civil case; however, state statutes provide that the courts may appoint a court officer to perform this function; therefore, it is generally considered a discretionary function of the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff is also mandated to serve as a court officer should the Michigan Court of Claims be seated in Kent County for a specific case (MCL 600.6407).

Other activities, such as investigating reported or suspected crimes are not mandated but are performed by all county sheriff's departments and are considered a necessary component of law enforcement. Other specialized activities or teams, (e.g. drug enforcement units, cold case team, and strike team), are not considered a necessary function to carry out a specific mandate, as evidenced by the number of counties who have not created such units. However, in some cases the Board of Commissioners has specifically authorized the creation of specialized units or teams or the performance of a specific function. For the purposes of this report, in the absence of any Board resolution, the function is considered a discretionary activity.

The Sheriff's Department also seeks and receives reimbursement from several sources – inmates, other units of government, etc., and charges fees for certain services. Establishment of an administrative unit to support these functions is considered necessary.

CORRECTIONS

All counties are mandated by statute to provide for sufficient jail space and to keep it in good repair. MCL 45.16a further states that a county may contract with another county for use of its jail in lieu of building one but the county must maintain a lock up within its geographic boundaries. The purpose of the Kent County Correctional Facility is to provide care and custody of individuals who have been arrested for, charged with, and/or convicted of violations of State law. For offenders charged with municipal ordinance violations, the County and the cities have established a MOU outlining the fees to house these offenders as the Sheriff is not statutorily required to house municipal ordinance violators.

Specific care and custody functions and activities are defined by a set of constantly evolving requirements including religious programs, provision of a law library, provision of medical services (specifically, physical examinations within 14 days of admission, testing for TB and STDs, and routine medical care) and provision of mental health assessment services.

Operation of alternative correctional services such as the Community Reentry Center is not mandated but is subject to the annual budget allocation authorized by the Board of Commissioners.

DISPATCH SERVICES

Counties are not mandated to provide dispatch services, however, such services are necessary to perform other mandated duties such as providing emergency assistance and enforcing the laws of the State. Operation of a dispatch service as a means to accomplish this function was authorized by the Board of Commissioners in 1987. In 2007, the Kent County Board of Commissioners approved an intergovernmental agreement forming the Kent County Dispatch Authority of which the Sheriff is appointed by virtue of the office. The Authority has since established a Strategic Plan to consolidate the 911 call-taking function to two Primary Public Safety Answering Points of which the Sheriff's Department serves as one of the call-centers. The Sheriff's Department continues to answer calls for service for other local units and dispatches their personnel when the service is requested by the local unit. Currently, the Kent County Sheriff's Office receives calls and dispatches every police department and every fire department outside of the City of Grand Rapids. The service also takes after-hours emergency calls for the Department of Public Works, the Kent County Road Commission, and the Kent County Animal Shelter. Answering and dispatch for all non-Sheriff's Department calls is considered a discretionary service, except where there is a Board-authorized agreement.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

County involvement with emergency management focuses on two separate areas, one related to hazardous materials, and the other related to general emergencies and disasters (e.g. weather-related incidents such as tornadoes). Since 9/11, this has expanded to include terrorism involving the use of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons of mass destruction. In 2004, the Board approved the Mutual Aid Assistance Agreement to provide the benefit of mutual aid among police departments operating within Kent County for special law enforcement needs in unusual or emergency situations where the need is beyond the capabilities of a single police department.

The Federal Government's Superfund Amendments Reauthorization Act (SARA) requires the County to administer a local emergency planning committee and conduct activities relating to the clean-up and disposal of hazardous material spills. The County delegates authority for these activities to the Sheriff's Department.

With respect to general emergency planning, the County is mandated by MCL 30.409(1) to have an Emergency Manager, provide Hazard Mitigation Plans, Hazard Material Plans, and Local Emergency Planning Committees. In 2012, the County entered into an agreement to consolidate the emergency management programs and LEPC to foster regional cooperation in preparing for emergency situations.

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMPUTER NETWORK

In 1987, the Sheriff's department and several other policing agencies established a cooperative computer system to provide for dispatch and police records. The system allows for the departments to share information and provides some data-sharing efficiencies and cost savings through shared resources. Participation in the network, which is accounted for in a separate budgetary center, is a discretionary activity.

MARINE SAFETY

Counties are not required to provide marine law enforcement, however, the Board has accepted grant funds for this activity since the 1970's. State law does require the Sheriff to inspect boat livery operations, and to recover drowned bodies, and the resources to provide all of these activities have been concentrated and accounted for as one operation. Marine patrol services may be provided by the Sheriff through contract with lake associations or local units of government, and as such, is considered a discretionary activity.

TOWNSHIP AND CONTRACTUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Board of Commissioners has, on a township-by-township basis and at the request of the township, added positions to provide targeted enforcement within the boundaries of the township. Resolutions creating the positions have specified the duties of the officer sufficiently for the program to be considered as approved by the Board. Services above the normal service level may be provided to townships on a fee basis as outlined in specific township memorandums of understanding.

In 2014, at the request of the City of Cedar Springs, the Board of Commissioners entered into an agreement with City of Cedar Springs to transfer the police functions and responsibilities from the City to the County Sheriff.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

Although not required, the Sheriff's Department entered into agreements with local school districts to provide School Resource Officers (SROs). The SROs will improve school safety by investigating on and off campus incidents that might affect the security of the school campus, staff and students; applying early intervention, security, and long-term problem solving solutions for existing criminal and safety concerns; and using education, community resources, dialogue and compromise to achieve solutions tailored to changing concerns and issues within the school district. This service is currently contracted with six different school districts in Kent County.

Sheriff's Department

Function	Mandated						Non-Mandated							
	Statute	Fully Funded	Un-Funded	Partially Funded			Board Authorized Agreement	Board Resolution	Necessary	Discretionary	Funding Source			
				Designated State/Feds	User Fees / Fines	Other					Gen. Fund	User Fees	State/Fed Grant	Other
Administration and Road Patrol														
Administration														
Administer and fulfill reporting requirements for grants, other revenues, and expenses									X		X		X	
Administer the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant							11-09-00-166						X	
Create and maintain records of the department's investigative and correctional activities	MCL 28.251		X											
Issue and administer gun permits	MCL 28.422					X								
Operate substations								12-8-94-158 12-45-95-146 8-83-107			X			X
Serve papers as ordered by the Courts	MCL 45.407					X								
Board Participation														
Community Corrections Advisory Board								3-89-37			X			
Kent County Dispatch Authority							11-16-06-121	7-27-06-66			X			X
Investigations														
Conduct investigations of reported and suspected crime									X		X			
Participate in the Metropolitan Enforcement Team							10-22-98-144				X			
Participate in the Kent Narcotics Team										X	X			

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Road Patrol														
Enforce criminal laws of State observed during patrolling and monitoring	MCL 51.76(2)b		X											
Implement COPS community policing							4-13-95-43					X	X	
Investigate accidents involving motor vehicles	MCL 51.76(2)c		X											
Operate a Domestic Violence Coordination Program								11-24-98-182		X				
Patrol and monitor traffic violations on County primary and County local roads	MCL 51.76(2)a		X											
Provide emergency assistance to persons on or near a highway or road patrolled by the Sheriff	MCL 51.76(2)d		X											
Provide secondary road patrol							10-86-144					X		
Security														
Provide court security	MCL 600.581		X											
Training														
Participate in Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards	PA 203 of 1965 as amended		X						X					
Provide training and certification courses for law enforcement personnel	PA 203 of 1965 as amended			X										
Participate in Michigan Sheriffs' Coordinating and Training Council	PA 125 of 2003		X											
Provide training and certification courses for Corrections personnel	PA 125 of 2003		X											
Communications Center														
Call-Taking														
Answer in-coming 911 calls								03-25-10-16	X				X	

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Dispatch Services														
Dispatch police and fire personnel							Various					X		
Dispatch Sheriff's Department personnel									X		X			
Corrections														
Community Re-Entry Program														
Operate a work release program								2-82-30			X	X		
Contractual														
Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agreements								11-08-12-112		X			X	
Corrections Administration														
Create and maintain records of inmates			X						X		X			
Inmate care accounting and billing									X		X			
Corrections Operations														
House inmates accused of City ordinance violations if space is available							2-26-98-28				X	X		
Make available various inmate services (religious, educational, medical, mental health, legal access, and recreational)	Various		X											
Operate a facility providing care and custody for offenders accused and convicted of violations of State law	MCL 45.16				X	X								
Transport														
Transport inmates sentenced to prison to the proper prison	MCL 800.48		X											
Transport inmates for mental health exams	MCL 330.2026		X											
Transport inmates to all district courts in the County for preliminary exams	MCL 600.581 MCL 766.4		X											

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Emergency Management														
Administer Local Emergency Planning Committee and activities related to hazardous material release	42 USCA 11001(B)	X		X				2-24-00-15						
Adopt and implement National Incident Management System								08-25-05-69			X			
Conduct periodic tests of readiness and the ability of the County's response system							1-28-93-12							X
Educate citizens and officials regarding roles and responsibilities in emergencies							1-28-93-12							X
Provide an emergency plan and review annually	42 USCA 11003		X					12-14-06-146						
Law Enforcement Computer Network														
Administer the law enforcement computer network										X	X	X		
Local Liquor Enforcement														
Enforce State and County liquor laws	MCL 436.1			X										
Marine Safety														
Conduct patrols on inland lakes, enforce marine safety laws, and rescue stranded boaters							1-6-98-6				X	X	X	
Inspect boat livery operations	MCL 324.44516					X								
Recover drowned bodies	MCL 51.301		X											
Compile boating accident reports from all entities	MCL 324.80136		X											
Target marine safety patrols										X	X			

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School Resource Officer														
Provide for additional school safety and early intervention								6-26-14-52		X	X	X		
Township/Contractual Law Enforcement														
Provide police functions for the City of Cedar Springs							11-6-14-91							
Provide services above normal service level to townships on a fee basis							7-27-00-102				X	X	X	X
Target road patrols within specified townships											X	X	X	X