



GANG IDENTIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION – 2025

Virginia Department of
Juvenile Justice

One Team.

New Ideas.

2025 Gang Awareness **Extraordinary Purpose.**



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DISCLAIMER

- The material contained in this presentation may contain some graphic, inflammatory, and profane language and photos. At times you could hear the instructors use this language in a discussion, scenario, or quote.
- The identified gangs and/or gang members are gleaned from the DJJ Records Management System and Law Enforcement Agencies across the COVA.
- Any information received in this presentation is considered Law Enforcement Sensitive (LES) information which is privileged and confidential.

PURPOSE

- **The purpose of this course is to provide law enforcement personnel a greater understanding of criminal street gangs.**
- **The ability to recognize members of these groups will increase the safety of our personnel and the public.**



GOALS

- 1) Recognize signs of gang activity
- 2) Know what to do when gang activity is identified
- 3) Know how to properly document gang activity





WHAT IS A CRIMINAL STREET GANG?

Key Points from the *Code of Virginia* § 18.2-46.1

- Three or more people
- Primary objective or activity is crime
- Identifiable by name, sign, or symbol
- Whose members have committed, attempted to commit, conspired to commit, or solicited others to commit two or more predicate acts (one act of violence).

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title18.2/chapter4/section18.2-46.1/>

WHAT IT IS NOT

- Criminal street gangs are not made up of any one race or ethnic group
- Gang members come from many races and ethnicities
- Many of the most well known and powerful gangs originated and are still primarily made-up of minorities



WHY DO PEOPLE JOIN GANGS?

REASONS & RISK FACTORS

- Low I.Q. or self-esteem
- Psychological or physiological disorders
- Substance abuse
- Anti-social behavior
- History of victimization
- Socially rejected

- Environmental factors / low-income neighborhoods
- Protection
- Identity / recognition
- Sense of belonging
- Peer pressure

GANG BEHAVIOR

TRADITIONAL



LOCAL / HYBRID



BEHAVIOR

- Group-think
 - The practice of thinking or making decisions as a group in a way that discourages creativity or individual responsibility.
 - Lack of accepted morals, ethics, values
- Little drive to improve themselves
- Territorial (Graffiti)
- Wear colors and use hand signs
 - Hybrids and local gangs may use mixed colors and signs

BEHAVIOR

- Loud boisterous behavior
- Confrontational
 - Unable to work through differences civilly
- Lack empathy for others
- Lack of remorse

- **Violence**
 - The solution to all problems



GANG MENTALITY (3-Rs)

- Respect
 - Based on fear and intimidation
- Reputation
 - Critical to a member
 - May define position in the gang
- Retaliation
 - Revenge
 - Not if, but when!





MESSAGING THROUGH VIOLENCE

SIGNS OF GANG VIOLENCE



SIGNS OF GANG VIOLENCE



OVERKILL

Hispanic gangs will use overkill methods, not only to rivals, but to intimidate citizens in their communities. **(WARNING!!!)**

In “message murders” like this one, they may make all members of the gang see the victim.

Any members who refuse or are reluctant to participate, may find themselves in the same position as this victim.

The gang may make a member participate in the murder of a friend or a loved one to show their dedication to the gang!



RANDY BROWARD

- OBG – Original Blood Gang
- #2 General VA UBN – Virginia United Blood Nation
- Fanatic
- Sentenced to Life + 237 years



GREEN LIGHT

RANDY

HRRJ



ANDY

NNCJ



RICARDO

ON THE STREET



Plan to murder 3 prosecutors and 2 investigators

MICHAEL HOPSON

- BPSN – Black P-Stone Nation
- O.G. aka Big Homie
- High school security officer
- Recruited at-risk youths into his gang to make money
- Sentenced to life



CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

- Gang assault own members if they broke rules
- Personally assaulted juveniles in gang
- Ordered gang members to shoot and kill rivals
- Had two of his own gang murdered





DOCUMENTING GANGS

FIELD INTERVIEW

- Name
- Alias
- DOB
- SSN
- DL #
- Height
- Weight
- Hair/Eye Color
- Body Type

- Tattoos/scars
- Clothing
 - Type
 - Colors
 - Anomalies
 - Wearing in an unusual manner
 - Flags
- **Detailed photos**

FIELD INTERVIEW

- Who are they with?
 - Have you found them together before?
- Are they known gang members?
 - What gang/s
- Do they have criminal histories?
 - **Have they committed crimes together**
 - **Check reporting system every time**
- Have they committed Predicate Criminal Acts?
 - Do you know of other accomplices to those PCAs that are not here now?
- What crime(s) are they committing now if any?
- Do they have any weapons?

FIELD INTERVIEW

- Where are they?
- Not just the physical location
 - Is it known as gang territory
 - Is it rival gang territory
 - Is it a high crime, high drug area
 - Have you found them there before and how often

- Why are they there?
 - Separate and ask, if more than one
- **If you get different stories or outright lies, document it!**

ASSOCIATES

- Who are they friends with?
- Who are they not friends with?
- Who were they friends with and are no longer friends with?

- Is anyone they associate with a known gang member/affiliate?
- Have they fought with anyone?
 - Could it have been a gang initiation?
 - Was it clearly an assault?

HISTORICAL

- Full criminal history
 - If you have a gang file on the individual
- Old calls for service and reports:
 - Who
 - What
 - Where
 - When
 - Why

- Old body/vehicle camera footage
 - In residences
 - On the street
- This is great for someone newly identified as a gang member
 - Potentially get years worth of gang activity

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Look for gang activity
 - Hand signs
 - Tattoos/Scars
 - Names
 - Locations in photos
 - Weapons
- Look for gang associates
 - May find a link to a known gang member you have never seen them with
- Anything you would look for in the real world
- **Do not use your personal social media accounts!**



SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

Identifying Gang Like Behavior



STOLEN LOGOS

- Oklahoma City
- OKC
- Not a gang hat, but expresses dislike for law enforcement
- “Only Kill Cops” or “Only Kill Corrections”



HAND SIGNS

WARNING

I shared this video because of Y'all repeated requests About Gang Signs Meaning, but note that Gang Sign is not a joke and should not be thrown in the wrong places, especially if you live in the United States, never do it in public. Tanks For Your Attention

Love Y'all 

SYMBOLS / GRAFFITI



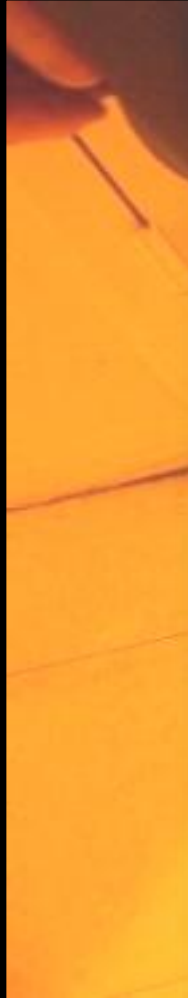
DOCUMENT GRAFFITI

- **4 Rs**
 - **Read It** (What does it mean?)
 - **Record It** (Photographs)
 - **Report It** (Field Intel Report or Incident Based Report and email Gang Unit)
 - **Remove It** (Sooner the better)

TATTOOS



SCARS



QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

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