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Press Release

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MPD launches the 2026 Operation Summer Guardian

MILWAUKEE, WI— The Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) is pleased to announce the launch of the fifth annual Operation Summer Guardian Summer Initiative (Summer Guardian 5.0) to address gun violence beginning Thursday, May 21st, 2026, and running every week, Thursday thru Sunday, until the end of September.

Five years ago, MPD created a targeted response prioritizing community engagement in areas that were identified as having the most gunshots fired. The response was titled “Summer Guardian” and deploys additional officers in these high frequency neighborhoods. Summer Guardian has occurred each summer since. To ensure the constitutionality of all stops, MPD requires those officers assigned to this deployment to attend a constitutional policing refresher course. In addition, MPD organizes community feedback sessions, neighborhood pop-up events and door hanger canvassing to ensure that the community is satisfied with the MPD presence. Feedback from the community has been positive throughout these annual deployments. Summer Guardian is an example of a multi-faceted community and problem-oriented policing approach to crime encompassing data, community input and regular feedback to reduce and mitigate the occurrence of violence in neighborhoods.

The measure of success of Summer Guardian is not in the number of arrests made or traffic stops conducted. Success is based on what does not happen, that is, shots being fired or shootings. However, removing danger from our community has been another welcome outcome. For all four prior Guardians (2022-2025), there have been a total of 143 arrests by officers (including arrests for reckless endangerment of safety and first-degree intentional homicide), 1041 park and walks conducted, and 78 illegal firearms removed from our community. The most recent Summer Guardian (summer of 2025) yielded 41 arrests and the removal of 16 firearms from our community.

During deployments, Officers have an impact on the community that cannot be measured in statistical analysis. Officers connect with community members who are appreciative of their presence. Officers directly engage with community members in positive ways. Summer Guardian is a model for deterring and reducing crime while simultaneously building trust and legitimacy with the community.

Summer Guardian is deployed in city-wide neighborhoods that include Muskego Way, Historic Mitchell Street, Lincoln Village, Layton Park, Forest Home Hills, Walnut Hill, Midtown, Cold Spring Park, Avenues West, Concordia, Silver Spring, Havenwoods, McGovern Park, Fairfield, Thurston Woods, Old North Milwaukee, Franklin Heights,

Arlington Heights, Wahl Park, Lincoln Creek, Grasslyn Manor, Capitol Heights, Roosevelt Grove, Sunset Heights, Sherman Park, Saint Joseph, Uptown, Metcalfe Park, Amani, and North Division. If you live in one of these communities and would like to participate in the regular community meetings to discuss Summer Guardian during the deployment, please e-mail mpdnews@milwaukee.gov and ask to be placed on the invitation list.

The 2026 deployment will focus on the reduction of youth gun violence and illegal possession of firearms by minors. This will be accomplished by a twofold approach of proactive enforcement and youth outreach in conjunction with our community partners. For more information, please visit: <https://mkepdpio.org/home/operation-summer-guardian/>.

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