# Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission

VIRGINIA DWR

CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

# Why accreditation?

## *A Continuous Pursuit of Excellence.*

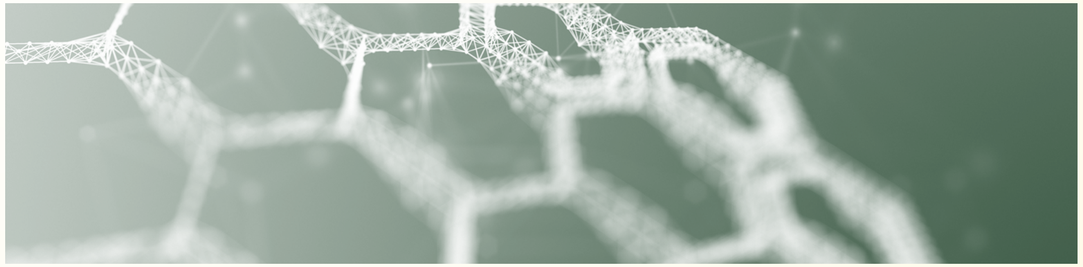
**Build Public Trust**

**Improve Consistency**

**Reduce Liability**

**Increase Accountability**

# Accreditation Networking Benefits



- **Shared Professional Standards** – Establishes a common framework for policy, training, and operations across accredited agencies.

- **Peer Collaboration** – Encourages communication and best practice sharing through VLEPSC and VALEAC networks.

- **Mutual Support System** – Builds relationships that enable resource sharing, mentorship, and mutual aid.

- **Problem-Solving Network** – Creates an informal support group for discussing challenges, policy development, and innovative solutions.

- **Enhanced Interagency Trust** – Establishes credibility and consistency that strengthen partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions.

# VLEPSC Accreditation Standards

- 4 Subject Areas
- 192 Standards
- Over 550 Bullets

**Administration**
- 80 Standards

**Operations**
- 69 Standards

**Personnel**
- 35 Standards

**Training**
- 8 Standards

# Final Report

**Overview:**

- DWR Law Enforcement Division reaccredited by the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC).
- 192 standards reviewed (7th & 8th Edition blended cycle) – **100% compliance, 0 deficiencies.**
- Assessment conducted via PowerDMS with on-site verification, interviews, and inspections.

**Result:**

***"The Virginia DWR demonstrates the highest standards of professionalism, operational excellence, and commitment to public service. Accreditation reaffirmed without condition." — VLEPSC Assessment Team***

# What Next?

**We have begun our VLEPSC Reaccreditation Process.**

## NAWLEA National Accreditation

**Begin seeking the North American Wildlife Law Enforcement Accreditation**

# Questions?

*"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives."*

*— Will A. Foster*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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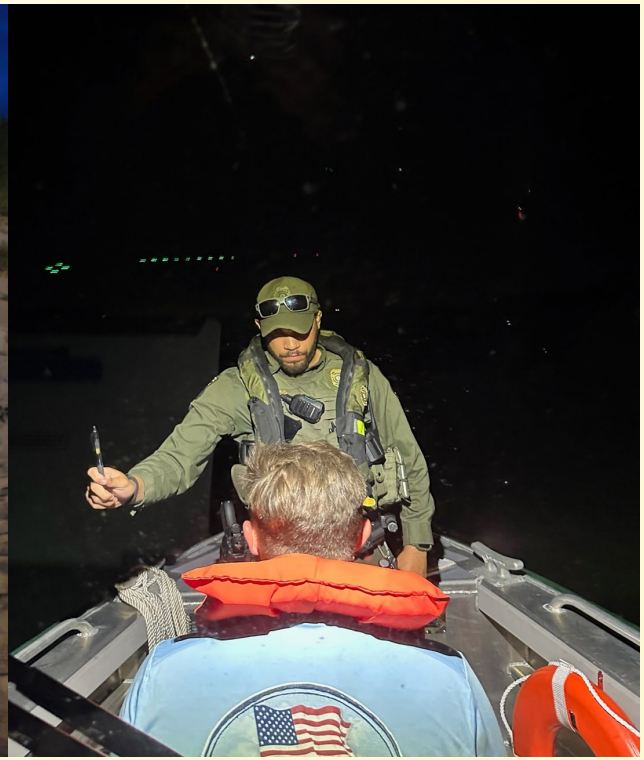
# Operation Midnight Express Overview



# Operation Midnight Express Launch
# July and August 2025

**Purpose:** Reaffirm our commitment to excellence in natural resource law enforcement.

**Mission:** Strengthen our presence during the evening and nighttime hours, aligning our enforcement efforts with the times when outdoor activity and potential violations are likely to occur. As Conservation Police Officers, our duty is not just to enforce laws, but to actively promote public safety, resource protection, and compliance across the Commonwealth when we are needed, and that often means after the sun has gone down.

**Expectations:**

2 of 5 workdays (40%) of workdays needed to include an evening or night patrol.

Participate in planned directed enforcement efforts, saturation patrols on DWR properties, coordinated efforts with K9 teams, Boating Safety Checkpoints, Bait Boat Operations, and more.

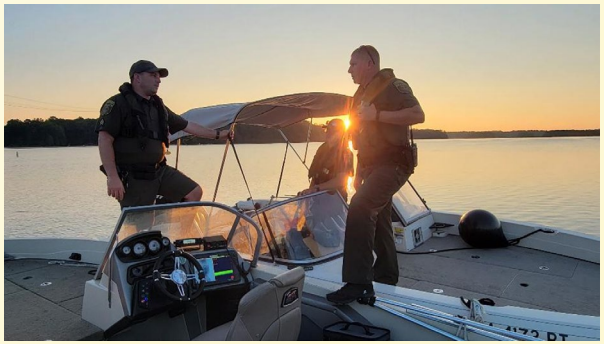
**Evening Patrol**: between 5 pm and 9 pm | **Night Patrol**: after 11 pm

**Operation Midnight Express was not just a directive; it was an opportunity to lead by example, to show pride in our role, and to reconnect with the spirit of service that defines us.**

# OUI and Reckless Operation Enforcement Highlights

- **Placed a significant emphasis on evening and nighttime patrols on the water and specifically targeted those areas where we have had issues with alcohol consumption and reckless operation in the past.**
- **July and August 2024:**
  - Reckless Operations Arrests – 14
  - OUI Arrests – 14

- **July and August 2025**
  - Reckless Operation Arrests – 14
  - OUI Arrests – 25



# Enforcement Highlights

- **ATV Beach Patrols:** Used ATVs/UTVs to patrol public beaches, uncovering license and size-limit violations; surprised anglers unfamiliar with nighttime enforcement.

- **Saturation Patrols & Checkpoints:** Conducted 51 checkpoints and 749 directed patrols, often combining CPOs from multiple districts.

- **Lake Anna Glow Party:** Officers from Regions I and IV conducted coordinated patrols during the Lake Anna Glow Party. Numerous boating violations were addressed, including an operating under the influence arrest with a BAC of 0.10.

- **After-Hours Jet Ski Enforcement:** Six jet skis stopped; one operator confirmed impaired (BAC 0.13) and arrested for operating under the influence.

- **Inter-Agency Cooperation:** Worked on numerous directed enforcement efforts with other state and local agencies. Examples are the Glow Party, Op Sail, Lakefest, Operation Dry Water, Fireworks shows, etc.

# Significant Incident: Spearfishing and Firearm Incident – Radford, July 5

While on routine patrol in Radford, Sergeant Rabago and a DWR Special Agent observed seven individuals illegally spearfishing game species in the New River. One subject discharged a handgun into the river. Conservation Police Officers, assisted by Radford Police, secured the firearm, identified the subjects, and discovered one had outstanding federal warrants and that the firearm was stolen. Officers seized 1 carp, 8 smallmouth bass, 9 walleye, and spearfishing equipment.

# Search & Rescue and Flood Response Operations

- **Shenandoah National Park SAR:** 15 Region IV officers participated in a multi-agency search for a 61-year-old hiker with medical concerns, last seen without food, water, or medication. Despite extensive coordination among local, state, and federal resources, the hiker was found deceased the following day.

- **Dante, VA Flood Response:** CPOs from Districts 33 and 34 responded to severe flooding with boats and UTVs. K9 handler Master Officer Mark VanDyke coordinated units in navigating limited access roads. Officers conducted door-to-door wellness checks and delivered essential supplies including food, water, and generators. Operations continued the following morning to ensure community safety.

# Operational Success

**Patrols** – 3,778

**Evening Patrols (5 pm to 9 pm)** – 1151

**Night Patrols (after 11 pm)** – 1183

**On-water Patrols** – 914

**Saturation/Directed Patrols** – 749

**Arrests/Summonses** – 1954

**Warnings Issues** – 899

**Reckless Operation of a Vessel** - 14

**OUI Arrests** - 25