

with the registration of firearms and the investigation, with the assistance of other police agencies, of those persons desiring to purchase a handgun from a registered firearms dealer (Code 1957, Art. 27, secs. 441-448).

The Agency is charged with the responsibility to investigate all applicants desiring to wear, carry, or transport a handgun. Investigations are conducted by members of the State Police and other police agencies. The Superintendent, after reviewing the report of investigation, has the authority to approve or disapprove the application and either issue, or refuse to issue, an appropriate permit (Code 1957, Art. 27, sec. 36). The Agency also operates a voluntary firearms registration service for those acquiring or owning firearms that are not controlled by other statutes. The Agency investigates and processes those persons desiring to secure a special police commission from the Governor (Code 1957, Art. 41, secs. 60-70).

Legislation in 1965 gave the State Police responsibility for licensing qualified garages and other facilities to make inspections and corrections of equipment and mechanisms and to certify that used motor vehicles, for which titles are sought, meet the equipment standards promulgated by the Motor Vehicle Administration (Code Transportation Article, secs. 13-102, 103).

Reports of motor vehicle accidents investigated by any law enforcement officer in the State must be forwarded to the State Police. The Agency is charged with the responsibility of analyzing and preparing its statistical tables and charts based on these reports.

The Truck Enforcement Division of the State Police, under direct appropriation from the Transportation Trust Fund, enforces the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Code pertaining to size, weight, and load of vehicles (Code Transportation Article, secs. 24-101, 24-112); laws governing registration of aircraft and pilots (Code 1957, Art. 1A, secs. 22-23); and laws governing motor fuel tax (Code 1957, Art. 56, secs. 135-157) and fraud resulting from the sale of motor fuels and lubricants (Code 1957, Art. 27, secs. 231-233).

Chapter 452, Acts of 1968, provided for the administration of the State Aid for Police Protection Fund by the Superintendent of the State Police (Code 1957, Art. 15A, secs. 35-39).

The Aviation Division provides helicopter service throughout Maryland twenty-four hours a

day, seven days a week, to effect the evacuation of seriously injured highway and other victims requiring immediate transport to medical assistance. Other missions include search and rescue, criminal investigation support, traffic control, and support in disasters and civil disturbances.

The Special Tactical Assault Team Element (STATE) and the Hostage Recovery Team (HRT) are comprised of personnel skilled in special tactics to respond to barricade and hostage situations, sniper incidents, rescue operations, and other extraordinary occurrences. STATE's mission is the neutralization of life threatening situations with the least possible risk to the principals and team members. HRT's mission is to assist in negotiations with hostage takers and barricaded individuals in an attempt to persuade them to release their hostages unharmed, to yield their refuge, and to surrender without violence.

The State Police maintains trained K-9 teams throughout the State. The primary purpose of the trooper/K-9 teams is crime prevention and detection. All teams are trained in basic police procedures, and a number have received special training in the detection of explosive substances, narcotics, and firearms. Bloodhounds are also utilized to search for lost and wanted persons.

The State Police maintains radio, teletype, and other forms of communication between its own installations and those of other law enforcement agencies within the State and participates in a national teletype system. The Electronic Services Division maintains communication equipment for State Police and allied State, federal, and local agencies. The Division maintains electronic devices, including VASCAR and RADAR for the State Police, and assists other agencies when equipment is of similar design.

The State Police operates a Police Academy for the training of its personnel. These facilities are available to all other law enforcement agencies throughout the State.

The Executive Protection Division provides security for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and Comptroller as required. To protect the safety of the legislative process, personnel are assigned when required.

The Special Services Division is responsible for gathering information pertaining to organized crime, investigating violations of narcotics and dangerous drug laws, as well as gambling, book-making, and other crimes of vice.