

12-Hour Police Patrols Begin

By MARK HODGES
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Horry County Police began a regular schedule of night patrols Wednesday, the first since the department was organized nearly 20 years ago.

In an effort to cut police response time and discourage criminal activity, from four to six officers will be patrolling different areas of the county nightly from 8 p.m.-8 a.m., according to Chief Herman Enzor.

"We're just trying to see how it works," Enzor said Friday. "We think it will prove successful. They're going from one end of the county to the other."

After one to two months, police officials will assess the new shift system, which Enzor said most law enforcement agencies in South Carolina have already adopted.

In the past, night police protection in

Horry County's unincorporated areas has been restricted to patrolmen "on call."

Under the old system, most officers went on the job around 8:30 a.m. and signed off shortly before midnight on evenings when there were no incidents to investigate, Enzor said.

"They went in whenever it quietened off," Enzor said. "We had to use our own judgment."

Policemen were hired to work in the sections of the county where they lived, he said. When the county police night dispatcher received a call during the early morning hours, he relayed it to the patrolman at his home.

There have been two main problems with the old system, according to Enzor:

— Police response time is prolonged by 30-45 minutes if an officer has to be wakened at his home to go to the scene of a crime; and

— Patrolmen have been putting in around 70-80 and sometimes as many as 100 hours a week of work attempting to cover crime in Horry County night and day.

"It's been kinda rough," Enzor said, adding that it has been difficult to attract policemen with the hours county patrolmen are asked to work.

Under the new system, officers are expected to work 12-hour shifts and be available for "on call" work only in emergencies, he said.

The Horry County Police Commission has discussed setting up day and night shifts for some time but did not approve the system until a Monday meeting because the force lacked the manpower to implement such a plan, according to commission chairman A.B. Grainger.

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