



CELEBRATE 3.21 • POLICE, FIRE & EMS

First Responder Kit

Protect • serve • celebrate



For police, fire, and EMS departments. It includes a Rock Your Socks shift challenge, a “challenge another department” post, station and vehicle signs, community interaction ideas, and a one-page field guide to communicating with people with Down syndrome, autism, and other disabilities.

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START HERE

How first responders can show up

When first responders celebrate, kids and families notice. And a little preparation helps every call go better.

ROCK YOUR SOCKS SHIFT CHALLENGE

- Every shift wears fun socks March 15–21 (within uniform policy)
- Post a photo from each shift or station
- Vote for the best socks
- Winner picks the next department to challenge

CHALLENGE ANOTHER DEPARTMENT

- Post your photo and tag 3 departments
- Use the graphic in this kit
- Neighboring police, fire, EMS, and dispatch
- Share every department that joins

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Visit a school's Rock Your Socks Day
- Bring a truck or cruiser to a 3.21 event
- Read at a library story time
- Hand out sock stickers

INSIDE THE DEPARTMENT

- Share the field guide at roll call
- Invite a self-advocate or DSACO to a training
- Review your special-needs registry, if you have one
- Station sign in the window

UNIFORM POLICY

Check with command staff first. Many departments allow fun socks with uniform shoes, or socks worn off-duty for photos.

WHAT IS DOWN SYNDROME?

A person has an extra copy of chromosome 21. It happens naturally, in every kind of family.

WHY 3/21?

Three copies of chromosome 21. The UN recognized World Down Syndrome Day in 2011.

HOW MANY?

About 5,700 babies with Down syndrome are born in the U.S. each year.



OUR STATION IS

Rocking our socks for 3.21!

Celebrating people with Down syndrome on World
Down Syndrome Day, March 21. **Everyone belongs
here.**

#Celebrate321



ROLL-CALL HANDOUT

Field guide: communicating with people with disabilities

For calls involving people with Down syndrome, autism, or intellectual and developmental disabilities. Always follow your department's policies and training.

1 Introduce yourself

Calm voice, your name, and why you're there. "I'm [name]. I'm here to help."

2 Speak directly to the person

Use short, simple sentences. One question at a time.

3 Give extra time

Wait for an answer. Speech may be hard to understand; ask them to show you.

4 Show, don't just tell

Point, demonstrate, or use pictures. Explain before you touch.

5 Reduce the sensory load

If safe: lights and sirens off, fewer people, a quieter spot.

6 Look for supports

A communication device, an ID card, or a caregiver who can help. Never take away a communication device.

7 Know that behavior may be communication

Running, covering ears, repeating words, or not answering may mean fear or overload, not defiance.

8 Follow up kindly

Tell the person what happens next. Praise cooperation.

THINGS PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME MAY EXPERIENCE

- Low muscle tone; may tire quickly
- Hearing or vision differences
- Understanding that's stronger than speech
- Heart conditions (about half of babies are born with one)
- Anxiety in new, loud situations

TRAINING & RESOURCES

- Invite self-advocates to speak at trainings
- Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio: dsaco.net
- The Arc's National Center on Criminal Justice & Disability
- Your county board of developmental disabilities

COPY & IDEAS

Social posts & family event ideas

Ready-to-post captions, and simple ways to meet families.

SHIFT CHALLENGE POST

“B shift rocked their socks today for World Down Syndrome Day! Everyone belongs in our community. We challenge @[dept] @[dept] @[dept] to show us your socks! #Celebrate321 #WorldDownSyndromeDay”

COMMUNITY POST

“Happy World Down Syndrome Day from [Department]! We’re proud to protect and serve every person in [city]. #Celebrate321 #WorldDownSyndromeDay”

FAMILY EVENT IDEAS

- Touch-a-Truck with a quiet hour (no sirens or horns)
- Station open house with a sensory-friendly time
- Read-aloud at the library in fun socks
- Meet-and-greet at a school Rock Your Socks Day
- Photo booth with gear, badges, and socks

MAKE IT WELCOMING

- Let kids explore at their own pace
- Offer ear protection
- Visual “what to expect” photos ahead of time
- Staff ready to kneel and say hello

HASHTAGS

#Celebrate321

#WorldDownSyndromeDay

#RockYourSocks

#CanalWinchester

PHOTOS & PERMISSION

- Feet photos are easy and private
- Ask before posting any face
- Never post children without a parent’s OK
- Let people with Down syndrome tell their own story

Dispatch too! Dispatchers and 911 call-takers can rock their socks and share the field guide. They’re often the first voice a family hears.