

LAW ENFORCEMENT CODE OF ETHICS

All law enforcement officers must be fully aware of the ethical responsibilities of their position and must strive constantly to live up to the highest possible standards of professional policing. It is important police officers have clear advice and counsel available to help them perform their duties consistent with these standards. The following ethical mandates are guidelines to meet this end:

Primary Responsibilities of Police Officer:

A police officer acts as an official representative of the government; he is required and trusted to work within the law. The officer's powers and duties are conferred by statute. The fundamental duties of a police officer include serving the community; safe-guarding lives and property; protecting the innocent; keeping the peace; and ensuring the rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

Performance of the Duties of a Police Officer:

A police officer performs all duties impartially, without favor, affection or ill will and without regard to status, sex, race, religion, political belief or aspiration. All citizens are treated equally with courtesy, consideration and dignity. Officers never allow personal feelings, animosities or friendships to influence official conduct. Laws are enforced appropriately and courteously and, in carrying out their responsibilities, officers strive to obtain maximum cooperation from the public. They conduct themselves, in appearance and deportment, in a way that inspires confidence and respect for the position of public trust they hold.

Discretion:

A police officer uses responsibly the discretion vested in the position and exercises it within the law. The principle of reasonableness guide the officer's conclusions, and the officer considers all surrounding circumstances in determining whether any legal action will be taken. Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional policing competence, does much to preserve good relationships and retain the confidence of the public. It can be difficult to choose between conflicting courses of action. It is important to remember that a timely word of advice rather than arrest which may be correct in appropriate circumstances can be a more effective means of achieving a desired end.

Use of Force:

A police officer never employs unnecessary force or violence and uses only such force in the discharge of duty as is reasonable in all circumstances. Force is used only with greatest restraint and only after discussion, negotiation, and persuasion have been found to be inappropriate or ineffective. While the use of force is occasionally unavoidable, every police officer refrains from the unnecessary infliction of pain or suffering and never engages in cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment of any person.

Confidentiality:

Whatever a police officer sees, hears, or learns of, which is of a confidential nature, is kept secret unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise. The public has a right to security and privacy, and information obtained about members of the public must not be improperly divulged.

Integrity:

A police officer does not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor does an officer condone such acts by other police officers. The public demands that the integrity of police officers be

above reproach. Police officers must, therefore, avoid any conduct that might compromise their integrity and that undercut the public confidence in a law enforcement agency. Officers refuse to accept any gifts, presents, subscriptions, favors, gratuities or promises that could be interpreted as seeking to cause the officer to refrain from performing official responsibilities honestly and within the law. Police officers must not receive private or special advantages from their official status. Respect from the public cannot be bought; it can only be earned and cultivated.

Cooperation with Other Officers and Agencies:

Police officers cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice. An officer or agency may be one among many organizations that may provide law enforcement services to a jurisdiction. It is essential that a police officer help colleagues fully and completely and with respect and consideration.

Personal/Professional Capabilities:

Police officers are responsible for maintaining a high standard of professionalism and take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve their level of knowledge and competence. Through study and experience, a police officer can acquire the high level of knowledge and competence that is essential for efficient and effective performance. The acquisition of knowledge is a never-ending process of personal and professional development that should be pursued constantly.

Private Life:

Police officers will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to their agencies or themselves. A police officer's character and conduct while off duty must always be exemplary, thus maintaining a position of respect in the community in which he or she lives and serves. The officer's personal behavior must be beyond reproach.

Signature of Officer

Date