

GENERAL ORDER



Title
**Metropolitan Police Department
Sworn Law Enforcement Officer
Code of Ethics**

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B

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Rescinds
Part I Section F of GO-PER-201.26 (Duties, Responsibilities and Conduct of Members of the Department), Special Order 97-31 (Metropolitan Police Department Code of Ethics) dated December 15, 1997, Special Order 97-34 (Ethics, Conduct and Appearance) dated December 23, 1997

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I. BACKGROUND

Ethics is defined as a code, system, or body of moral principles or good conduct, particularly a system for a group of people or a profession, such as law or medicine. Ethics deals primarily with values: what is good, what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. The responsibility to act ethically rests with every sworn law enforcement officer when he/she goes about his/her professional duties and in his/her personal life.

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) derives its authority from the D.C. Official Code § 5-127.03 (Police to have powers of constables; authorization to execute certain Superior Court orders). With this authority, sworn law enforcement officers investigate other people, abridge normal liberties, and use force when necessary. Therefore, it is imperative that sworn law enforcement officers of the MPD epitomize the highest degree of ethical behavior when serving the communities and citizens who live, work, and visit Washington, D.C.

II. POLICY

The policy of the Metropolitan Police Department is that sworn law enforcement officers shall maintain the highest standard of conduct and perform their duties in a nondiscriminatory, efficient, courteous, respectful, and ethical manner at all times. Further, these official powers shall not be used for personal profit or gain, or violate the Constitution or laws in performance of their work. (CALEA 1.1.2)

III. REGULATIONS

Sworn law enforcement officers shall abide by the following Metropolitan Police Department Law Enforcement Officer Code of Ethics, adopted from the International Association of Chiefs of Police Law Enforcement Code of Ethics:

“As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community, to safeguard lives and property, to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder, and to respect the Constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all, and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my Department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature, or that is confided to me in my official capacity, will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities, or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of the police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.

I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself to my chosen profession ... law enforcement.”

IV. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- A. Specific violations of Department policy or procedures shall be handled in accordance with General Order 1202.1 (Disciplinary Procedures and Processes) and other applicable directives.
- B. Commanding Officers/Directors shall ensure that sworn members of their command:
 - 1. Familiarize themselves with the contents of this directive through roll call training and Police Service Area team meetings; and
 - 2. Subscribe to the contents of this directive.

- C. The Director, Institute of Police Science shall ensure that:
 - 1. Recruits are familiar with the content of this directive prior to graduation from the Institute of Police Science; and
 - 2. The annual in-service training program shall include the contents of this order in the core curriculum.

V. CROSS REFERENCES

- A. General Orders
 - 1. GO-PER-201.09 (Equal Employment Opportunity)
 - 2. General Order 1202.1 (Disciplinary Procedures and Processes)
 - 3. General Order 201.26 (Duties, Responsibilities and Conduct of Members of the Department)
 - 4. GO-OPS-304.15 (Unbiased Policing)
- B. Related Materials
 - 1. DC Personnel Regulations, Chapter 18, Part 1 (Employee Conduct)
 - 2. MPD Handbook (Authorities, Accountabilities and Duties, 2000 edition)
- C. D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended, D.C. Official Code § 3-201 et seq.

// SIGNED //
Charles H. Ramsey
Chief of Police

CHR:SOA:DAH:JAH:mcw:pas