

# GENERAL ORDER



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

<b>Title</b> <b>Metropolitan Police Department Sworn Law Enforcement Officer Code of Ethics</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>RAR</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Effective Date</b> <b>June 1, 2017</b>		
<b>Replaces:</b> GO-RAR-201.36 (Metropolitan Police Department Sworn Law Enforcement Officer Code of Ethics), Effective Date April 11, 2005		
<b>Related to:</b> GO-PER-201.09 (Equal Employment Opportunity) GO-PER-201.26 (Duties, Responsibilities and Conduct of Members of the Department) GO-OPS-304.15 (Unbiased Policing) DC Personnel Regulations, Chapter 18, Part 1 (Employee Conduct) D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended (March 14, 2007) D.C. Official Code § 2-1402 <i>et seq.</i>		

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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 or she goes about his or her professional duties and in his or her personal life.

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) derives its authority from the D.C. Official Code § 5-127.04 (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 people who live, work and visit Washington, D.C.

## II. POLICY

The policy of MPD is that our sworn law enforcement officers maintain the highest standard of conduct and perform their duties in a nondiscriminatory, efficient, courteous, respectful, and ethical manner at all times. Further, police powers shall

not be used for personal profit or gain, and members shall not violate the Constitution or laws in performance of their work.

### **III. REGULATIONS**

Sworn members shall abide by the following MPD Law Enforcement Officer Code of Ethics, adapted from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) 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 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. PROCEDURES**

- A. Specific violations of Department policy or procedures shall be handled in accordance with GO-PER-120.21 (Disciplinary Procedures and Processes) and other applicable directives.
- B. The Commanding Officer of the Metropolitan Police Academy (MPA) shall ensure that:
  - 1. Recruits are familiar with the content of this directive prior to graduation from the MPA.
  - 2. The annual in-service training program shall include the contents of this order in the core curriculum.

**V. CROSS REFERENCES**

GO-PER-120.21 (Disciplinary Procedures and Processes)



Peter Newsham  
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