

GENERAL ORDER

April 2016

Immediately

I-1

Distribution: All Employees

Subject: **CODE OF ETHICS**

Index as:	Code of Conduct	Integrity
	Code of Ethics	Oath of Office
	Code of Ethics, Law Enforcement	Oath of Office, Public Employees
	Code of Ethics, Public Safety Telecommunications	Police Code of Conduct
	Confidentiality	Public Employees Oath of Office
	Discretion	Public Safety Telecommunications, Code of Ethics
	Ethics	Use of Force
	Ethics Training	

Accreditation Standards: 1.1.1, 1.1.2

Cross Reference: G.O. I-2, Mission, Values and Goals
 G.O. II-1, Written Orders and Directives
 G.O. IV-1, Rules of Conduct City of St. Petersburg Administrative Policy #010405
 Rules and Regulations of the Personnel Management System, Section 9
 §876.05, F.S.S.

Replaces: G.O. I-1, Law Enforcement Code of Ethics (November 9, 2007)

This Order consists of the following sections:

- I. Introduction
- II. Law Enforcement Code of Ethics
- III. Police Code of Conduct
- IV. Public Safety Telecommunicators Code of Ethics
- V. Public Employees Oath of Office
- VI. Ethics Training

I. INTRODUCTION

A. All law enforcement officers and other employees of a law enforcement agency must be fully aware of the ethical and professional responsibilities of their position as public employees within the criminal justice system. They must strive constantly to live up to the highest possible standards of the law enforcement profession.

B. The Department believes it important that employees have clear direction to assist them in performing their duties in an ethical and professional manner and hereby adopt the *Law Enforcement Code of Ethics* and the *Police Code of Conduct*, both of which have been promulgated by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).

C. While civilian employees of the Department lack the authority and powers of arrest granted by law to sworn employees, they represent the Department and the law enforcement profession by their actions and/or inactions and should conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner whether on or off duty.

1. The Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) has, likewise, published a *Code of Ethics* for Telecommunicators and this standard too is hereby adopted by this Department. This *Code* serves as a guide for the conduct of employees who provide valuable and direct services to the citizens and visitors to the City of St. Petersburg.

2. Employees not represented by ethical codes addressed to sworn officers and Telecommunicator shall strive to comply with those portions of the cited ethical codes that are applicable to them in the course of their personal and professional lives and shall, like others, adhere to their oath of office (§876.05 F.S.S.). See also the City's *Administrative Code* and the *Rules and Regulations of the Personnel Management System*.

II. 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 both in 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 before God to my chosen profession...law enforcement."

III. POLICE CODE OF CONDUCT

A. Primary Responsibilities of a Police Officer - A Police Officer acts as an official representative of government who 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, safeguarding lives and property, protecting the innocent, keeping the peace and ensuring the rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

B. Performance of the Duties of a Police Officer

1. A Police Officer shall perform all duties impartially, without favor or affection or ill will and without regard to status, sex, race, religion, political belief or aspiration. All citizens will be treated equally with courtesy, consideration and dignity.

2. Officers will never allow personal feelings, animosities or friendships to influence official conduct. Laws will be enforced appropriately and courteously and, in carrying out their responsibilities, officers will strive to obtain maximum cooperation from the public. They will conduct themselves in appearance and deportment in such a manner as to inspire confidence.

C. Discretion

1. A Police Officer will use responsibly the discretion vested in his position and exercise it within the law. The principle of reasonableness will guide the officer's determination, and the officer will consider all surrounding circumstances in determining whether any legal action shall be taken.

2. Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional policing competence, will do much to preserve good relationships and retain the confidence of the public. There can be difficulty in choosing 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.

D. Use of Force

1. A Police Officer will never employ unnecessary force or violence and will use only such force in the discharge of duty as is reasonable in all circumstances.

2. The use of force should be used only with the 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 will refrain from unnecessary infliction of pain or suffering and will never engage in cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment of any person.

E. Confidentiality

1. Whatever a Police Officer sees, hears or learns of that is of a confidential nature will be kept secret unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise.

2. Members of the public have a right to security and privacy, and information obtained about them must not be improperly divulged.

F. Integrity

1. A Police Officer will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will an officer condone such acts by other Police Officers.

2. The public demands that the integrity of Police Officers be above reproach. Police officers must, therefore, avoid any conduct that might compromise integrity and thus undercut the public confidence in a law enforcement agency. Officers will 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 advantage from their official status. Respect from the public cannot be bought; it can only be earned and cultivated.

G. Cooperation with Other Police Officers and Agencies

1. Police officers will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

2. An officer or agency may be one among many organizations that may provide law enforcement services to a jurisdiction. It is imperative that a Police Officer assist colleagues fully and completely with respect and consideration at all times.

H. Personal and Professional Capabilities

1. Police Officers will be responsible for their own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve their level of knowledge and competence.

2. Through study and experience, a Police Officer can acquire the high level of knowledge and competence that is essential for the efficient and effective performance of duty. The acquisition of knowledge is a never-ending process of personal and professional development that should be pursued constantly.

I. Private Life

1. Police Officers will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to their agencies or themselves.

2. 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.

IV. PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATIONS CODE OF ETHICS

“As a Public Safety Telecommunicator, I am dedicated to serve the public; to safeguard life and property; to keep my personnel informed on all calls that may require their attention; to assist all public safety.

I will keep my private and social life free from all criticism; maintain a calm attitude during times of stress and emergencies; develop self-control and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others, regardless of race, creed or religion. I will obey the laws of the land, rules and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission and my Department. Whatever information I receive of a confidential nature will be revealed only in the official performance of my duties.

I will never act in a selfish or unofficial manner or let my personal feelings, friendships, prejudices or animosity influence my decisions. I will enforce the rules and regulations of my Department and the Federal Communications Commission without fear, favor or ill will, never employing unnecessary force and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the high responsibility of my position as a symbol of public faith and trust and will accept it to be held as long as I am faithful to the ethics of public safety service. I will constantly strive to achieve those objectives and ideals which govern my profession, dedicating myself, before God, to my chosen profession, public safety telecommunications.”

V. PUBLIC EMPLOYEES OATH OF OFFICE

A. Employees shall execute the statutory Oath of Office prior to assuming their duties and swear or affirm to support the Constitution of the United States and the State of Florida.

“I, _____, a citizen of the State of Florida and of the United States of America, and being employed by or an officer of _____ and a recipient of public funds as such employee or officer, do hereby solemnly swear or affirm that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of the State of Florida.

VI. ETHICS TRAINING

A. Initial Training

1. Sworn employees shall receive ethics training as part of the basic recruit academy curriculum.

2. Civilian employees shall receive ethics training as part of their orientation and introduction to the Department's policies and procedures.

B. All employees shall receive refresher ethics training at least every two (2) years.

Anthony Holloway
Chief of Police