

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION POLICE DEPARTMENT

2.1.1 - STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The Lower Merion Township Police Department expects employees to maintain high standards of appearance and conduct. The public similarly expects such high standards. Police officers wield considerable power over the citizenry, power that is carefully circumscribed by state and federal law, and ultimately, by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Our power to arrest, seize property, and interfere, at times, with the free movement of citizens constitutes a public trust. We can help ensure that we regard this trust as vital by exemplary performance in our jobs. Performance is not enough: we must always conduct ourselves in an exemplary fashion; therefore the following standards of conduct have been established.

A.	GENERAL CONDUCT
-----------	------------------------

1. Employees will be held responsible for any act or omission which in any way is prejudicial to good order or discipline, or reflects upon the good name or reputation of the police department, or adversely affects its interests specifically mentioned in these or other rules or regulations of the Township of Lower Merion.
2. Employees must promptly obey all lawful and proper orders and instructions, written or otherwise, however transmitted or received.
3. Employees shall be honest, truthful, accurate and ethical in the performance of their duties.
4. Employees shall cooperate fully with all employees of the Township of Lower Merion in the performance of their official duties.
5. Employees will display respect for their superior officers, subordinates and associates. When on duty and in the presence of the public, superior officers shall be addressed or referred to by rank.
6. Employees shall be dignified and courteous in dealings with all fellow employees of the Township of Lower Merion.
7. Employees in contact with the public shall be sensitive to the diversity of the community and conduct themselves with dignity, courtesy and efficiency, and endeavor to provide the highest level of service possible.

8. Employees will address their subordinates, associates, supervisors, or members of the general public courteously, and will not use abusive, violent, insulting or provoking language which could be deemed insulting to any person or group by reason of their racial or ethnic background.
9. Employees will not gossip or communicate or convey rumors detrimental to the department or another employee.
10. Employees will cooperate and coordinate their efforts with other employees to ensure maximum effectiveness. This high degree of cooperation and coordination will extend to other law enforcement organizations and government agencies.
11. Employees shall notify a Command level officer whenever they are interviewed or questioned by any outside law enforcement agency conducting an official law enforcement related investigation.
12. Employees will restrict personal conversations or personal associations to an appropriate minimum while on duty.
13. Employees shall not loiter at the Public Safety Building, and shall use the building for professional purposes only. Each employee is responsible for the cleanliness and upkeep of their work area.
14. Employees shall adhere to the Township's Administrative and Human Resource Department's policies.
15. Employees shall not be absent from duty without official leave.
16. Employees shall be punctual in reporting for duty, and in maintaining assigned work schedules.
17. Employees will treat as confidential the official business of the department. They will not impart official business of the department to anyone, except those for whom it is intended, or as directed by their commanding officer, or under due process of law. A commanding officer may convey to representatives of the media, upon establishing their identity, current news, providing the ends of justice are not thereby defeated. Officers of this department will not furnish material for media outlets, newspapers or magazine articles, without the approval of the Superintendent of Police or his/her designee.
18. Employees on duty shall not read materials or produce, generate or exhibit documents, or other materials, in a manner that would tend to bring discredit to the police department.
19. Employees shall not engage in any activity of any form, which would bring discredit upon the police department.

20. Employees shall be mindful of their responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of official police business and their responsibility to avoid any conduct that would tend to bring discredit to the police department when utilizing any form of Social Media.
21. Employees, while on duty, shall not engage in any normally legitimate act which when performed on duty and in view of the public may reflect discredit upon the police department.
22. Employees, under color of office, shall not solicit services or anything of value from anyone that is not within the responsibilities of that employee in conducting the normal course of business or operation of the Police Department.
23. Employees shall not accept awards, gratuities, or any article of value as payment for favors or services rendered in connection with their official duties, except public rewards approved by the appropriate authority and the expenses incurred in the discharge of his/her duties.
24. Employees shall not incur debts that they are unwilling or unable to pay.
25. Employees shall not attempt to gain preferential treatment through the aid of political influence or other improper means.
26. Employees shall not knowingly associate with, or have any dealing with: known criminals, or persons engaged in unlawful activities except in the line of duty.
27. Employees, except in the discharge of official duty, shall not knowingly write, print, distribute, store, or possess any object, writing, film, or picture of an obscene, immoral, or defamatory nature.
28. Employees shall not furnish bail or sign bond for any person arrested other than an immediate family member.
29. Employees shall not recommend or suggest a bondsman or attorney for any person arrested other than an immediate family member.
30. Police vehicles will not be used for conveying property, except when authorized by a supervisor, and then only on police business. No person other than an employee of the department shall be permitted to ride in a police vehicle except when such transportation is in direct connection with police activity, or approved by a supervisor.
31. Employees, while on duty, will remain alert and awake, unencumbered by conflicts arising from off-duty employment.
32. Employees must carry their police identification card and MPOETC certification card with them at all times. In addition, while on duty, employees shall carry a valid

driver's license. Employees shall notify their supervisor of any problems associated with their driver's license.

B.	CONDUCT IN UNIFORM
-----------	---------------------------

1. Employees on duty shall be properly uniformed, neat and clean in their personal appearance. This also applies to off-duty status, if the uniform is worn.
2. Employees are not to wear a mixture of uniform and civilian clothes at any time while on duty.
3. Employees in uniform shall not smoke except in designated places. Employees shall not smoke while conducting official business when such activity would not be in good public taste, i.e., when walking on the street or addressing a citizen. Employees shall not smoke in the Public Safety Building or in any department vehicle.

C.	USE OF EQUIPMENT
-----------	-------------------------

1. Employees shall never brandish a weapon, nor shall they remove their firearm from its holster other than in the proper performance of duty.
2. Employees will inspect, safeguard and properly maintain all department property or equipment entrusted to their care, and will avoid wasteful, careless or hazardous use of such equipment or supplies. Employees will promptly report to their supervisor any loss, damage, destruction or defect of department property or equipment.
3. At the beginning and end of a tour of duty, employees will examine any vehicle assigned to them and report any operational deficiencies, damage or defects to their superiors.
4. Employees will operate department vehicles and other equipment in such a manner as to avoid injury to persons or damage to property. Whenever a police vehicle is involved in a collision or is otherwise damaged, the operator will notify a supervisor immediately. A written report will be submitted by the employee to their supervisor.
5. When an employee terminates employment, all issued equipment will be returned by the day that the termination is effective. Failure to return all township property may result in withholding final pay or, if necessary, taking legal action.

D.	USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS
-----------	---------------------------------

1. Employees, while on duty, will remain alert and awake, unencumbered by alcoholic beverages, prescription drugs or illegal narcotics. Employees shall not drink intoxicants while in uniform or report for a regularly assigned tour of duty with the odor of intoxicants on their breath. This will result in the employee being declared unfit for duty and result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
2. Employees, off duty, shall not use intoxicants to a degree or in such a manner as to discredit the police department.
3. In the event of an emergency recall, each officer must determine their fitness for duty if alcohol has been consumed. A supervisor will be consulted and asked to confirm or deny, as appropriate, the officer's judgment in the matter. No adverse actions will be taken if, in an emergency recall, the officer believes them self to be incapacitated for duty, says so, or is told so by a supervisor, before actually going on duty.
4. Employees shall not carry weapons, when off duty, in a situation that would be deemed socially inappropriate, particularly where the officer consumes alcoholic beverages.
5. Employees shall not have an intoxicant, or any other contraband, in any police building, or in any police equipment, except in the proper performance of police duty.
6. Employees shall not use any Schedule I controlled substances. Schedule II-V controlled substances are only allowed if prescribed by a physician.

Nothing in these standards of conduct or other related regulations limits the responsibilities or obligations of an employee because the alleged act or omission does not specifically appear in this manual, orders of the department, or in the laws or codes for which the department is responsible to enforce.

This page intentionally left blank.