



## **Code of Conduct**

### **.01 Policy**

It is the policy of the Bladensburg Police Department to hold members accountable for strict adherence to a prescribed code of conduct.

### **.02 Terms**

**Lawful Order:** any order in keeping with the performance of duty prescribed by law or department rules and regulations, policies and procedures or for the preservation of good order, efficiency and proper discipline, and does not conflict with department rules and regulations and policy.

**Moral Turpitude:** Turpitude means a corrupt or depraved or degenerate act or practice. Moral turpitude refers generally to conduct that shocks the public conscience.

### **.03 Governing Legislation and Reference**

Governing Legislation: N/A

Forms: N/A

Reference:

General Order 101, Mission, Values, and Vision

General Order 102, Code of Ethics

General Order 103, Oath of Office

### **.04 Procedure**

#### **Job Knowledge, Competency, and Performance**

All members are expected to have knowledge of and comply with all department directives, general orders, special orders, standard operating procedures relevant to their respective duties, and any additional procedures established by authorized individuals. Members are expected to have knowledge of and comply with the policies and procedures contained with the Town of Bladensburg Personnel Policy Manual.

Sworn members shall familiarize themselves with and have working knowledge of all laws of the State of Maryland and Ordinances of the Town of Bladensburg, which they are required to enforce. Sworn members are required to abide by the standards of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and their Oath of Office. Civilian members are

required to abide by the Department's Code of Ethics.

Members shall maintain sufficient mental and physical competency to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibilities of their positions. Members shall perform their duties in a manner that will maintain the highest standards of efficiency in carrying out their duties and the lawful objectives of the department.

#### **Neglect of Duty**

Members shall execute all assigned job duties, tasks and responsibilities in a thorough and complete manner. Members shall take any official action required by federal or state law, by town ordinance, or by any directive of the Chief of Police. Members will be approachable and responsive to all persons in need of assistance.

Members shall promptly submit all reports that are required of their duties or by constituted authority, in accordance with established department directives.

While on duty, members shall not engage in any activities or personal business that would cause them to neglect or be inattentive to their assigned responsibilities. Members shall remain awake, alert and attentive while on duty. If unable to do so, they shall report to their supervisor, who shall determine the proper course of action.

#### **Reporting for Duty**

Members shall report for duty at the time and place required by assignment and be physically and mentally fit to perform their duties. Department sanctioned extra-duty assignments, training sessions, and legally issued subpoenas shall constitute an order to report for duty under this section.

Members shall be properly equipped and aware of all information required to perform their assignment. Members shall remain at their job assignment until relieved by another department member or dismissed by proper authority. Members will be permitted to suspend assigned activities for the purpose of having a meal or authorized break periods during their tour of duty, but are subject to immediate recall.

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Members shall not be absent from duty without proper notification and authorization. Members shall report their absence from duty in accordance with established Department procedures. Members on sick leave may not perform any activity, to include other employment.

### **Compliance with Lawful Orders / Insubordination**

Members shall promptly comply with all lawful orders given to them by a superior officer, to include those relayed to them by another member of the Department. Members authorized to give orders shall ensure that the order is clear, lawful and given in connection with official Department business.

Members who are given an order that conflicts with a department rule, regulation, policy, procedure, general order, directive, or previous order, shall respectfully inform the issuing supervisor of the conflict. If the supervisor does not alter or retract the conflicting order, the order will stand. Under these circumstances, the responsibility for the conflict will be upon the supervisor.

Members shall not obey any order that they know, or should know, would require them to commit an illegal act. If in doubt as to the clarity or legality of the order, the member shall, if feasible, request clarification of the order from either the issuing supervisor or the next level in the chain of command as soon as possible.

### **Required Conduct and Participation in an Investigation**

Members shall fully cooperate and provide truthful and complete information in any administrative investigation to which they are considered a subject or witness. Members shall notify their supervisor of their participation in any investigation conducted by the Department or other agency by their next scheduled tour of duty.

### **Untruthfulness**

Members shall not intentionally make false statements or fail to disclose information in connection with their performance of official duties. This includes when the purpose is to conceal suitability or non-suitability for hire, during any administrative or supervisory investigation involving an internal or external complaint, or to gain improper personal advantage.

Any falsification of, or any intentional failure to disclose, information relevant to suitability or fitness for police employment that is discovered

after a member is hired, may result in their termination.

Members shall be truthful and complete in all official oral and written statements, reports, and other forms of communication in connection with their employment with the Bladensburg Police Department. Exceptions include instances where deception is necessitated by the nature of a member's assignment.

Members shall not feign illness or injury, falsely report themselves ill or injured, or otherwise deceive or attempt to deceive any official of the department or the Town as to the condition of their health.

### **Harassment in the Workplace**

Members shall not engage in any conduct that constitutes racial, ethnic, gender or sexual harassment or abuse of authority as defined in the Department's general orders and procedures, or Town of Bladensburg Personnel Policy.

### **Bias Based Policing**

It is strictly prohibited for members to engage in the practice of bias-based profiling. Sworn members shall not take any police action that is based solely upon personal traits that include, but are not limited to race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age and cultural group.

### **Duty to Report Misconduct**

Members shall promptly report any knowledge of another member's non-compliance with any federal, state or local law, Town of Bladensburg ordinance, Code of Ethics, Department directive, general or special order, policy, or procedure, to their supervisor.

### **Courtesy, Responsiveness, and Impartiality**

Members will exercise reasonable courtesy in all interaction with the public. Members will not use rude, cruel or profane language toward any citizen. Members will remain professional toward all individuals during the performance of their duties and while in the presence of the public.

Members shall not express, whether by act, omission or statement, any prejudice concerning race, creed, gender, disability, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion, economic or marital status, political or cultural group, national origin or other similar personal characteristics.

Members will provide all citizens with professional, effective and efficient police service. Members

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shall not allow their decisions to be influenced by race, creed, gender, disability, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion, economic or marital status, political or cultural group, national origin or other similar personal characteristics.

Members will not permit their personal opinions, associations or friendships to influence their decisions and shall remain impartial in the performance of their duties.

### **Interaction and Cooperation Between Department Personnel**

Members shall interact and fully cooperate with all Department, Town of Bladensburg, and other law enforcement or government agency personnel, in a courteous, respectful and professional manner during the performance of their duties. Members will utilize their chain of command in all official actions or communication when appropriate.

Members shall not initiate or engage in any form of gossip that pertains to other department members. Members shall not make frivolous, reckless, or false complaints against other members of the Department.

Members shall not publicly criticize or ridicule the department's operations, directives, procedures or personnel in a manner that is unlawful, defamatory, obscene, or undermines the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department, interferes with the maintenance of discipline, or is made with reckless disregard for the truth.

### **Unlawful Conduct**

Members shall not steal, duplicate, manufacture, conceal, falsify, destroy, tamper with, convert to personal use, remove or withhold any property, evidence, police record, report or other document obtained or held in connection with an investigation or other official Department business, except by process of law or directed by a supervisor or Chief of Police.

Members shall process all property and evidence obtained or received in accordance with established Department general orders and/or procedures. Members shall not photograph or record any crime scene or police related investigation in any form, for their personal use.

Members shall not initiate, engage or conduct a work stoppage or strike with the intent to induce, influence, or coerce a change in the conditions, compensation, rights, privileges, or obligations of employment.

### **Unbecoming Conduct**

All members are prohibited from engaging in any conduct, on and off duty, that brings the department into disrepute, reflects unfavorably upon the employee as a member of the department, damages or affects the reputation of that employee, or impairs the operation or efficiency of the department or any of its personnel.

Sworn members shall conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in a manner that is in keeping with the highest standards of the law enforcement profession. Sworn members shall not participate in any incident that involves moral turpitude or prevents their ability to perform as law enforcement officers. Sworn members will maintain a level of moral conduct in their personal and business affairs. Sworn members shall not fail to perform their required duties because of fear or cowardice.

### **Use of Force**

Members authorized to use force in the performance of their duties, shall only use that amount of force, which is objectively reasonable to gain compliance from a person, control a situation, effect an arrest or protect themselves or others from harm. Members shall comply with departmental procedures concerning the documentation and investigation of the use of any force.

### **Prohibited Associations**

Members shall avoid personal, financial, or other continuous associations with persons whom they know, or should know, are engaged in criminal activity, under criminal investigation or indictment, registered as a sex offender or gang members, or who have a reputation for present or past involvement in felonious or other criminal behavior, except as necessary in the performance of official duties, or where unavoidable because of personal or family relationships.

Members shall not knowingly associate with any person or organization that advocates the overthrow of the United States government or promotes or fosters the hatred or persecution of a person or protected group.

### **Conflict of Interest and Misuse of Official Position**

Members shall not use their official position, department issued identification cards or badges for personal or financial gain for themselves or another; avoiding consequences of unlawful or

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prohibited actions; or obtaining privileges not otherwise available to them, except in the performance of duty.

Members shall not lend their identification cards or badges to any other person, or permit them to be photographed or reproduced, without the authorization of the Chief of Police.

Members shall not use or allow others to use the Department's uniform, logo or badge for any private purpose, without the authorization of the Chief of Police.

Members shall not knowingly allow their name or photograph to be used to endorse any product or service as representative of the Department without explicit permission of the Chief of Police or designee.

Members shall not endorse, recommend, or suggest the employment or purchase of any specific professional or commercial service or product, while acting in an official capacity.

Members shall not access, obtain, disseminate, or use any confidential or other official department information, for any financial, personal or private gain or interest for themselves or another.

### **Gratuities**

Members shall not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, gratuity, loan, service, currency or fee, either for themselves or others, where there is a direct or indirect connection between the solicitation or acceptance and the expectation of services of an official nature performed by the member from their employment or association with the Department, unless authorized by the Chief of Police.

### **Political Activity**

Members shall not use their official position, authority, employment or association with the Department to influence, interfere with, or affect the outcome of an election or other political activity.

Members shall not engage in political activity of any nature while on duty, while in uniform, or while off-duty and acting in any capacity as a representative or agent of the Department or Town of Bladensburg. Exception is the member's right to vote.

Members shall not use any property, equipment, symbols, other information associated with the Department or the Town of Bladensburg in any manner that would imply endorsement or support with a political candidate or partisan objective.

### **Interference in Investigations**

Members shall not attempt to directly or indirectly secure the abandonment or withdrawal of any complaint, charge, or allegation by any means to include, threat, appeal, persuasion, payment of money or other consideration.

Members shall not conduct or intervene in any investigation or other official action outside the scope of their assignment or assigned to another member, without authorization from a superior officer, unless the exigencies of the circumstances require immediate police action.

Members shall not intentionally become involved in disputes or interfere with investigations that involve their neighbors, friends, associates, or relatives.

Sworn members shall not make an arrest or take other official action in personal matters or in which any family member is involved, except where such action is necessary due to the immediate threat of serious bodily harm or significant property damage. This does not alleviate a member's obligation to report knowledge of a crime to the appropriate authorities.

### **Participation in Civil Matters**

Members shall not provide any statement or testimony that pertains to a civil action unless under lawful subpoena, or when directed by a superior officer under the advisement of the Town Attorney.

Members under lawful subpoena or otherwise directed by a superior officer shall notify the Chief of Police prior to providing any statement or testimony in a civil action related to the member's official duties or employment with the Department or where the Department or the Town has an interest in the matter.

### **Department Weapons**

Members authorized to carry and use weapons in the performance of their duties, shall do so in accordance with established laws and department procedures. Sworn members shall not use, carry or handle any firearm in a careless or imprudent manner so as to cause an unintentional discharge.

Non-sworn members shall not use or be in possession of a firearm while on-duty.

### **Tobacco, Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs**

Members shall strictly adhere to the Drug-Free Workplace policies listed in the Town of Bladensburg Personnel Policy and Department

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General Orders, which pertain to the use of alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, and prescription medications.

Members shall comply with laws and ordinances that govern the use of any tobacco or tobacco products. Members shall not use tobacco or tobacco products while in direct contact with the public, in public view, or in a public building or a building open to the public in general. Members shall not leave their assignment or post for the sole purpose of using tobacco.

Members shall not report for duty, or be on-duty, while under the influence of intoxicants to any degree, or with an odor of an alcoholic beverage on their breath. Members shall not possess or consume intoxicants, while on-duty, except when authorized in the performance of official duties, and then, never to the extent that the member's ability to perform an official assignment or function is impaired.

Members, while off duty, will refrain from consuming intoxicating beverages to the extent that it results in impairment, intoxication, obnoxious or offensive behavior which discredits them or the department, or renders the member unfit to report to their next scheduled shift.

Members shall not purchase intoxicants, either on-duty or off-duty, while in uniform or attire that clearly identifies the member as an employee of the Department. Except in the performance of duty, members in uniform will not enter any establishment or place where the principle business is the sale of intoxicants.

Members shall not bring or store alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, narcotic or hallucinogens in any department facility or vehicle, except those that are lawfully prescribed, held as evidence, used for training or otherwise authorized by a supervisor.

### Personal Appearance

Members shall comply with Department directives that pertain to uniforms, attire, grooming and personal appearance. Members shall maintain a neat, clean, well-groomed, professional appearance while on duty or off-duty and acting in an official capacity, unless dictated by job assignment or authorized by the Chief of Police.

### Release of Information/ Confidential Records

Members shall consider the operations and official business of the Department to be confidential. Any information that is accessible only to a member as a result of their employment with the

Department shall be considered confidential, unless otherwise defined. Members shall only release confidential or other official information to any person authorized to receive it in accordance with applicable laws and Department General Orders.

Members may not release, or cause to be released, any documents of the Bladensburg Police Department for use in any hearing or court, unless a judicial subpoena or court order has been issued, or the release has been approved by the State Attorney, the Town Attorney, or the Chief of Police.

### Personnel Contact and Identification Information

Members shall maintain an operable cellular or residential phone. Members shall not electronically block the Department's ability to contact them in this manner.

Members shall provide their current phone number, residential address and emergency contact information to the Department for emergency notification or call-out purposes. Members shall report any changes to the referenced information to their supervisor within 48 hours after the change occurs.

Members shall not disclose another department member's personal contact or identification information to persons not employed with the Department, unless directed by the Chief of Police or designee, or the member whose information is being requested.

Members shall not disclose the identity of any department member engaged in authorized covert operations.

### Official Representation and Media Relations

Members shall not address media personnel or release official information relating to Department business without authorization of the Chief of Police or designee. Members will comply with established department procedures and General Orders that relate to media relations. Release of information to media personnel shall be done in compliance with State Law and the department's General Orders.

Members shall not present themselves as the official representative of the Department, without authorization from the Chief of Police. Department letterhead may not be used for personal or private correspondence.

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Members on-duty or off-duty and acting in an official capacity, shall provide their name, rank, duty assignment and their official photo identification card in a courteous manner upon request by any person, unless assigned to covert duties or when otherwise authorized by the Chief of Police or designee.

### Department Equipment and Vehicle Operation

Members shall not abuse, damage, or lose through negligence or intent, any property, or equipment owned or leased by the Town of Bladensburg. Members shall properly maintain all property, equipment and vehicles, owned or leased by the Town of Bladensburg.

Members shall not operate vehicles owned or leased by the department or Town of Bladensburg in an unlawful, careless, or negligent manner, to include actions that contribute to the breakdown of a vehicle, any property damage, or which are found to have been the cause of a preventable

accident.

Members shall immediately report to a supervisor, any damage, loss or theft of assigned property, equipment or vehicles, owned or leased by the Department or Town of Bladensburg.

Members shall use all equipment, property, and vehicles, owned or leased by the Department or Town of Bladensburg, only for their intended purpose and in accordance with established departmental procedures.

Members shall not allow unauthorized persons to possess or use any property, equipment or vehicles owned or leased by the department or Town of Bladensburg.

All employees authorized to operate a vehicle owned or leased by the Town of Bladensburg shall maintain a valid Driver's License and shall promptly report the loss or suspension of their driver's license to their immediate supervisor.

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HISTORY: Adopted January 1, 2014

This General Order supersedes all other orders and memoranda in conflict therewith.

Authority:



Charles L. Owens  
Chief of Police