

Bowie Police Department - General Orders



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AUTHORITY Chief John K. Nesky	ACCREDITATIONS STANDARDS CALEA STANDARDS: 1.1.3-a-b-c, 1.3.1, 12.2.1-a, 61.1.8	TOTAL PAGES 4
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I. INTRODUCTION

The Bowie Police Department is a law enforcement organization within Prince Georges County, Maryland, whose role is to protect residents of the city, its visitors, and their property. The department’s responsibility is to provide assistance to the public, and to gain their cooperation with established rules, regulations, and laws.

The term law enforcement is difficult to define because it encompasses many perceptions as to the services provided or expected, both by the law enforcement community and the public-at-large.

This perplexing problem of definition has been generated by the changing police role which has developed over the years because of society’s uncertain demands. In view of the responsibilities of the department in Bowie, it is essential that each employee understand those policies related to the mission of the Bowie Police Department.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Bowie Police Department is:

To enhance the quality of life in the City of Bowie by developing partnerships with the community and other stakeholders in a manner that promotes problem solving and preserves a safe environment through professional law enforcement that respects human dignity.

III. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENTS

Policies are a means by which management sets forth guidelines for its employees to follow towards achieving the mission of the Department. The scope of the policy is left to those employees who interpret the policy: to exercise discretion, to use initiative, and to develop judgment as to which steps are to be instituted in a specific situation. The following general policy statements regarding organization, management, professionalism, law enforcement, use of force, and personnel, are provided

to assist employees in performing our mission. (CALEA 12.2.1-a)

A. Organization

The organizational structure of the department has a direct and profound influence on the accomplishment of our mission. Administrative and staff support functions are spread among various officers; the operational function is the responsibility of each patrol officer.

Such decentralization of functions requires sound organizational control and a utilization of effective management principles. Lines of authority and chain of command, the essential principles for an operative organizational structure, are critical for the success of this police organization. Each officer has the responsibility to adhere to the principles of the organization.

B. Management

Considering the organizational goals and mission, each officer is responsible for adhering to and utilizing department guidelines, directives, and policies as carefully and as efficiently as possible.

Command personnel are responsible for the performance of all officers under their command. Although authority and function may be delegated to subordinates, command personnel may not delegate their own responsibility. They are answerable and accountable for failures or inadequacies of subordinates. Command personnel are responsible for motivating their subordinates to operate in compliance with department policies and procedures at optimum efficiency and effectiveness.

The Sergeant directs the work of his subordinates. Success is measured by the performance of his subordinates rather than his personal production. The Sergeant is a leader, evaluator, and instructor of his subordinates. He must inform the Chief of the accomplishments, shortcomings, and productivity of his subordinates. The Sergeant must be concerned for the welfare of his/her subordinates and be responsible for supporting them in their proper actions. This support does not include protection from the consequences of misconduct.

When a mistake is made, it should not be concealed or denied. It should be corrected, an effort made to discover its cause, and steps taken to prevent its recurrence.

The Sergeant is a part of management, and is therefore expected to act on behalf of management. He is to inform the Chief on matters which concern him and his subordinates as well as to inform his subordinates of Department policies and the reasons for these policies. He controls rumors by informing his subordinates of the facts.

C. Law Enforcement

A crime is an act of commission or omission prohibited and punished by law. Whenever an officer believes a crime has been committed or is about to be committed, it is his responsibility and obligation to prevent, suppress, investigate, or solve the crime. The primary purpose of enforcing the law is to protect the right of the citizen to be secure in person and property from criminal attack.

Every citizen of the United States is entitled to certain basic constitutional rights which are not to be violated. Officers must respect the rights of others and avoid provocative speech or gestures. Once an arrest has taken place, it is the obligation of the arresting officer to ensure that post-arrest procedures and prosecutorial steps are followed in accordance with existing law and constitutional safeguards. These include but are not limited to constitutional safeguards relating to interview, interrogation, and right to counsel. To fail in this effort is a violation of law and of the principles of the law enforcement profession.

Active patrol by uniformed officers in marked cruisers is one of the most useful available resources the department has to prevent crime. Each officer has the responsibility to prevent crimes which are preventable by police action. It is the patrol officer's responsibility to conduct the preliminary investigation of a crime, affect an immediate arrest if possible, and obtain all available information which will assist in the detection and apprehension of the offender.

In view of limited resources, the inherent ambiguity of some laws, and the alternatives to accomplish the intent of the law, it is essential that the police exercise discretion in the enforcement of the law. It is preferable to prevent a crime, accident, or incident than to deal with its consequences.

To be effective in decreasing the number of crimes, law enforcement officers must be selective as to time, place, and relative importance of the crime. They must direct their efforts towards those crimes which are most easily prevented by patrol. For minor offenses, an officer must use discretion in determining whether an arrest or a warning best fulfills the police objective.

The department must act quickly and decisively with regard to major crimes and serious law enforcement problems. A delay in effecting an arrest or taking decisive action is warranted only in the absence of sufficient manpower, or when delay is advisable in order to accomplish the law enforcement mission.

The primary objectives of traffic law enforcement are to save lives, to prevent accidents, and to expedite the flow of traffic. Attention should be directed towards the enforcement of those laws which when violated cause the greatest number of accidents, particularly at those times and places where most traffic violations occur. For minor violations, an officer may warn a violator if in the officer's opinion the warning would be as effective as a citation. (CALEA 61.1.8)

D. Use of Force

The basic difference between the use of force and brutality is the application of the term "reasonable." Unreasonable force is brutality, which is not condoned. Use of force authorized by law is not brutality. Officers will only use physical force after attempts at persuasion, warning, or advice have failed. The force used will be the minimum amount necessary to produce the desired results.

E. Professionalism

A professional police officer maintains the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and conduct. He knows the limits of his authority and does not resort to illegal means to accomplish his duties. He is obligated to be knowledgeable of the law and of his responsibility in enforcing it. The standards of conduct expected of police officers are greater than that expected of the public.

Officers should avoid questionable behavior. Succumbing to the numerous temptations to which an officer is subjected is a sign of weakness.

In his private life, a professional police officer should exemplify the traits of stability, fidelity, and morality. In his profession, the officer should conduct himself in a manner which instills respect for the law and the police service, and inspires confidence and trust. He does not allow himself to be personally offended or become emotionally involved in any controversy. He does not accept gifts, favors, or gratuities which may be interpreted by the public as influencing his judgment or the performance of his duty.

Nothing does more to enhance the image of the police officer and the police department to elicit public cooperation than to be courteous and helpful. Officers must refrain from lecturing, scolding, humiliating, or inconveniencing the unintentional offender for minor violations; instead, they should be understanding. Professional behavior on the part of the officers should minimize conflict between officers and violators.

F. Personnel

Each officer plays an important role in the police department; therefore, it is incumbent upon the department to recruit the best qualified individual available. The department has a responsibility to the officer to develop a personnel program which meets the needs of its officers with regards to employment guidance, benefits, and proper placement.

Training is a continual process. The purpose is to improve the officer's performance, which in turn makes the department more effective. The Chief, Command Staff and Sergeants share the responsibility for training their subordinates. In addition, it is department policy to encourage officers to pursue educational goals which will improve their job ability.

Discipline and punishment are not synonymous. A department whose officers voluntarily abide by all the rules, regulations, and orders is a well-disciplined department; however, violations require punishment. In determining disciplinary action, all circumstances will be considered.

Complaints against officers will be investigated thoroughly and objectively. Through this investigation, the rights of both officers and citizens will be protected. The contents of these investigative reports must be kept confidential.

A systematic review ensures that adopted policies and procedures are properly implemented. This review provides a method by which management identifies organizational problems.

IV. CONCLUSION

The police department has made a positive and distinctive impact on law enforcement and public safety in the City of Bowie. With dedication to our mission and adherence to established policies, each officer will contribute to the continued success of the Bowie Police Department.