



GENERAL ORDER ADM-12 CODE OF CONDUCT

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 31, 2018

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. THE DEPARTMENT MOTTO
- III. THE MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT
- IV. VALUES STATEMENT
- V. FOUNDATION FOR INTERNAL DISCIPLINE
- VI. FUNDAMENTAL EXPECTATIONS
- VII. RULES OF CONDUCT
- VIII. EXPECTATIONS OF SUPERVISORS AND COMMANDERS
- IX. ETHICS
- X. CANCELLATIONS

I. POLICY¹

The Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) shall strive to ensure that all members maintain the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and professional conduct while carrying out their duties and in their relationships with citizens and co-workers. This Code of Conduct applies to all sworn, civilian, and volunteer members, on- and off-duty.

II. THE DEPARTMENT MOTTO

The motto of the Howard County Department of Police, "Pro Bono Publico" ("For the Good of the Public"), is an affirmation that the Department exists solely for the common good of the Howard County community.

III. THE MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT²

It is the mission of the Howard County Police Department to provide a sense of safety and security for everyone by protecting life and property, reducing the opportunity for crime and disorder, enforcing criminal and traffic laws, assisting victims, and promoting positive community engagement and effective partnerships.

IV. VALUES STATEMENT³

The HCPD is dedicated to the core values of "Integrity, Pride, and Community".

A. Integrity

- 1. The Department can only succeed in its mission if its personnel maintain their integrity.
- 2. Our authority comes from the trust citizens bestow on us to protect their life, freedom, and property. Should this trust be broken by an individual or by the Department, our actions are rightfully called into question.
- 3. The Department and its members must hold themselves to a standard that is beyond reproach.

B. Pride

¹ CALEA 26.1.1

² CALEA 12.2.1a

³ CALEA 12.2.1a

1. The Department is a proud institution and works to develop this pride in its sworn, civilian, and volunteer personnel. We are proud of the highly motivated, highly trained, and highly respected personnel who are the Department.
2. We are proud of our rich tradition of providing quality police services to the residents and visitors of Howard County.
3. We are proud to be part of a noble profession that is called upon to maintain order in a free society.
4. We are proud of the partnerships we have with the people we serve.

C. Community

1. The cornerstone of this Department is our relationship with the community we serve. Our ability to be effective in carrying out our mission is based on the credibility we have with the community.
2. Understanding that we are a part of and not separate from the community is critical. Although we are granted the responsibility for policing the community, we cannot do it without the approval and cooperation of the public.
3. The Department strives to enhance this relationship by:
 - a. Ensuring that each police contact is carried out fairly and with respect;
 - b. Seeking input from the public on our programs, procedures, and priorities; and
 - c. Being active in community programs and charities.

V. **FOUNDATION FOR INTERNAL DISCIPLINE**

- A. Self-discipline encompasses character; competence; obedience to orders and the initiation of action in the absence of orders; and orderly and efficient interaction with others towards the accomplishment of a common objective. Individual accomplishment and group performance is contingent, in part, upon self-discipline. Self-discipline is an integral component of the successful response to crisis situations. The Department expects such self-discipline from all personnel.
- B. The goal of internal discipline is to provide order and personal accountability for an individual's action. The administration of internal discipline is based on a formal, written foundation.
- C. To this end, the Chief of Police establishes policies, procedures, and orders. All personnel must understand these directives if they are to conform to them. Directives will be written clearly and concisely and distributed to those who must adhere to them.⁴

VI. **FUNDAMENTAL EXPECTATIONS**

There are certain fundamental expectations of members of the Department. These expectations include:

A. Selflessness and Dedication

1. The giving of one's self to the community has been the foundation of law enforcement for generations. Selflessness exists in the dedication, actions, and demeanor of HCPD members in servicing those in need and in devoting themselves to the agency's mission.

⁴ CALEA 12.2.1g
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2. Selflessness should not create within any member an attitude that family and individual development are secondary to professional service. Such an attitude is detrimental to the member, the Department, and the community. The Department expects all members to maintain a reasonable balance between dedication to the agency's mission and their personal and family life.

B. Loyalty

1. The Department recognizes that there are many kinds of loyalty in the law enforcement profession. Throughout their careers, members are faced with difficult decisions that test these loyalties. The Department expects each member to be loyal to the principles of the law enforcement profession, the mission of the Department, and the Oath of Office.
2. Prior to assuming a sworn status, officers shall take and subsequently abide by the Oath of Office.⁵

C. Attention to Duty

1. A member's professional responsibility is fulfilled by faithfully and diligently performing their assigned tasks and meeting all the expectations of their job description. Anything less violates the trust placed in all members by the community and qualifies as unprofessional conduct.
2. Members are expected to perform assigned tasks throughout their full tour of duty.

D. The Proper Use of Discretion⁶

1. The proper use of discretion is an important part of responsible law enforcement. Each member of the HCPD is responsible for the appropriate use of that discretion after carefully considering the guidance given by the written policies, rules, and regulations of the agency, and the applicable laws that we are sworn to uphold.
2. The appropriate use of discretion must be based on the facts known to the member at the time of the incident; the member's knowledge of the circumstances of the situation; his training and experience; and what is in the best interests of the Department, the community, and the parties involved.
3. Members are advised, as time and conditions permit, to consider supervisory consultation regarding the use of discretion at times when such actions would be furthering the interests of all concerned.

E. Demeanor and Bearing

1. The actions, appearance, and attitude presented by members determine, to a large degree, the respect bestowed on the Department and the profession.
2. All members will present themselves in a professional manner designed to promote and maintain public respect.

F. Information Management⁷

⁵ CALEA 1.1.1

⁶ CALEA 1.2.7

⁷ CALEA 12.1.4

1. Successful communication is the responsibility of all members and is the foundation of a cooperative, efficient work environment and effective decision making. Regardless of rank or position, all members have a right to timely, complete, and honest communication.
2. The Department requires supervisors to make every effort to provide information to members on matters of relevance to them. The Department requires that all members seek out the information that is needed to resolve concerns or improve their work environment and performance, the accomplishment of Departmental goals, or their interaction with others.
3. Members shall treat the official business of the Department as confidential. Information obtained in an official capacity shall only be disseminated to those who have an official need to know. When authorized access is not available, members shall not misuse their authority to obtain information.
4. All laws and policies pertaining to release of information shall be adhered to as outlined in General Order ADM-14, Media Relations and Public Affairs.

VII. RULES OF CONDUCT⁸

A. Conformance to Policy

1. Members shall not knowingly commit any act or fail to perform any act that constitutes a violation of any Departmental policy without good cause or exigent circumstances.
2. All members shall cooperate fully with any internal or criminal investigation consistent with the law, the County Employee Manual, and the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights.

B. Conformance to Laws

1. Members shall obey all local, state, and federal laws, and the laws of any foreign country which they visit.
2. Any member who is charged with a substance-related civil or criminal violation, whether by arrest or other charging document, or a significant motor vehicle violation as described in Section 26-202 of the Maryland Transportation Article, shall notify his supervisor as soon as practical, but not to exceed 24 hours.
3. Any member who becomes the subject of a criminal investigation shall notify his supervisor as soon as practical, but not to exceed 24 hours. If the first notification is verbal, the member shall provide written notification as soon as possible.
4. A misdemeanor or felony conviction, guilty plea, or finding of guilt shall be prima facie evidence of violation of this section, except when an officer is convicted by a court for proper performance of his duties while being exonerated by Departmental investigation. Departmental action shall not be contingent upon placement of criminal charges or a conviction.
5. Members shall immediately report to their supervisor the suspension, revocation, cancellation, refusal, or expiration of their driver's license.

⁸ CALEA 26.1.1
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6. Members with personal knowledge of a member who violates local, state, federal, or another country's laws or statutes shall notify their supervisor immediately.

C. Conduct with Departmental Members

1. Members of the Department shall treat each other with the respect and courtesy due every individual in a professional work atmosphere. No member shall address another in profane, threatening, or abusive language.
2. When conducting official business in public, members shall be referred to by the appropriate rank or title (i.e. Mr., Mrs., etc.).
3. Members shall not be referred to in conversation in any type of derogatory manner.
4. Members shall not maliciously threaten, verbally or physically assault, or sexually harass any member of the Department.
5. Members who aid, abet, or incite any altercation between other members shall be held responsible along with those involved.
6. Members shall promptly respond to the aid of any officer or Departmental member who, while carrying out official duties, need assistance.

D. Conduct Unbecoming/Rudeness

1. As the most visible representatives of Howard County government, all members must display unblemished professional conduct. They are duty bound to avoid behavior that would reflect poorly on themselves, the Department, or the County government, regardless of rank or duty status.
2. Members shall be courteous, discreet, maintain proper decorum and temper, and refrain from using harsh, violent, insolent, profane, or derogatory language or gestures, unless it is deemed essential to a specific assignment.
3. All members shall be courteous and respectful in dealing with the public.

E. Public Statements and Personal Social Media Use

1. Government employees have the right to speak as private citizens on matters of public concern. Outside of this protected area, members may be disciplined for public statements and social media posts that interfere with the ability of the Department to carry out its mission; undermine the integrity of the Department or a member of the Department; impair the public trust in the Department; undermine morale; or impact discipline. Members may also be disciplined for public statements or social media posts that would otherwise constitute a violation of the Code of Conduct, such as insubordination or conduct unbecoming.
2. Except when part of official Department-assigned duties, members shall not disclose publicly or post on social media information or pictures obtained from an incident scene, official departmental record, or information made confidential by law.
3. When maintaining personal social media accounts, members should be cautious when identifying themselves as members of the Department, including appearing in uniform or displaying a Department badge, insignia, vehicle, or equipment.

4. Members may, without prior approval from a Deputy Chief or the Chief of Police, address public gatherings; appear on radio, television, or the internet; or publish articles as long as they do not present themselves as representing the Department in such matters, consistent with General Order ADM-14, Media Relations and Public Affairs.

F. Use of Computers and Electronic Devices

1. Members are prohibited from accessing and/or viewing offensive or inappropriate material, including but not limited to pornography, on any county-issued device, or on any device, including a personal device, while on duty, unless the accessing and/or viewing of such material is part of a legitimate law enforcement investigation or other departmental assignment.
2. Members are reminded that the personal use of county-provided electronic devices is governed by the County communications policy and General Order ADM-40, Computer Operations.

G. Discrimination and Harassment

1. HCPD is committed to maintaining an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Members shall neither discriminate against nor harass any citizen or co-worker for any reason, including race, age, national origin, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, as prohibited by County, State, and Federal law.⁹
 - a. Harassment, whether verbal, non-verbal, visual, physical, or sexual, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
 - b. Such harassment may include but not be limited to unwanted sexual advances or propositions; demands for sexual favors; unwelcome jokes; kidding or teasing; unwelcome epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; unwelcome vulgar, offensive, or obscene language; types of whistling; and unwelcome communications, including but not limited to telephone calls, text messages, voicemails, or emails of a vulgar, offensive, or obscene nature.
 - c. Any member who experiences or witnesses discrimination or harassment of any type by another member should submit a completed complaint form directly to the Internal Affairs Division in accordance with General Order ADM-02, Internal Investigations. Members are strongly encouraged to report the discrimination or harassment to their supervisor or their chain of command.
2. Consistent with the provisions of General Order ADM-28, Recruitment and Fair Employment Practices, the Department will direct its employment and personnel practices toward ensuring true equal opportunity for all persons. The Department's actions in all matters relating to recruitment, hiring, training, benefits, tuition grants, compensation, promotion, transfer, and all treatment on the job will be free of discriminatory practices.
3. No member shall display suggestive, graphic, or derogatory objects, pictures, materials, graffiti, symbols, or commentaries in the workplace, including in emails and during the use of a computer.

⁹ CALEA 26.1.3
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4. Members shall neither take nor contribute to any retaliation against any individual or group of individuals who have reported harassment or discrimination, opposed discriminatory practices, or participated or assisted in an investigation or proceeding brought under Department policy or County, State, or Federal law.

H. Truthfulness

1. The Department and its members must hold themselves to a standard that is beyond reproach.
2. Members are prohibited from intentionally making any verbal or written false statement or omitting any information unless it is in conjunction with an allowable police practice or as legally permissible in the course of one's duties.
3. Members shall not knowingly enter or cause to be entered any inaccurate, false, or improper information.
4. Members shall not knowingly withhold information relevant to an incident, investigation, or situation. Members shall not omit any information that is pertinent to the subject of any official document, computer data, or recording device.

I. Insubordination

1. Members shall obey any lawful order given by a superior or other person designated to be in command.
2. If a member is given an order that conflicts with an existing order that the member is obeying, the member shall notify the superior giving the order of the conflict per General Order ADM-17, Organizational Direction and Structure. If the conflicting order is repeated, it will stand.¹⁰

J. Performance on Duty

1. On-duty members shall not engage in activities or personal business that causes them to neglect or be inattentive to their official duties, obedience to orders, or initiation of action in the absence of orders.
2. Members shall not leave their duty assignment without the approval of their supervisor. This does not preclude officers from leaving their beat to respond to emergency calls or provide backup if none is available when necessary. The Communications Division shall be notified as soon as practical when an officer leaves his assignment.
3. Members shall remain alert while on duty. Sleeping is prohibited. If a member is unable to remain alert, he shall report that information to his immediate supervisor who shall take appropriate action.

K. Relationships

1. Personal relationships between members shall not interfere with the performance of their duties and a professional attitude shall be maintained.
2. Supervisors and Commanders shall not have direct supervision of a relative or spouse, or with any member with whom they are intimately involved.

¹⁰ CALEA 12.1.3
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3. Supervisors and Commanders are prohibited from having a romantic relationship with a subordinate in their direct line chain of command. The Supervisor or Commander has the responsibility to make the relationship known to his Commander or the Chief of Police to determine if a reassignment is required. The final reassignment decision shall rest with the Chief of Police.
4. The prohibition of a romantic relationship extends to members fully or partially responsible for the evaluation of the performance or oversight of a probationary member. For Education and Training staff this includes all probationary members. For Field Training Officers, this includes the duration of a probationary member's field training assignment.

L. Punctuality and Court Appearances

1. Members shall report for duty at the time and place required by assignment or orders.
2. Court subpoenas, writs, and other subpoenas resulting from official actions constitute an order to report for duty under this section.
3. All scheduled training functions, overtime assignments, and approved uniformed off-duty security details are to be considered a duty assignment and are therefore subject to the rules of this section.
4. Members shall not leave prior to the scheduled end of an assignment without proper approval.

M. Community Relations

1. Positive interaction between the community and the police is essential to the accomplishment of the Department's mission.
2. It is the responsibility of all members to strive continually to establish and maintain a climate in which they may perform their duties with the acceptance, understanding, and approval of the public. Support of the community for the Department's mission is essential and necessary for all members to maintain and promote.
3. Through both formal programs and the daily actions of all members, the Department will strive to achieve the willing participation of the public in obeying and enforcing the law and in preventing crime and disorder.
4. Any report, complaint, or request for assistance shall be handled courteously, professionally, and in accordance with Departmental procedures.

N. Performance Level

1. Upon completion of approved training, members shall remain competent to perform their duties and to assume the responsibilities of their assignments, and shall perform their duties in accordance with Departmental standards.
2. Lack of knowledge, unwillingness or inability to perform assigned tasks, and failure to conform to established requirements for the position, rank, or grade, or failure to take appropriate action as required, constitute unsatisfactory performance.

O. Injury or Illness Report

1. Members shall not feign illness or injury or falsely report an illness or injury or otherwise attempt to deceive the Department about their health.
2. All members shall immediately report to their supervisor, in writing, any health condition or the consumption of any prescription or non-prescription medication that might adversely affect their ability to perform their duties.
3. Members will not be required to disclose confidential health information that is not material or relevant to the essential job functions of the member's position or other legitimate interests of the Department.

P. Labor Activity

1. A good relationship between labor and management is vital to a productive organization. All members will strive to maintain a positive relationship between labor and management to promote the success of the Department's mission.
2. Members have the right to join labor organizations.
3. Members may not engage in any strike or work stoppage. This includes the concerted failure to report for duty; willful absence from one's position; unauthorized leave; sickness that is unsubstantiated by a physician's note when required; the stoppage of work; or the abstinence, in whole or in part, from the full, faithful, and proper performance of the duties of employment. The Department will seek the removal of any member who plans or engages in any strike, work stoppage, or slow down.

Q. Abuse of Position

1. Police personnel are entrusted with an unusual amount of authority over the lives of others and an extraordinary degree of discretion in the performance of their duties. Abuse of authority and position by members is not permitted. It is a violation of community trust and impacts the effectiveness of the Department and its members.
2. Members shall not use their official position, Departmental identification cards, badges, Departmental uniforms or insignia, or equipment for personal or financial gain, or to obtain privileges not otherwise available to them or for the benefit of others.
3. Members shall not lend their identification cards or badges to anyone, nor shall they allow them to be reproduced.
4. Members may not authorize the use of their names, photographs, or official titles that identify them as Departmental personnel for testimonials or advertisements without the prior approval of the Chief of Police.
5. Members shall not attempt to influence other Departmental personnel for their benefit or that of any other person, to secure a promotion, or to avoid penalties for improper actions.

R. Intervention in Cases: Members shall not interfere with or access cases being handled by other members of the Department or any other government agency unless:

1. Ordered to intervene by a supervisor;

2. The intervening individual believes beyond a reasonable doubt that an injustice would result from failure to take immediate action; or
3. Such intervention is required because of supervisory or command responsibilities.

S. Gratuities

1. No compensation, reward, gift, or other consideration shall be solicited or accepted by any member without special permission of the Chief of Police.
2. This includes, but is not limited to money, tangible or intangible property, food, beverage, loan or promise of loan, or any service.
3. This does not include fundraising activities that have been approved by the Chief of Police, such as BearTrax or The Special Olympics, or bona fide activities of any union members when not officially representing the Department. This does not preclude accepting unsolicited items that are given to or generally available to the public or through union and county programs.

T. Associations

1. Members shall not associate with, consort with, or be seen in the presence of persons who they know or should know have been convicted of a felony crime, are under criminal investigation or indictment, or have a reputation in the Department or the community for criminal behavior.
2. This does not include contact in an official capacity or when unavoidable because of family relationships.

U. Visiting Prohibited Establishments: Members shall not, except in the performance of specific duties, visit, enter, or frequent a house of prostitution, illegal gambling house, or any establishment where local, state, or federal laws are violated.

V. Command Notification

1. It is the duty of all members to ensure that appropriate notification is made in the event an incident or situation occurs that either creates or has the potential of creating a heightened community interest or poses potential liability to the HCPD or the County.¹¹
2. Once such a situation is recognized, members shall make immediate notification to their direct supervisor who shall ensure the timely notification to the Chief of Police or his designee, via the Chain of Command.¹²
 - a. Such incidents may include but are not limited to an act by a member that causes an increased likeliness of death or serious physical injury to another; significant damage to property; a significant hate-bias incident; homicide; a significant school-based incident; or any notable, large deployment of HCPD resources.
 - b. As appropriate, additional guidelines and procedures are provided in applicable HCPD directives.

W. Identification

1. Members not in uniform shall display their identification card while on duty.

¹¹ CALEA 11.4.5

¹² CALEA 11.4.5

2. Sworn members shall carry their badges and identification cards on their person whenever they are armed.
3. When on duty or acting in an official capacity, members shall give their name, identification number, or display their photo identification to anyone who requests it.¹³ This does not include members in covert assignments or those in assignments that could be jeopardized by divulging such information.

X. Contact Information

1. Members shall provide their most up-to-date contact information to the Department, including a phone number where the member can be immediately reached.
2. Any change of address or phone number shall be reported to the Employment Services Division as soon as practical, but no later than two (2) weeks after the change has occurred.
3. This information will be treated as confidential and shall not be released outside the Department.

Y. Alcoholic Beverages

1. No member shall purchase, consume, be under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, or have the odor of an alcoholic beverage on his breath while on duty.
2. Off-duty members shall not purchase or consume alcoholic beverages while in uniform or while wearing any item that identifies them as a member of the Department.
3. No alcoholic beverages other than properly stored evidence or recovered property will be kept in any Departmental facility or vehicle. This does not include bona fide training assignments; Vice & Narcotics props involving alcohol, which may remain in Department vehicles; or Departmentally-sanctioned events in which transport is authorized.

Z. Use of Tobacco

1. Any member who can be identified as a member of the HCPD shall not use any form of tobacco, e-cigarette, or vaping devices if they are in formation, on a crime scene, or on an active investigation; when in the view of or interacting with the public; or while engaged in traffic control.
2. Members shall obey the County regulations that prohibit smoking in County buildings, County vehicles, and in certain public places.
3. Members are prohibited from using tobacco products, including chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, or vaping devices, in any County- owned building or vehicle.

AA. Hand Salutes

1. When in uniform, sworn members shall render a hand salute:
 - a. To all uniformed commissioned officers when encountered outdoors, regardless of the wearing of hats. All such salutes are to be returned appropriately.

¹³ CALEA 22.2.7a
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- b. When in a formation and ordered to do so by the officer in charge of the formation
 - c. When the hearse bearing the body of a police officer passes in cortege.
2. Salutes are not rendered indoors unless hats are worn as part of a ceremony. Salutes shall be rendered on the passing of the colors and on the playing/singing of the National Anthem.
3. When indoors without a hat, members are to stand at attention and place their right hand over their heart on the presentation of the colors and the playing or singing of the National Anthem or recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, unless otherwise specified by the Detail Commander.

VIII. EXPECTATIONS OF SUPERVISORS AND COMMANDERS¹⁴

- A. Not every situation can be addressed in writing. The absence of written direction and guidance is not an excuse for inaction. Supervisors and Commanders must be able to address situations for which no written direction has been prepared by applying policies, procedures, and training that are relevant to the issue at hand.
- B. Accomplishment of the Department's mission is paramount, but an integral part of command responsibility is safeguarding and providing for the welfare of Departmental members.
- C. Supervisors and Commanders are expected to demonstrate model behavior that exemplifies the performance expectations of all members.
- D. The primary responsibility of command is leadership. All who are charged with command, from an acting supervisor through the Chief of Police, are entrusted with continuously and consistently leading members and effectively managing resources.
- E. Supervisors and Commanders are responsible and accountable for the performance of all subordinate members under their command or observation.¹⁵ Supervisors and Commanders who become aware of a deficiency are required to take appropriate action and make appropriate notification should the subordinate be outside of their routine Chain of Command.
- F. Supervisors and Commanders shall be expected to consistently demonstrate initiative, effective and timely decision-making, and the ability to correctly interpret and reinforce written directives and applicable training.
- G. Supervisors and Commanders shall alert the Chief of Police if they identify reoccurring issues or situations that are not adequately covered by a written directive or training.
- H. Supervisors and Commanders shall expect to face heightened scrutiny and consequences for lapses in compliance with policy, training, or meeting performance expectations, or their failure to hold subordinates accountable for the same.¹⁶

IX. ETHICS¹⁷

- A. Members of the HCPD shall adhere to the Howard County Public Ethics Law, Howard County Code 22.200.

¹⁴ CALEA 11.3.1

¹⁵ CALEA 11.3.2

¹⁶ CALEA 11.3.1b

¹⁷ CALEA 1.1.2

- B. Sworn members shall also abide by The Law Enforcement Code of Ethics (Appendix B).
- C. Ethics training will be conducted for all personnel, at a minimum biennially.
- D. Ethics training shall be in the form of a classroom session, shift briefing, distance learning, training bulletin, or any combination of methods.

X. CANCELLATIONS

This General Order cancels and replaces General Order ADM-12, Code of Conduct, dated December 31, 2008.

Authority:



Gary L. Gardner
Chief of Police