

Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure		
	<b>APD.SOP.2011 General Conduct</b> <b>Effective Date: October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024</b>	
Chief Darin Schierbaum	Signature by: DS	Date Signed: 10/10/2024

## SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

### APD Staff,

The Policy and Standards Section is dedicated to providing the department, and its employees, with accurate, understandable and transparent policies. In order to publish policies that reflect the most up-to-date standards, the Policy and Standard Section regularly reviews all policies to ensure that they are reflective of the current mission and objectives of the Atlanta Police Department.

APD.SOP.2011 was recently updated, however, it has been mandated that we include the following language within the policy:

- ***This Section, 4.4.1, may not be deleted, revised, or amended pursuant to Court Order in Calhoun, et al. v. Pennington, et al. 1:09-CV-3286-TCB. Consult the City of Atlanta Department of Law with any questions or concerns. \****

### As a reminder, the below changes were recently updated as well:

- Use of Tobacco, Tobacco Products and E-Cigarettes (VAPES) are prohibited in all City vehicles, buildings and while on active calls.
- Using Bluetooth devices such as AirPods/Earbuds for personal conversations/use is prohibited while on a call-for-service.
- It is a violation of this policy, citizens' rights, and the Calhoun Order to interfere with a citizen's right to record, so long as they are not interfering with the officer's job duties.
- Employees will read and respond (if a response is requested) to e-mails from supervisors within the employees' Chain of Command within 24 hours, or their immediate return to work.

**Thank you and stay informed!**

**Policy and Standards Section**  
**Planning, Research, and Accreditation Unit**



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## **1. PURPOSE**

The intent of this directive is to establish the guidelines and operating procedures for all departmental employees while interacting with each other and the public at large.

## **2. POLICY**

The employees with the Atlanta Police Department will conduct themselves professionally and courteously when answering the telephone or greeting visitors at Departmental facilities. This procedure includes interactions with fellow employees and with members of the public. Employees will make every effort to provide needed assistance without rudeness or undue delay.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 Division commanders will monitor their subordinates' interaction with other employees and with the public to ensure that this procedure is followed.
- 3.2 Supervisors will enforce this procedure with their subordinates. They will set the standard for courtesy and provide a model for their subordinates to emulate.
- 3.3 Employees will conduct themselves professionally and courteously, to promote good public relations and to project a positive image.

## **4. PROCEDURE**

### **4.1 OFFICE COURTESY**

- 4.1.1 Supervisors will ensure that work sites are staffed, and telephones are answered during the working hours of the work site, unless approved otherwise by the division commander.

#### **4.1.2 General Considerations:**

- 1. Employees will greet each caller and visitor immediately, and in a courteous manner. The employee making initial contact will attempt to handle the citizens request first. In the event the employee is unable to assist, they will provide the visitor/caller with the correct information of the person, or unit, who will be able to resolve the matter.
- 2. Do not use slang or profanity.
- 3. Keep current Department and City government telephone listings and a message pad at each telephone location.

#### **4.1.3 Telephone Calls**

- 1. Greet callers courteously with a statement identifying the work site and the title and name of the person answering.
- 2. If the requested person is unavailable, offer to either take a message, leave a voicemail or be placed on hold. If the caller requests to be placed on hold, be sure to update the caller on the status every 5 minutes.
- 3. If it is necessary to transfer the call, inform the caller that they are being transferred and state the office and telephone number to which the call is being transferred. Stay on the line to be sure that the call goes through correctly.



4. Personal information about an employee will not be given out over the phone. Home phone numbers or addresses are not to be released outside the chain of command unless approved by a supervisor. If the caller identifies themselves as an employee of the Department and wants this personal information, refer them to the Personnel Services Unit.

#### 4.1.4 Responding to Telephone Calls and Mail

1. When information or action is requested by telephone, the call taker will attempt to resolve the request as soon as possible
2. Section commanders or designee will return telephone calls within twenty-four (24) hours.
3. Requests for information or action by mail, email, or fax, will be responded to within three business days. These requests will be logged, indicating the date of receipt, to whom forwarded for response, and the date of response.

#### 4.1.5 Visitors

1. Greet visitors courteously and contact the appropriate staff member to notify them of the visitor. If the staff member is unavailable, offer to take a message or find someone else who can assist them. If there is a wait, estimate how long it will be and offer the visitor a seat.
2. If a visitor must be referred to another location/unit, be sure that the directions are clear. If the destination is in the same building, consider escorting the visitor to minimize confusion.

#### 4.1.6 Messages

All messages for unavailable employees need to include the requesters name, their callback number and the date and time the message was taken. The message must be delivered and responded to within 2 business days of the original call/request.

#### 4.1.7 Urgent Communications

Be responsive to the urgency of visitors and callers; if the matter is urgent, and the employee is unavailable, contact a supervisor.

#### 4.1.8 E-mail

City e-mail accounts will be checked by all employees at least once during their shift, or as frequently as the employees' assignment dictates. Employees will read and respond (if a response is required) to e-mails from their direct supervisor, or supervisors within the employees' Chain of Command, within 24 hours, or upon immediate return to work after an absence/scheduled leave.

#### 4.1.9 Remote Working

Sworn and professional personnel, with approval from their supervisor, have the option to complete mandated online training at their worksite or remotely. Training completed remotely will have time credited for the work but must be counted in the current pay period.

### 4.2 USE OF TOBACCO, TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND VAPING PRODUCTS

- 4.2.1 Employees will not use any tobacco, tobacco products or Vapes/Vaping products when interacting with the general public or while on a call for service.

- 4.2.2 Use of Tobacco, Tobacco Products and Vaping Products in Department Facilities:



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### APD.SOP.2011 General Conduct

Effective Date: July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024



1. Use of any type of tobacco, tobacco products and/or Vaping products are prohibited in any building, office, work area, or other structure, which is owned, leased, or in any manner operated under the control of the Atlanta Police Department.
2. All employees and visitors will abide by the posted designations. Persons who refuse compliance may be charged with violating Section 106-9 of the City of Atlanta Code or Section 16-12-2 of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

4.2.3 The use of any type of smoking, tobacco product or vaping product is prohibited in vehicles that are owned, leased, or in any manner operated under the control of the Atlanta Police Department.

#### 4.3 CELLULAR PHONE USE WHILE ON DUTY

4.3.1 Employees are authorized to use cell phones to conduct Departmental business.

1. Employees will not use cellular telephones to conduct Departmental business that should otherwise be broadcast over the radio.
2. Cellular telephones may be used to allow additional communication between employees but does not relieve the officer from using the radio for disseminating and documenting information.

4.3.2 Cell phones for personal use while interacting with the general public is prohibited.

4.3.3 Employees will not use hands-free devices (AirPods, Bluetooth headset, ect) for personal phone calls while on a call for service or when interacting with the general public.

4.3.4 Employees will not use a cellular phone, with or without a hands-free option, while directing traffic.

#### 4.4 AUDIO, VIDEO OR PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING

4.4.1 All employees shall be prohibited from interfering with a citizen's right to record police activity by photographic, video, or audio means. This prohibition is in effect as long as the recording by the citizen does not physically interfere with the performance of an officer's duties.

**\*Interference with Citizen's Right to Record is grounds for Dismissal (APD.SOP.2020 )**

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4.4.2 All employees shall be prohibited from intentionally deleting or destroying the original or sole copy of any photograph, audio, or video recording of police activity created by a member of the public.

4.4.3 All employees shall be prohibited from intentionally deleting or destroying the original or sole copy of any photograph, audio, or video recording relating to any use of force described under the "Reporting Requirements" section of APD.SOP.3010 Use of Force.

4.4.4 All employees (sworn and non-sworn) are prohibited from using personal recording devices, such as a cellular telephone, camera, video camera, sound recording device etc. to record pictures, sounds, or video during the course of their duties. (CALEA 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Standard 83.2.2)

4.4.5 Failure to comply with section 4.4.4 of this directive will result in the seizure of the device in order to ensure the preservation of any improperly obtained photos, videos, audio recordings, etc.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

**E-Cigarettes:** An electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) or vape is a device that simulates tobacco smoking. It consists of an atomizer, a power source such as a battery, and a container such as a cartridge or tank filled with liquid. Instead of smoke, the user inhales vapor.

**Vapor product:** any noncombustible product containing nicotine that employs a heating element, power source, electronic circuit, or other electronic, chemical, or mechanical means, regardless of shape or size, that can be used to produce vapor from nicotine in a solution or other form. The term 'vapor product' shall include any electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, or similar product or device and any vapor cartridge or other container of nicotine in a solution or other form that is intended to be used with or in an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, or similar product or device. (See OCGA § 16-12-170)

## 6. CANCELLATIONS

APD.SOP.2011 General Conduct, effective July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

## 7. REFERENCES

- ❖ APD.SOP.2020 Disciplinary Process
- ❖ August 2024 Order in Calhoun, et al. v. Pennington, et al. 1:09-CV-3286-TCB
- ❖ CALEA 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Standard 83.2.2