



Charleston County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures Manual

Sheriff Carl Ritchie

2-06

Duty to Intervene

- ☐ NEW
- ☒ REVISED
- ☒ REVIEWED

ACA Standards Reference:
CALEA Standards Reference: 1.2.10, 4.1.1
NCCHC Standards Reference:
SCLEA Standards Reference:
SC Minimum Standards:

This policy dated 1/28/2025 replaces prior policies cited above and supersedes all previously issued directives.

I. Purpose:

The Charleston County Sheriff's Office has an obligation to protect all citizens as well as other law enforcement and public safety officials. This policy will address the duty to intervene, which is expected of all members of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office pertaining to conduct and activities observed while on and off-duty.

II. Policy:

It is the policy of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office that all members of the Sheriff's Office recognize and act to intervene to prevent or stop other Sheriff's Office employee(s) or other public safety official(s), whether law enforcement, detention officers, or civilian employee, from conducting any act that is unethical or that violates law or Sheriff's Office policy. (Ref: CALEA 1.2.10)

III. Definitions:

- A. For purposes of this procedure, the word "deputy" applies to all agency employees with a certification classification of Class I, Class II, or Class III, as defined by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

The following terms are used interchangeably; however, they carry guidance to specific employees based on usage of the term:

1. Deputy, deputy sheriff, detention deputy, sworn employee, uniformed sworn employee, sworn administrative employee, and
 2. civilian, non-sworn employee.
- B. *Agency Employee / Member*: When used without further clarification, the term employee is inclusive of all agency members of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office (sworn and non-sworn) to include recruits in training, civilian employees, reserve deputies, and State constables.
- C. *Intervene*: To come between, whether verbally or physically, so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events.

IV. Procedure:

- A. The Sheriff's Office is committed to encouraging appropriate intervention and protecting any agency member who intervenes in good faith.

- B. All Sheriff's Office personnel must recognize and act upon the duty to intervene to prevent or stop any agency member or other public safety official from conducting any act that is unethical, or that violates law or policy (e.g., excessive force, theft, fraud, inappropriate language, sexual misconduct, harassment, falsifying documents, inappropriate behavior, etc.).
(Ref: CALEA 4.1.1)
1. Intervention may be verbal and/or physical.
 2. The intervention may be accomplished by any means reasonable once and if safe and possible to do so, given the circumstances presented.
 3. Failure to intervene may subject an agency member to disciplinary action.
(Ref: CALEA 1.2.10)
- C. Responsibilities of Agency Personnel
1. If aid is required by any individual, ensure that medical attention is rendered to the capabilities of the agency member's training and/or certification; or, by calling for assistance to include 911 if necessary.
 2. Take a preventative approach whenever possible if observing behavior that suggests an agency member is about to conduct unethical, unlawful, or inappropriate behavior.
 3. If intervention is determined necessary, consider the circumstances surrounding the incident to determine the safest and appropriate form of intervention.
 4. Once determined necessary, take an active approach to intervene by appropriate and reasonable means, whether verbal or physical, to prevent, alter, or stop the inappropriate or unethical behavior, misconduct of law or Sheriff's Office policy.
 5. Immediately notify a supervisor after conducting any type of intervention once safe to do so.
 6. All types of interventions, whether verbal or physical, will be documented on an incident and/or supplemental report.
 7. Sheriff's Office employees also have an inherent duty to report any unethical or illegal conduct when learned of, even if after the alleged unethical or illegal conduct has occurred. Notification will be made

to their supervisor or the Office of Professional Standards as soon as practical.

8. Once a supervisor is made aware of an employee's intervention or allegations of learned of misconduct, they will gather all pertinent information (i.e., witnesses, reports, body worn or in-car camera video, etc.) and make notification to the Office of Professional Standards for further investigation.
 9. Should the supervisor determine that the employee's conduct to be criminal, serious in nature, potential harm to the public, the employee, or the Sheriff's Office, the employee may be relieved from duty (See [Policy 6-01 Internal Affairs](#)).
 10. The Office of Professional Standards will investigate all reports of interventions of any kind, and the unethical or illegal conduct that lead to the intervention or lack thereof.
 11. The Office of Professional Standards will make appropriate entries of alleged misconduct resulting in interventions within *Blue Team* to comply with [Policy 6-04 Personnel Early Warning System](#).
- D. Any Sheriff's Office employee(s) who, acting in good faith, based upon the situation or facts before them, intervenes to prevent or minimize misconduct of another, regardless of rank, will not be subject to disciplinary action for their intervention. The Agency member may only be disciplined for making a report pursuant to this policy that they know or should reasonably know to be false, or making a report that they know is made in bad faith.
- E. All Charleston County Sheriff's Office personnel benefit when potential misconduct and unethical behavior is not committed. Preventing misconduct preserves job security and integrity for all Sheriff's Office employees; ultimately, protecting employee(s) from impacting their careers as a result of misconduct, or in some cases, a result of a failure to intervene to prevent misconduct by others.