

Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and Canons of Ethics

Edmonds Police Department Policy

LAW ENFORCEMENT CODE OF ETHICS AND CANONS OF ETHICS

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As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.

I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession . . . law enforcement.

CANONS OF ETHICS

"**CANONS**" are statements which express, in general terms, standards of professional conduct expected of police department employees in their relationship with the public, the criminal justice system, and the police department employee profession. They embody the general concepts from which the ethical standards and the disciplinary rules are derived.

"**ETHICAL STANDARDS**" are statements that represent the objectives toward which every police department employee shall strive. They constitute principles that can be relied upon by the police department employee for guidance in specific situations.

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Canon One: Police department employees shall uphold the Constitution of the United States, the State Constitution, and all laws enacted or established pursuant to legally constituted authority.

Ethical Standards

- **Standard 1.1:** Police department employees shall recognize that the primary responsibility of their profession and of the individual officer is the protection of the people within the jurisdiction of the United States through upholding of their laws, the most important of which are the Constitution of the United States and the State Constitutions and laws derived therefrom.
- **Standard 1.2:** Peace officers shall be aware of the extent and the limitations of their authority in the enforcement of the law.
- **Standard 1.3:** Peace officers shall diligently study principles and new enactments of the laws they enforce.
- **Standard 1.4:** Peace officers shall be responsible for keeping abreast of current case law as applied to their duties.
- **Standard 1.5:** Peace officers shall endeavor to uphold the spirit of the law, as opposed to enforcing merely the letter of the law.
- **Standard 1.6:** Police department employees shall respect and uphold the dignity, human rights, and constitutional rights of all persons.

Canon Two: Police department employees shall be aware of and shall use proper and ethical procedures in discharging their official duties and responsibilities.

Ethical Standards

- **Standard 2.1:** Peace officers shall be aware of their lawful authority to use that force reasonably necessary in securing compliance with their lawful enforcement duties.
- **Standard 2.2:** Police department employees shall truthfully, completely, and impartially report, testify, and present evidence in all matters of an official nature.
- **Standard 2.3:** Police department employees shall follow legal practices in such areas as interrogation, arrest or detention, searches, seizures, use of informants, and collection and preservation of evidence.

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- **Standard 2.4:** Police department employees shall follow the principles of integrity, fairness, and impartiality in connection with their duties.

Canon Three: Police department employees shall regard the discharge of their duties as a public trust and shall recognize their responsibilities to the people whom they are sworn to protect and serve.

Ethical Standards

- **Standard 3.1:** Police department employees, as professionals, shall maintain an awareness of those factors affecting their responsibilities.
- **Standard 3.2:** Police department employees, during their tour of duty, shall diligently devote their time and attention to the effective and professional performance of their responsibilities.
- **Standard 3.3:** Police department employees shall ensure that they are prepared for the effective and efficient undertaking of their assignment.
- **Standard 3.4:** Police department employees shall safely and efficiently use equipment and material available to them.
- **Standard 3.5:** Police department employees shall be prepared to and shall respond effectively to the demands of their office.
- **Standard 3.6:** Police department employees, with due regard for compassion, shall maintain an objective and impartial attitude in official contacts.
- **Standard 3.7:** Police department employees shall not allow their personal convictions, beliefs, prejudices, or biases to interfere unreasonably with their official acts or decisions.
- **Standard 3.8:** Police department employees shall recognize that their allegiance is first to the people, then to their profession and the Edmonds Police Department.

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Canon Four: Police department employees shall conduct their public and private lives so that they exemplify the high standards of integrity, trust, and morality demanded of a member of the peace officer profession.

Ethical Standards

- **Standard 4.1:** Police department employees shall refrain from consuming intoxicating beverages to the extent that it results in impairment which brings discredit upon the profession or their employing agency, or renders them unfit for their next tour of duty.
- **Standard 4.2:** Police department employees shall not consume intoxicating beverages while on duty, except to the degree permitted in the performance of official duties.
- **Standard 4.3:** Police department employees shall not use any narcotics, hallucinogens, or any other controlled substance except when legally prescribed. When such controlled substances are prescribed, officers shall notify their superior officer prior to reporting for duty.
- **Standard 4.4:** Police department employees shall maintain a level of conduct in their personal and business affairs in keeping with the high standards of the peace officer profession. Employees shall not participate in any incident involving moral turpitude.
- **Standard 4.5:** Police department employees shall not undertake financial obligations which they know or reasonably should know they will be unable to meet and shall pay all just debts when due.
- **Standard 4.6:** Police department employees shall not engage in illegal political activities.
- **Standard 4.7:** Police department employees shall not permit or authorize for personal gain, the use of their name, photograph, or official title identifying them as police department employees in connection with testimonials or advertisements for any commodity, commercial enterprise, or commercial service which is not the product of the officer involved.
- **Standard 4.8:** Police department employees shall not engage in any activity which would create a conflict of interest or which would be in violation of any law.
- **Standard 4.9:** Police department employees shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner which does not discredit the peace officer profession or their employing agency.
- **Standard 4.10:** Police department employees shall not be disrespectful, insolent, mutinous, or insubordinate in attitude or conduct.
- **Standard 4.11:** Police department employees shall be courteous and respectful in their official dealings with the public, fellow employees, superiors, and subordinates.

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- **Standard 4.12:** Police department employees shall not engage in any strike, work obstruction or abstention, in whole or in part, from the full, faithful, and proper performance of their assigned duties and responsibilities, except as authorized by law.
- **Standard 4.13:** Police department employees shall maintain a neutral position with regard to the merits of any labor dispute, political protest, or other public demonstration, while acting in an official capacity.

Canon Five: Police department employees shall recognize that our society holds the freedom of the individual as a paramount precept, which shall not be infringed upon without just, legal, and necessary cause.

Ethical Standards

- **Standard 5.1:** Peace officers shall not restrict the freedom of individuals, whether by detention or arrest, except to the extent necessary to legally or reasonably apply the law.
- **Standard 5.2:** Police department employees shall recognize the rights of individuals to be free from capricious or arbitrary acts which deny or abridge their fundamental rights as guaranteed by law.
- **Standard 5.3:** Police department employees shall not use their official position to detain any individual, or to restrict the freedom of an individual, except in the manner and means permitted or prescribed by law.

Canon Six: Police department employees shall assist in maintaining the integrity and competency of the peace officer profession.

Ethical Standards

- **Standard 6.1:** Police department employees shall recognize that every person in our society is entitled to professional, effective, and efficient law enforcement services.
- **Standard 6.2:** Police department employees shall perform their duties in such a manner as to discourage double standards.
- **Standard 6.3:** Police department employees shall conduct themselves so as to set exemplary standards of performance for all law enforcement personnel.

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- **Standard 6.4:** Police department employees shall maintain the integrity of their profession through complete disclosure of those who violate any of these rules of conduct, violate any law, or who conduct themselves in a manner which tends to discredit the profession.
- **Standard 6.5:** Police department employees shall have responsibility for reporting to proper authorities any known information which would serve to disqualify candidates from transferring within or entering the profession.
- **Standard 6.6:** Police department employees shall be responsible for maintaining a level of education and training that will keep them abreast of current techniques, concepts, laws, and requirements of the profession.
- **Standard 6.7:** Chief executive peace officers shall accept the responsibility of utilizing all available resources and the authority of their office to maintain the integrity of their agency and the competency of their officers. These canons and ethical standards shall apply to all legally defined police department employees, regardless of rank.

Canon Seven: Police department employees shall cooperate with other officials and organizations who are using legal and ethical means to achieve the goals and objectives of the peace officer profession.

Ethical Standards

- **Standard 7.1:** Police department employees, within legal and agency guidelines, shall share with personnel, both within and outside their agency, appropriate information that will facilitate the achievement of criminal justice goals or objectives.
- **Standard 7.2:** Police department employees, whether requested through appropriate channels or called upon individually, shall render needed assistance to any other officer in the proper performance of their duty.
- **Standard 7.3:** Police department employees shall, within legal and agency guidelines, endeavor to communicate to the people of their community the goals and objectives of the profession, and keep them apprised of conditions which threaten the maintenance of an ordered society.

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Canon Eight: Police department employees shall not compromise their integrity, nor that of their agency or profession, by accepting, giving, or soliciting any gratuity.

Ethical Standards

- **Standard 8.1:** Police department employees shall refuse to offer, give, or receive gifts, favors, or gratuities, either large or small, which can be reasonably interpreted as capable of influencing official acts or judgments. This standard is not intended to isolate police department employees from normal social practices, or to preclude gifts among friends, associates, or relatives, where appropriate.
- **Standard 8.2:** Police department employees shall not consider their badge of office as a license designed to provide them with special favor or consideration.

Canon Nine: Police department employees shall observe the confidentiality of information available to them through any source, as it relates to the peace officer profession.

Ethical Standards

- **Standard 9.1:** Police department employees shall be aware of and shall meticulously observe all legal restrictions on the release and dissemination of information.
- **Standard 9.2:** Police department employees shall treat as confidential the official business of their employing agency, and shall release or disseminate such information solely in an authorized manner.
- **Standard 9.3:** Police department employees shall treat as confidential that information confided to them personally. They shall disclose such information as required in the proper performance of their duties.
- **Standard 9.4:** Police department employees shall neither disclose nor use for their personal interest any confidential information acquired by them in the course of their official duties.
- **Standard 9.5:** Police department employees shall treat as confidential all matters relating to investigations, internal affairs, and personnel.