



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Personnel Management

Section: 303

Subject: General Responsibilities

Topic:

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to set forth guidelines and responsibilities for each member of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office.

II. POLICY

A. Knowledge of Regulations

Each sworn employee of the agency shall establish and maintain a working knowledge of all laws and ordinances in force in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the County of Loudoun, regulations and General Orders of the agency and the divisions thereof. In the event of improper action or breach of discipline, it shall be presumed that the employee was familiar with the law, regulation, or order in question. Violation of any law, regulation, or order may be grounds for disciplinary action.

B. Loudoun County Personnel Regulations

The personnel rules established by the Human Resources Handbook of the County of Loudoun, unless specifically exempted, shall govern employees of the Sheriff's Office. Each employee of the Sheriff's Office shall familiarize themselves with these personnel rules. Each Division Commander shall make a copy of the Human Resources Handbook available to employees upon request.

C. Obedience to Laws and Directives

All employees of the Sheriff's Office shall observe and obey all Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances, all rules and regulations of the County of Loudoun, and all General Orders and regulations of the Sheriff's Office.

D. Performance of Duty

All employees shall perform the duties required of them by law, agency rule, policy, or order, or by order of a superior officer. All lawful duties required by competent authority shall be performed promptly as directed, notwithstanding the general assignment of duties and responsibilities.

E. Obligation to Supervise

All supervisors are responsible for monitoring the actions of their subordinates while on duty. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, checking reports and other documentation for accuracy, thoroughness, and ensuring completion of tasks. Supervisors are responsible for conducting periodic inspections of agency issued equipment.

Supervisors should be prepared to respond to major incidents and take incident command from subordinates when appropriate.

Supervisors are expected to notify their chain of command of any employee misconduct. All supervisors are expected to conduct detailed, thorough, fair and impartial investigations stemming from incidents of responses to resistance, employee misconduct, citizen complaints or other investigations as may be required by, and in accordance with, General Orders 302 and 403.12.

Failure to comply with this General Order is considered a failure to supervise.

F. Reporting Violation

An employee who has knowledge of other employees (individually or collectively) who are (knowingly or unknowingly) violating any laws or statutes, ordinances, or rules and regulations of the Sheriff's Office, or who are disobedient to orders, shall bring all facts pertaining to the matter to the attention of a superior officer. The superior officer contacted shall take appropriate action. If the superior officer fails to take appropriate action, the matter may be brought to the attention of a superior higher in the chain of command, or to the Sheriff.

F. Preservation of Peace and Protection of Property

It shall be the duty of each sworn employee of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to:

- Preserve the public peace
- Protect life and property
- Enforce and uphold the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Ordinances of the County of Loudoun.

G. Cooperation and Coordination

Each employee shall coordinate their efforts with other employees of the Sheriff's Office, with other Loudoun County agencies, and with other law enforcement agencies with the objective of ensuring maximum achievement and continuity of purpose through teamwork. Each employee is charged with the responsibility for maintaining

a high degree of cooperation, both within the Sheriff's Office and with any other agency.

H. Assistance to Fellow Deputies

No sworn employee of the Sheriff's Office shall fail to aid, assist, or protect a fellow deputy to the full extent of his/her capabilities in time of need, in accordance with established procedures.

I. Obligation to Duty

Sworn employees of the Sheriff's Office are always subject to duty, although periodically relieved from its routine performance. Each sworn employee shall always respond to the lawful orders of superiors and other proper authorities, as well as to requests for law-enforcement assistance from citizens. Proper law-enforcement action must be taken whenever required. Sworn employees assigned to special duties are not relieved from taking proper action, even though outside the scope of their specialized assignment, when necessary.

J. Reporting for Duty

Each employee shall report for duty at the time and place required by assignment or orders, and shall be properly uniformed, equipped, and prepared to assume duty. Each employee shall give his/her undivided attention to orders, instructions, and other information that may be disseminated. Each employee shall be punctual and prompt in response to all requirements of duty, court appointments, and in any other situation where time may be specified.

K. Inspections

Inspection of any sworn employee's dress, uniform, or equipment may be made at any time by a competent authority. Such inspections may include, but not be limited to, examination of lockers, desks, or any other space on agency premises utilized by any employee.

L. Human Relations

Each employee shall perform his/her duties in an efficient, courteous, and orderly manner, always employing good judgment and patience. Each employee shall refrain from harsh, profane, or insolent language or acts, and shall be courteous and civil in dealing with others. No employee shall use racial or ethnic slurs, but shall use respectful, civil forms of address to all persons, regardless of their lifestyle. Display of bias toward any person because of race, sex, religious preference, or lifestyle shall be considered conduct unbecoming an employee of the Sheriff.

M. Assistance to Citizens

While on duty, sworn employees shall aid and assist citizens within Loudoun County whenever such aid or assistance appears to be appropriate and is not in conflict with the general principles of law enforcement, or in violation of statutes, ordinances or agency rules and regulations. Included in this instruction is the requirement to render all possible assistance to any citizen who may wish to make any report in accordance with established policies and procedures of the Sheriff's Office. While in an off-duty status, each employee has a professional obligation to act, in any bona fide emergency or where his/her assistance is requested.

N. Identification as a Law Enforcement Officer

Each sworn employee shall identify himself/herself by displaying the Sheriff's Office official badge and/or identification card before acting, except where impractical or infeasible, or where identity is obvious. Upon the request of any citizen, a sworn employee shall willingly supply his or her name and law enforcement identification in a courteous manner.

O. Training

Each employee shall attend appropriate Sheriff's Office and other in-service training at the direction of competent authority. Such attendance shall be considered a duty assignment.

P. Stand-By Duty

Any sworn employee placed on stand-by duty shall furnish the Emergency Communications Center with his/her location and/or telephone number where he/she may be immediately contacted.

Q. Physical Fitness

Because quick response to situations requiring physical exertion may be required of a sworn employee, the safety of the public and of deputies demands that each sworn employee maintain him/herself in good physical condition, regardless of assignment. Poor physical condition (e.g., obesity) is as much a detriment to the agency's image as improper demeanor or unkempt uniform appearance. Each sworn employee of the agency is encouraged to keep fit and to undertake such programs of exercise as may be required to do so. Each sworn employee shall submit to a periodic physical examination conducted by a designated County agency or contractor, as required.

R. Establishing Elements of a Violation

The existence of facts confirming a violation of law, ordinance, rule, or regulation is all that is necessary to support any allegation for an allegation of a violation of policy under this section. It is not necessary that a formal complaint be filed or sustained.

S. Truthfulness

When questioned by competent authority, each employee shall give complete and honest answers to any question related to the performance of his/her official duties, or to his/her fitness to hold public office.

T. Polygraph

Each employee shall be required to submit to a polygraph test if deemed necessary by the Sheriff or his designated representative, if the gravity of any incident or violation so dictates.

U. Criticism of Sheriff's Office or Superiors

Under no circumstance may an employee speak critically or in a derogatory fashion to other employees or to persons not of the agency regarding orders or instructions issued by a superior officer. If an employee has reason to believe that any order or instruction is inconsistent or unjust, then that employee may appeal to the next higher authority in the agency.

V. Nepotism

No employee of the Loudoun County Sheriff shall be transferred, promoted, or demoted to a position that regularly places him/her in a direct or immediate supervisory role with a family member, a member of the same household, or a partner in a consensual relationship.

Family members, a member of the same household or partners in a consensual relationship will not be regularly assigned as a direct supervisor to a family member, member of the same household or partner in a consensual relationship within the same chain of command. Short term special assignments will be handled on a case-by-case basis. In the event the Sheriff approves a special assignment which would ordinarily place employees in a position of violating the terms of this policy, the supervisor shall recuse him/herself from any action affecting the subordinate family member, member of the same household, or partner in a consensual relationship.

W. Personal Relationships and Fraternization

If a dating, romantic, or marriage relationship develops between two employees, the Sheriff will not permit such employees to supervise or report to one another, work in the same functional area, work on the same team, or participate in the review or evaluation of the performance of one another.

If a dating, romantic, or marriage relationship develops between persons who supervise or report to one another, work in the same functional area, work on the same team, or participate in the evaluation of the performance of one another, the persons involved in the relationship shall report it to their respective Bureau Commander(s). The Bureau Commander(s) will consider suitable and available transfers, reassignments, or other arrangements to comply with this policy.

When possible, transfers, reassignments, or other accommodations will be determined based on seniority, time in position, and the overall needs of the agency.

Any exception to this policy must be authorized by the Sheriff. An exception may be granted only if the Sheriff determines that the exception is in the best interests of the agency.