



ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

ADM - 217 – DUTY TO INTERVENE

Amends/Supersedes: NEW

Date of Issue: 08/11/2025

I. GENERAL

- A. The Newport News Police Department recognizes that inappropriate conduct of department personnel can have a significant impact on public trust in the department. This policy establishes guidelines and expectations for employee intervention, in accordance with the department's mission and values.
- B. Newport News Police Department employees will intervene, within their scope of authority and training, if they observe another department employee or public safety professional, regardless of agency affiliation, engage in any unreasonable use of force, or if they become aware of any violation of department policy, state or federal law, or local ordinance. Immediate intervention and notification are required when the unreasonable actions could result in injury, death or violations of constitutional rights. [1.2.10]
- C. Immediate supervisor notification is required for all interventions. Additionally, employees who are unable to directly intervene because of their scope of authority or are not appropriately trained for the situation, must also immediately notify their supervisor.
- D. Any law enforcement officer who fails to intervene may be deemed complicit and subject to prosecution under [18 U.S. Code § 242](#) - Deprivation of rights under color of law for failure to intervene to stop the constitutional violation.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Intervene – To come between, either physically or verbally, or take action to prevent or interrupt criminal, unconstitutional or inappropriate actions.
- B. Scope of authority – the authority assigned to, and capabilities of an employee based on their job description and training.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Decision to Intervene

The following situations are examples for when an employee, upon observing the behavior, may need to intervene, as required by this policy:

1. The application of excessive and/or unnecessary force.
2. An unlawful investigative detention, arrest or search.
3. Bias-based profiling, as defined by [ADM-214 Implicit Bias Policy](#) and [§52-30.1](#) of the Code of Virginia.
4. An employee fails to utilize appropriate de-escalation techniques, or whose actions appear to escalate a situation to the point of conflict or violence.
5. Constitutional violations include retaliation for participation in 1st Amendment protected activities.
6. Any unsafe behavior and/or tactics that may endanger the safety of officers, employees or the public.
7. When employees display apparent signs of stress or inappropriate behavior, for the circumstances, that appear to impede their ability to manage or de-escalate the situation.



B. Intervention

1. When a situation requires intervention, employees will use the most appropriate de-escalation techniques for the circumstances. The intervention may include verbal or physical intervention, and/or supervisor notification. Anytime intervention occurs, the employee must notify their supervisor.
2. If an employee observes behavior that suggests a danger of escalation, preventative intervention is encouraged, whenever possible.
3. If an employee is unable to directly intervene (i.e. too much distance or insufficient time to intervene or intervention would require abandoning their own actions, which endanger the safety of officers and citizens on scene), immediate supervisory notification is required.
4. Upon notification, supervisors must respond and take immediate action to de-escalate the situation. Once the situation is under control, supervisors will notify the officer's chain of command. Appropriate follow-up actions may include:
 - a. Initiate an internal investigation for alleged misconduct, following [ADM-270 Administrative and Internal Investigations](#).
 - b. Refer the officer to an appropriate psychological service or program, per [ADM-330 Employee Psychological Services](#).
5. Employees should only intervene when the situation or circumstances are within the scope of their authority.
 - a. All officers have the appropriate training and authority to intervene in any situation that involves the use or potential use of force, or violations of local, state or federal law.
 - b. Non-sworn personnel are not expected to directly intervene in situations involving physical violence or law enforcement activities. In situations requiring immediate intervention, non-sworn personnel must immediately notify an on-duty supervisor, either directly or through the Communications Division.

C. Training & Policy Review

1. New employees will receive training on this policy.
2. All employees must complete a documented review of this policy annually, in PowerPolicy.

Steven R. Drew

Chief of Police