

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 8, 1996
REVIEW DATE: July 17, 1997
AFFECTS: All Personnel

REVISION DATE: July 23, 2007

Plano Police: Mission Statement

To provide outstanding Police Services, in partnership with the community, to maintain a safe environment that contributes to the quality of life.

In achieving this mission we emphasize:

Voluntary Compliance
Education of Citizens
Partnership with the Community
Visual Presence in the Community
Detection and Apprehension of Offenders

Our Organizational Performance Measures which gauge our success in achieving our mission are:

Crime Rate
Traffic Safety
Timely Service
Quality of Service

Plano Police: Our Values

Integrity
Fairness & Equity
Personal Responsibility
Service Orientation
Teamwork
Planning & Problem Solving

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Integrity

Our value as Police Employees depends upon the respect and confidence we earn from the community. The integrity of each individual, as well as the organization, is necessary for citizens to give us their trust. Without this trust, we cannot expect to form a partnership with the community.

Integrity means to us:

Be honest — no dishonesty, lying or misrepresentation; report events accurately without slanting details;

Admit mistakes and take corrective action;

Be responsible for your actions and your own problems;

If you establish a rule, abide by it;

Do what you say you will do — set the example for the public and other employees, act in a manner which results in respect;

Do not accept gratuities;

Behave consistently with our Department Values.

Fairness and Equity

Fundamental to delivery of professional police service is the fair and equal treatment of all individuals. Whether employee or citizen, all must be treated with dignity and respect.

Fairness and Equity means to us:

Provide fair treatment to people (employees and citizens) — use your discretion judiciously and act consistently with values and expectations;

Set and communicate expectations;

Address the issue, not the personality, and keep personal matters out of the workplace;

Treat others as you wish to be treated;

Remain neutral and listen to all sides before making a decision;

Have respect for all persons, ideas and opinions;

Avoid racial, ethnic, sexual and religious slurs;

Avoid spreading gossip and rumors.

Personal Responsibility

Each of us has a personal responsibility for the success of our organization. We respect, care about, trust and support each other. We respect and encourage individual responsibility and talent, while recognizing Department members have a right and an obligation to participate in managing our organization.

Personal Responsibility means to us:

Set a positive example;

Perform duties with minimal supervision — act in a mature manner and realize what you should and should not do;

Voluntarily comply with Department policies, rules and regulations;

Maintain your job skills, competence and knowledge — develop your professional competence beyond the minimum standard;

Do what needs to be done instead of looking to others to do it;

Admit to mistakes and consider each an opportunity for professional and personal improvement.

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Service Orientation

Each employee must view requests for service not only as an opportunity to enhance the quality of life for the community, but to promote the Department's image whenever possible.

Service Orientation means to us:

Listen to what people say;

Show that you care by being empathetic and having compassion in dealing with victims;

Demonstrate concern for others by treating their problems as important — then work to solve problems with positive outcomes;

Follow through on promises — if you set an expectation, meet, and strive to, exceed it;

Answer questions directly and explain your reasons;

Be polite and courteous — being sensitive to the feelings of others;

Provide prompt services.

Teamwork

Teamwork is essential to the successful operation of the Department. The team must include all employees working in partnership with each other and the community to complete our mission.

Teamwork means to us:

Cooperate and collaborate within our Department, City, and with our citizens;

Involve others (employees and community) in planning, decision making and taking actions — seek and use input;

If you are a team, you must be committed to the goals, objectives and plans of the team — commit to performing your assigned tasks and work together for common goals;

Teamwork does not necessarily mean majority rules, nor does it eliminate individual management responsibility and accountability;

Communicate with others — citizens and employees.

Planning and Problem Solving

In developing department plans, we must anticipate possible problems and opportunities, and seek to deal with them in innovative ways. Progress and success only come by taking some risk. The process must involve feedback and participation from all levels of the organization and community.

Planning and Problem Solving means to us:

Take the initiative by identifying problems, looking for potential problems, and developing solutions;

Seek input and advice about any function from the persons doing the functions;

Be willing to take risks and challenge the status quo;

Look for permanent solutions to problems — avoid a band-aid approach to problem solving;

Have a shared vision and direction — develop long and short term goals;

Take action;

Develop a broader understanding of missions and functions beyond your own unit or team.

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Human Relations Principles

There are certain human relations principles which govern the quality of police services. These principles must be mastered to achieve professional excellence.

The human relations principles of attitude, verbal behavior, and non-verbal behavior are fundamental to police professionalism. On this foundation, the principles of openness, objectivity, perspective, courtesy, and compassion must be learned and applied. The principles of stereotyping, cynicism, prejudice, arrogance, and provocation must, likewise, be clearly understood to avoid their negative effects.

Attitude

Principle: A mental position or emotion about people or events influences the approach to those people or events, and that approach influences outcome.

How and Why: There is a big difference between what a person thinks and what a person does. Everyone is entitled to his or her thoughts. This includes police officers, and all the people they serve.

However, problems can occur when people lose awareness of the boundary between their thoughts and the objects of those thoughts. The mind tends to organize the evidence-gathering of the senses so that people and events appear to fit preconceived notions, stereotypes, prejudices and opinions. Sometimes the match is close to reality; often it is not. In either case, people tend to see evidence which supports their preconceptions and to overlook or discount evidence which does not support those preconceptions.

Attention to attitude is exceptionally important for the police employee because the negative forces in the police environment are pressing and immediate. If a police employee accepts the invitation and forms a rigid attitude which matches those negative forces, everyone suffers: The employee, his or her friends, family, co-workers, superiors, subordinates and the public. The one who suffers most is the employee. Harboring a negative attitude causes more and more stress to oneself.

Thinking is not harmful; however, putting thoughts into action can be. Therefore, deliberately harboring destructive thoughts can be risky, particularly for an honest person, because repeated thoughts tend toward expression — conscious or unconscious — in action. This tendency directly threatens officer safety. An officer's negative attitude toward individuals of a certain group can adversely influence behavior in moments of crisis, turning a situation which was under control into one which is out of control.

Police employees are entitled to their personal beliefs. However, these employees cannot allow beliefs to interfere with the performance of their duties. It is incumbent upon police employees to strive for the elimination of negative attitudes, which might impair their impartiality or effectiveness.

Verbal Behavior

Principle: Speaking in a way that takes into account the unique characteristics and surroundings of the listener tends to increase the clarity of communication.

How and why: Everything a police professional does requires speaking. There are four kinds of speaking: requesting, promising, declaring and asserting. People ask for things (request); say they will, will not, might, or might not do things (promise); say things are so because of authority (declare); and say things are so because of evidence (assert). Speaking and listening with disciplined awareness of these distinctions is a simple solution to many communication problems.

Simply assuming that the spoken message is going to be understood by others is not acceptable. For the police professional it is essential that clarification is requested when mixed messages are received. Speaking directly and definitively will assure the message is received and understood. Additionally, listening and asking for clarification will assure others involved that their message is being heard and understood.

Non-Verbal Behavior

Principle: Reinforcing verbal behavior with non-verbal behavior that sends the same messages tends to clarify communication.

How and why: Because police work is an occupation that deals mainly with people, words are one of the most powerful tools of the trade. However, there are many subtle messages sent by means other than words. These non-verbal messages can help or hinder the spoken message.

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When dealing with people, actions have priority over words in conveying feelings and intentions. They can signal that the communicator is angry, feels threatened, lacks respect, or fears losing control of the situation.

Developing a non-verbal vocabulary requires conscious observation of its use. Masters of non-verbal communication enhance the message potential of their words, get their message across quickly and easily, and get desired action with minimum confusion. Mastery of non-verbal communication can dramatically reduce stress in human relations.

Openness

Principle: Ready accessibility, willingness to hear and consider, and freedom from pretense or concealment tend to stimulate trust and cooperation.

How and why: Openness of operation is the policy of the Plano Police Department. Fully implementing this policy requires a combination of openness and discretion in every employee.

Police employees hear much that should not be repeated. They enter peoples' private lives, often without invitation, and witness private matters. They must deceive the deceivers and yet not become tainted by deceit. They must sometimes pretend to be what they are not.

When employees convey ready accessibility and willingness to hear and consider, the public can more easily accept the need for concealment in some police operations. Openness in human relations does not mean telling everyone everything.

In people occupations, listening is the most readily available and effective tool the professional has. By carefully listening to a person, a police employee allows that person to discharge pent-up emotions, lower tension level and reduce anxiety.

People like to know what is happening and why something is being done to them. A simple explanation by the officer will satisfy curiosity, reduce anger and head off a possible complaint. Telling the person why he or she is being stopped, why handcuffs are necessary, or why a citation is being issued points out the logical, non-personal nature of the behavior. This changes the situation from a personal entanglement to a professional contact.

Most people are particularly sensitive about being touched physically. Being touched uninvited, especially by an authority figure, may represent an intrusion and an attack on one's personal integrity. Violent reactions, altercations and complaints have resulted when insufficient attention was paid to this psychological or cultural reality.

In general, the police professional does not touch people unnecessarily. In routine situations, experienced employees reduce tension by giving a brief explanation before touching. This is merely a professional technique which smoothes the way to getting the job done with the least amount of strain.

Department employees must also be aware that their statements tend to be heard as Police Department statements. Frequently, due to public expectations and because of accessibility, police employees, particularly police officers, are invited to express personal opinions. These invitations should be diplomatically declined when an employee is on duty or in uniform. Unless there is a reason not to, employees should supply requested information, refer the requestor to a source of that information, or refer the requestor to the appropriate person within the department to provide the information. Employees should be particularly careful at all times to avoid representing their opinions as facts.

Finally, Department employees must avoid any suggestion that the Department, or they, while acting in their capacity as a member or representative of the Department, is biased for or against any racial, ethnic, religious, social or political group.

Objectivity

Principle: Dealing with facts or conditions without distortion by personal feelings, prejudice or interpretations tends to produce decisions and actions consistent with those facts.

How and why: A police professional is objective. This professional can maintain a cool head in a variety of tense, provocative situations. He or she is able to step back from emotion-charged situations and see them from a broad perspective.

True police professionals do not see themselves as punishers, because this is outside their professional standards. They keep their professional identity intact under the most difficult circumstances. They recognize they are part of a team, and they do not assume the unrealistic burden of winning the game alone.

In handling difficult people, every police employee must ask whose problem it is. By recognizing the source of the problem, the employee is able to control the situation, keep the contact politely impersonal, and avoid a degrading — and potentially dangerous — altercation.

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Perspective

Principle: Mental and emotional stability tend to exist in proportion to the capacity to view things, people and events in the largest possible framework.

How and why: Police work involves serious and sometimes tragic human events. Repeated exposure can lead to a tendency to shut off all feelings and appear gruff and serious, to the point of coldness.

This is an occupational hazard that usually diminishes with experience. The person who does not take himself or herself too seriously is probably the more stable and better adjusted individual, since the ability to laugh at oneself is a measure of inner security.

A good sense of humor is an asset to a person in police work. Being able to see the humor in some situations can help ease tension, lessen the burden and make interesting many incidents which might otherwise become difficult and frustrating.

Humor is one of the most powerful manipulators in human relations. It can stimulate new insight, ease tensions and support spirited cooperation. It can also stifle new insight, increase tension and block cooperation. Therefore, laughter must always be accompanied with respect and consideration of others.

Discretion is equally important. Each employee must exercise discretion to ensure that he or she protects and serves the individual and all people in the community through objective enforcement of the law.

Courtesy

Principle: Social rituals of respect, consideration, cooperation and politeness tend to originate and sustain human relations characterized by those qualities.

How and why: Effective law enforcement depends on a high degree of cooperation between Department employees and the public. The practice of courtesy in all public contacts encourages understanding and appreciation. People rightfully expect fair and courteous treatment by police. While the urgency of a situation might preclude the ordinary social amenities, discourtesy under any circumstance is indefensible.

Tone of voice and manner of speaking can convey messages which reinforce or cancel out the words used. When employees treat others with courtesy and consideration, they are clearly setting the level and tone for the kind of transaction they expect. Cursing at people; calling them by uncomplimentary names; or referring to them by skin color, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status are inappropriate. The proper method of address is sir or ma'am or Mr., Miss, or Mrs. and the last name, even when the situation is a difficult one. The use of first names or becoming overly familiar with people can lead to misunderstanding and resentment. Teenagers are especially sensitive to a heavy-handed approach or the suggestion of being treated as children. Generally, addressing juvenile groups as "men" or "ladies" and using the teenager's name communicates the expectation of adult behavior and helps promote such behavior.

Recognition of individual dignity is vital in a free system of law. Just as all persons are subject to the law, all persons have a right to dignified treatment under the law. The protection of this right is the duty of every Department employee.

Compassion

Principle: Sympathetic consciousness of others' distress and the desire to alleviate it tends to neutralize stereotyping, prejudice, cynicism, arrogance and provocation.

How and why: Simple compassion probably brings more young men and women into the police service than any other single human quality. Yet soon after entering that service, these men and women are confronted with human problems so serious and so enduring that it impacts their ability to express compassion towards others.

Compassion creates the opportunity for meaningful accomplishment in police work, if only in a small way and if only for limited time. While it is not possible for a police professional to end crime, a career filled with protecting and serving can do much to alleviate the distress that crime causes.

Stereotyping

Principle: Fixed beliefs that are held in common by members of a group and that allow no individuality or critical judgment tend to produce decisions and actions more consistent with those beliefs than the facts.

How and why: Working hypotheses, based on past experiences with people, are an important and necessary tool of the

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professional police employee. However, these working data should not be confused with stereotypes, which are exaggerated assumptions based largely on emotional feelings.

Stereotypes are generalizations which automatically assign certain group characteristics to anyone who happens to belong to that group. Within every group there are individuals who differ, sometimes dramatically, from the stereotype of that group.

Police have long experience with being stereotyped as a group. Within the Department, men and women of all ethnic religious, political, and cultural backgrounds are employed on an integrated, equal basis. Remarks, actions, or jokes which can be interpreted as insults, even unintentionally, must be avoided.

Some stereotyping may be inevitable and unconscious. This makes it critically important for police professionals to continuously review their beliefs about people. This is particularly so for beliefs which are deeply felt and apparently justified. Such beliefs are potentially dangerous because they tend to be unexamined. Unexamined beliefs can secretly govern decisions and actions.

Stereotyping is a threat to officer safety. Events do not always occur as it seems they will. People are not always as they appear to be. Having an open mind is essential to good human relations.

Cynicism

Principle: Contemptuous distrust of human nature and motives tends to produce decisions and actions more consistent with this distrust than with the facts.

How and why: In police work, as in other professions, a certain amount of skepticism is healthy. It means alertness and not taking things for granted, even apparently routine situations. But exposure to crime and its aftermath can tend to harden and render insensitive an employee whose sympathetic understanding is needed to properly perform his or her duties.

A cynical attitude is a negative view of life. It can be accompanied by depression, anger, or both. A depressed or angry person cannot function as efficiently as a calm, optimistic one. In addition, this attitude will surely be communicated to other people and will likely influence routine matters in a negative way.

Police employees have the occupational hazard of repeated exposure to criminals, militants, dissidents, people with problems of living, and people who do not like police. Although these people actually constitute a relatively small percentage of the total population, they may seem to represent a much larger percentage because of daily contacts. This can lead to a kind of police tunnel vision where there are only "good guys" and "bad guys" rather than a wide variety of individuals.

Although its origin is understandable, the cynical attitude is non-productive and undesirable in the professional police employee.

Prejudice

Principle: Judgments or opinions formed before the facts are known, or held in disregard of contradicting facts tend to produce decisions and actions more consistent with those judgments and opinions than with the facts.

How and why: Every police employee, like every citizen, may have private biases and personal feelings. However, when these attitudes adversely affect the manner in which the employee deals with people on the job effectiveness is thereby diminished.

Employees can be impaired by exaggerated attitudes about the superiority of their own race, gender, age, political or religious beliefs or other characteristics. They may be unable to professionally evaluate the behavior of individuals who do not share those characteristics.

People who have acknowledged a prejudice can begin to see a distinction between the prejudice and actual people and events. They may still feel that some people and events fit the prejudice, but they will also see that others do not.

Prejudices that interfere with the police employees' professional judgments and actions must be acknowledged, examined and controlled.

Arrogance

Principle: A feeling of superiority manifested in an overbearing manner tends to stimulate resistance in others.

How and why: Complaints are inevitable when police employees display an officious, superior attitude toward the public.

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The secure individual is confident, authoritative and non-defensive rather than demeaning or overly aggressive. All people are equal under the law, and even individuals who commit serious violations must be treated as human beings.

Very quickly, the officer on patrol learns that attitudes impact behavior. They find that his or her way of approaching a person tends to determine that person's response. The officer finds others negative attitude can create tension but realizes that it is imperative not to act on those feelings because it could adversely impact the officer's career as well as the Department's image. Experienced police officers have learned that it is easier to talk people into the station than to fight them in.

Former Los Angeles Chief of Police Edward M. Davis said:

The professional, competent, emotionally secure police officer does not approach situations with a "bristle." Instead, the officer actively solicits the cooperation of the individual or groups where the public peace is endangered. An officer with the ability to firmly but pleasantly solicit the cooperation of individuals or groups can frequently accomplish, through this cooperation, what it might take scores of officers to accomplish through the use of a "hard" approach to the situation.

Provocation

Principle: Extremes of negative and positive emotions tend to be stimulated by authority figures.

How and why: Because the police officer is seen in a parenting role, routine contacts may cause citizens to feel accused, guilty, angry or resentful. This can happen without any provocation on the part of the officer. A person's hostility tends to be contagious. It stimulates defensiveness, counter-hostility and raises barriers to communication. Well-trained police officers are aware of this process and are able to control their reactions. They know the anger is not directed at them personally, but at them as authority figures.

To an insecure person, not only the uniform but also the age, stature, gender, race or other characteristics of the officer can seem a challenge. This person may ridicule that characteristic of the officer and try otherwise to bait the officer into a verbal or physical conflict. Understanding the irrational basis for this behavior makes it easier for the officer not to engage it. Non-engagement tends to neutralize the provocative behavior. The person may switch to another form of provocation, and another, while the officer keeps turning attention to some new aspect of the real issue. Often through this kind of patient, professional juggling, the most difficult people lose their way and talk themselves out.

The option of physical force is available, but only when absolutely necessary. The opportunity for less violent persuasion is not always present, so it should be used whenever and wherever it can be. The professional's vulnerability to being manipulated into a fight is reduced through self-awareness and understanding of the source of the antagonists' irrational provocations.

On the other hand, no police professional tolerates physical abuse, but takes prompt action to contain — though not to punish — an assaultive suspect.

The Employee Environment

Division of Labor: Law enforcement professionalism is enhanced when police officers perform only those tasks which require police knowledge and skills. The Department employs civilians in positions which have different requirements. In addition to releasing officers for more traditional police tasks, employment of civilians makes it possible to hire people for their specialized skills.

Separating employees into these two groups, sworn and civilian, is intended to divide the work of police service and accomplish it most efficiently. These classifications are not intended to divide people doing the work. Much like the distinctions of rank and position, the distinction of sworn and civilian should be used strictly to advance the police mission. The success of interactions between employees from different job classifications, ranks, and positions depends heavily on human relations skills.

Dignity and respect: Dignity is self-esteem. Respect is esteem for others. This combination of self-esteem and esteem for others — of dignity and respect — is the starting place for all successful human relations.

Rules against political, religious and racial discrimination are well established. Rules against sexual discrimination, including sexual harassment, are also well established.

People of different races, creeds, genders, cultures and ages have different methods of approach, interaction, and separation. These methods vary from community to community, organization to organization, and person to person. What

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works in one setting may not work in another; what is acceptable today may not be tomorrow.

There is a simple question which answers it: "Can I do what I am about to do with dignity and respect." If the answer is no, the action should not be taken.

The most effective employees know they are responsible for their own dignity and respect. They do not require the presence of dignified and respectable people before they can, themselves, manifest those qualities.

The police personality: Many kinds of people choose a career in police service. Studies on people coming into police work show that the majority are above average in intelligence, are more emotionally stable than the average person, and are usually motivated by the need for action, recognition and responsibility. In addition, most people in police work tend to be conscientious, energetic and ambitious and are interested in upgrading themselves by achieving higher educational and occupational status.

Significantly, nearly every candidate for the police profession expresses the desire to make the community a better place in which to live.

To feel self-confident and to function effectively under discouraging circumstances, the person doing police work needs a good measure of inner security. Without a positive sense of self, the person in police work is likely to be overly anxious, insecure, and, consequently, less able to handle efficiently a wide range of problems and people.

Men and women in police work are subject to the same kinds of feelings and tensions as other people. Police work is a stressful occupation. The multiple pressures of the job create a burden which may affect physical or emotional well-being.

To adapt to the increased stresses in police work, it is important for officers to have a stable home life and outside interests in sports or hobbies to counterbalance the tensions and demands of their profession.

Alcoholism, drug abuse, and stress: Police officers are frequently required to make decisions affecting human life and liberty in difficult situations where there is little time for reflection and no opportunity to seek advice. Law enforcement in a free and complex society requires officers to have the stamina, intelligence, moral courage and emotional stability to deal fairly with human beings in many complicated and potentially explosive situations. Because the police profession is so demanding, it requires that employees be unswervingly dedicated to one another's well-being.

Every employee should be aware of the symptoms of alcoholism, drug abuse and stress. Employees should not hesitate to seek professional assistance for themselves, to offer help to fellow employees affected by these disorders, and to encourage such employees to seek professional assistance. In the case of illegal drug abuse, there is the additional responsibility to inform Department management.

Typically, ignoring these problems does not make them go away; they tend, instead, to mount steadily until some catastrophe demands action. Many well-intentioned people wait too long to offer help or take preventive action. Perhaps the toughest of all human relations assignments are the ones that call for effective intervention in the problems of alcoholism, drug abuse and stress.

Finally

In closing, the job that each employee performs is vital to the success of the department. As it takes each component for a car to perform, from the tires on the road to the smallest bolt within the engine compartment, the success of the department is found in the performance of each employee. No job is too small, or unimportant. Value is found through the contribution each person makes. Remember the value in your contribution each day and see it through to completion. The result will be personal, as well as departmental, success.