

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDER 1.1.1**



Title: OATH OF OFFICE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY

Effective Date: March 10th, 2017

Revised: November 22nd, 2022

Accreditation Standards: 1.1.1, 1.2.1

Pages: 3

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ralph W. Benson III".

By Order of Ralph W. Benson III, Chief of Police

PURPOSE: To provide the officers of West Whiteland Township Police Department a clear understanding of the law enforcement agency role, the significance and the solemnity of the oath of office and the importance of comprehending and adhering to the oath of office and to provide for the recognition of police authority and the associated limitations of authority.

POLICY: It will be the policy of the West Whiteland Township Police Department to have all sworn members adhere and subscribe to the oath of office. Each member of the West Whiteland Township Police Department, prior to assuming sworn status, is required to take and subscribe to an Oath of Office. It will also be the policy of the West Whiteland Township Police Department to operate within its limits of authority.

PROCEDURE:

I. Oath of Office (PLEAC 1.1.1)

- A. The West Whiteland Township Police Department Oath of Office shall at a minimum include the language, “I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support, obey, and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the Pennsylvania Constitution, and the laws of Pennsylvania and West Whiteland Township, and that I will discharge the duties of my office with fidelity”.
- B. In this Oath of Office, sworn officers shall acknowledge that they will uphold, obey and enforce the law without consideration to a person’s race, color, sex, religious creed, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, handicap or disability.
- C. This Oath of Office will be administered orally by the Assistant to the Township Manager or a Magisterial District Judge. A signed and notarized copy will be placed in the officer’s personnel file.
- D. Any person failing or refusing to take the Oath of Office shall be discharged immediately by the proper appointing authority. All newly hired officers will be on a one-year probationary period. This probationary period will commence from the date the officer takes the Oath of Office.

II. Legal Authority (PLEAC 1.2.1a)

- A. [The Second Class Township Code](#), in [Article XV: Corporate Powers, Section 1506](#), General Powers, grants to the elected Board of Supervisors the corporate powers of Townships of the Second Class to make and adopt all such ordinances, by-laws, rules, and regulations which may be deemed necessary for proper management, care and control of the Township, its finances, and the maintenance of peace.
 - 1. [Article XIX: Township Police](#), Section 1901, Appointment of Police, provides specifically for Township Police; including Appointment of Police (Section 1902), Powers (Section 1905), Shield (Section 1906), and Equipment (Section 1907), Lockups (Section 1908).
- B. The Township of West Whiteland Police Department is a legally constituted police department of a government entity, having been organized on October 1, 1973 by the Township of West Whiteland under provisions of the Second Class Township Code.
- C. As employees of a municipal police department, West Whiteland Township Police Officers are certified as municipal police officers under L. 1974, Act 120, eff. 6/18/74, establishing the “Municipal Police Officers’ Education and Training Commission” (MPOETC). Under the Act, a “police officer” is any full or part-time employee of a city, borough, town, township, or county police department assigned to criminal and/or traffic law enforcement duties.
- D. Police officers who are certified by the MPOETC are eligible to carry and use weapons in the performance of their duties, make arrests and/or otherwise

enforce the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and their respective municipalities. (PLEAC 1.2.1b)