

# The University of Pennsylvania Police Department

## Canons of Police Ethics

### ***Article I: Primary Responsibility of Job***

The primary responsibility of the police service and of the individual officer is the protection of the people of the United States through the upholding of their laws; chief among these is the Constitution of the United States and its amendments. The law enforcement officer always represents the whole of the community and it's legally expressed will and is never the arm of any political party or clique.

### ***Article II: Limitations of Authority***

The first duty of a law enforcement officer, as upholder of the law, is to know its bounds upon themselves in enforcing it. Because they represent the legal will of the community, be it local, state, or federal, they must be aware of the limitations and proscriptions which the people, through law, have placed upon them. They must recognize the genius of the American system of government which gives absolute power to no person, group, or institution; and they must insure that they, as a prime defender of that system, does not pervert its character.

### ***Article III: Duty to be Familiar with the Law, with One's Responsibilities, and Responsibilities of Other Public Officials***

The law enforcement officer shall, assiduously apply themselves to the study of the principles of the laws which they are sworn to uphold. They will make certain of their responsibilities in the particulars of their enforcement, seeking aid from their superiors in matters of technicality or principle when these are not clear to them; they will make special effort to fully understand their relationship to other public officials, including other law enforcement agencies, particularly on matters of jurisdiction, both geographically and substantively.

### ***Article IV: Utilization of Proper Means to Gain Proper Ends***

The law enforcement officer shall be mindful of their responsibility to pay strict heed to the selection of means in discharging duties of their office. Violations of law or disregard for public safety and property on the part of an officer are intrinsically wrong; they are self-defeating in that they instill in the public mind a like disposition. The employment of illegal means, no matter how worthy the end, is certain to encourage disrespect for the law and its officers. If the law is to be honored it must first be honored by those who enforce it.

### ***Article V: Cooperation with Public Officials in the Discharge of their Authorized Duties***

The law enforcement officer shall cooperate fully with other public officials in the discharge of authorized duties, regardless of party affiliation or personal prejudice. They shall be meticulous, however, in assuring themselves of the propriety, under the law, of such actions and shall guard against the use of their office or person, whether knowingly or unknowingly, in any improper or illegal action. In any situation open to question, they shall seek authority from their superior officer, giving them a full report of the proposed service or action.

### ***Article VI: Private Conduct***

The law enforcement officer shall be mindful of their special identification by the public as an upholder of the law. Laxity of conduct or manner in private life, expressing either disrespect for the law or seeking to gain special privilege, cannot but reflect upon the police officer and the police service. The community and the service require that the law enforcement officer lead the life of a decent and honorable person. Following the career of a peace officer gives no person special prerequisites. It does

give the satisfaction and pride of following and furthering an unbroken tradition of safeguarding the American Republic. The officer who reflects upon this tradition will not degrade it. Rather, they will so conduct their private life that the public will regard them as an example of stability, fidelity, and morality.

***Article VII: Conduct Toward the Public***

The law enforcement officer, mindful of their responsibility to the whole community, shall deal with individuals of the community in a manner calculated to instill respect for its laws and its police service. The law enforcement officer shall conduct their official life in a manner that will inspire confidence and trust. Thus, they will be neither over-bearing nor subservient, as no individual citizen has an obligation to stand in awe of them nor a right to command them. The officer will give service where they can and require compliance with the law. They will do neither from personal preference or prejudice, but rather as a duly appointed officer of the law discharging their sworn obligation.

***Article VIII: Conduct in Arresting and Dealing with Law Violators***

The law enforcement officer shall use their powers of arrest strictly in accordance with the law and with due regard to the rights of the citizen concerned. Their office gives them no right to prosecute the violator nor to mete out punishment for the offense. They shall at all times have a clear appreciation of their responsibilities and limitations regarding detention of the violator; they shall conduct themselves in such a manner as will minimize the possibility of having to use force. To this end, they shall cultivate a dedication to the service of the people and the equitable upholding of their laws whether in the handling of law violators or in dealing with the law-abiding.

***Article IX: Gifts and Favors***

The law enforcement officer, representing government, bears the heavy responsibility of maintaining through their own conduct the honor and integrity of all government institutions. They shall, therefore, guard against placing themselves in a position in which any person can expect special consideration or in which the public can reasonably assume that special consideration is being given. Thus, they should be firm in refusing gifts, favors, or gratuities, large or small, which can be interpreted by the public mind as capable of influencing their judgment in the discharge of their duties.

***Article X: Presentation of Evidence***

The law enforcement officer shall be concerned equally in the prosecution of the wrong-doer and the defense of the innocent. They shall ascertain what constitutes evidence and shall present such evidence impartially and without malice. In so doing, they will ignore social, political, and all other distinctions among the persons involved, strengthening the tradition of the reliability and integrity of an officer's word.

The law enforcement officer shall take special pains to increase their perception and skill of observation, mindful that in many situations theirs is the sole impartial testimony to the facts of the case.

***Article XI: Attitude toward Profession***

The law enforcement officer shall regard the discharge of their duties as a public trust and recognize their responsibility as a public servant. By diligent study and sincere attention to self-improvement, they shall strive to make the best possible application of science to the solution of crime and, in the field of human relationships, strive for effective leadership and public influence in matters affecting public safety. They shall appreciate the importance and responsibility of their office; hold police work to be an honorable profession rendering valuable service to their community and their country.

## ***Law Enforcement Code of Ethics***

**As a law enforcement officer**, my fundamental duty is to serve humankind; 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 persons to liberty, equality, and justice.

**I will** keep my private life unsullied as an example to all; maintain courageous calm in the faces of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land 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, 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 the police service. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession...law enforcement.