



Ethics in Law Enforcement

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the general parameters of ethical conduct that is expected by all sworn members of this department, both on and off-duty.

II. POLICY

A. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department, that sworn members will perform their professional duties competently and conscientiously in full accordance with the law as well as departmental rules and regulations and agency values.

B. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department, that sworn members, while on-duty, will uniformly treat private citizen's in a civil and equitable manner, regardless of the circumstances of the sworn member citizen contact or citizen's status.

C. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department that sworn members will conduct their off-duty personal lives in a mature, law-abiding and exemplary manner.

D. The policy of the Ridgely Police Department, applies to all sworn members.

E. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department, that all sworn members will be guided by the provisions of the IACP law enforcement ethic statement.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. **Corrupt Practices:** Conduct by sworn members that involves profiting from their misuse of authority of office, usually for personal gain for themselves or others, including bribery, extortion, fraud and perjury.

B. **Gratuities:** Gifts, advantages or favors, solicited or unsolicited, by sworn members of any rank, from a citizen or other public official, that may tend to influence or compromise the member's duty performance, so that future considerations may be reasonably expected by the citizen-benefactor.

General Order No. 1-1 (Cont.)

C. Noble Cause Intent: The phenomenon of officers who engage in misconduct or commit a criminal act, in the belief the end result will justify their actions.

D. Malfeasance: The intentional commission of a prohibited act.

E. Misfeasance: The proper performance of a required act.

F. Nonfeasance: Failure to perform a required act.

IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A. Sworn members are personally and professionally responsible for compliance with all laws and agency rules and regulations. They cannot consider themselves exempt from any law or regulation based on any situational basis, either work related or off-duty.

B. Sworn members cannot engage in any misconduct either on or off-duty, that might discredit themselves or the department. Police misconduct, is impropriety in public office, either by commission or omission and is understood to include:

1. Malfeasance
2. Misfeasance
3. Nonfeasance

C. Sworn members are responsible for their actions, both on and off-duty, and they are required to fully cooperate with any official inquiry into their performance and behavior.

D. Sworn members shall treat other agency members both sworn and civilian, in a civil, professional and collegial manner. Harassment and discrimination either in or out of the workplace, directed at either coworkers or private citizens is expressly prohibited.

E. Sworn members shall not accept gratuities. This proscription applies to all ranks and positions – No Exceptions.

F. All sworn members, particularly in command positions, must avoid any possibly conflicts of interest which might discredit themselves or this department.

G. Corrupt practices, regardless of any presumed “noble cause intent”, will not be tolerated on the part of any sworn member.

H. Sworn members can cause any reasonable means to protect themselves or to effect compliance with a lawful enforcement action. Excessive use of force is strictly prohibited.

General Order No. 1-1 (Cont.)

I. Sworn members shall be constantly cognizant of the unique role that discretion plays in their authority as law enforcement officers, along with its corollary of confidentiality with regard to both department matters and the public's right to privacy.

J. Although this policy was primarily created for sworn members, it is also applicable to civilians employees as well.