



Rules of Conduct

I. AUTHORITY

The Chief of Police shall have the power to make any rules necessary to promote the effective and efficient performance of the Ridgely Police Department and to insure the good government of the Department and its employees.

The authority of the Chief of Police shall also include the power, "To suspend, amend, rescind, abrogate, or cancel any rule adopted by him or any former Chief of Police."

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department that all employees shall comply with the rules of conduct as herein stated, with the additions and amendments to these rules that may be promulgated and with all other orders and directives, either verbal or written, which may be issued by authority. The violation of any rule or conduct, procedure, or lawful order, whether written or verbal, subjects the violators to disciplinary action.

Ignorance of the rules, procedures, and orders of the Ridgely Police Department is not justification for any such violation. An employee shall be responsible for his own acts and he may not transfer to others his responsibility for executing or failure to execute any lawful order or policy duty.

III. COURTESY

A. An employee shall be courteous to the public and to fellow employees. He shall be tactful in the performance of his duties, shall control his temper and exercise utmost patience and discretion, and shall not engage in argumentative discussions, even in the face of extreme provocation. While on duty or in the performance of his duties, he shall not use coarse, violent, profane or obscene language or gestures toward the public or fellow employees. He shall not express any prejudice or use language which is insulting or demeaning to the public or fellow employees concerning race, sex, religion, politics, national origin, lifestyle, mental or physical disabilities or other personal characteristics.

B. Police employees will at all times show respect for their fellow employees and will conform to the rules of military courtesy and military discipline or prescribed by the Chief of Police.

General Order No. 1-2 (Cont.)

IV. UNBECOMING CONDUCT

A. Every employee shall conduct himself at all times, both on and off duty, in a manner which reflects most favorably on the Ridgely Police Department. The phrase "reflects most favorably" pertains to the perceptions of both citizens and other Department employees. Conduct unbecoming an employee shall include that which tends to bring the Department into disrepute, or reflects discredit upon the employee as a representative of the Department or that tends to impair the operation or efficiency of the Department or employee.

B. A supervisor will not injure or discredit a subordinate through unreasonable, unjust, arbitrary, or tyrannical conduct, or abusive language.

C. An employee of the Ridgely Police Department shall not maliciously threaten, strike, or assault any other employee of the Department.

V. INSUBORDINATION

A. Employees of the Ridgely Police Department shall, unless otherwise directed by competent authority, transact all official business with employee's senior in rank or classification; only through the Official Chain of Command.

B. An employee shall promptly obey all lawful orders of a superior, including those from a superior relayed by an employee of equal or lesser rank. A lawful order is any order, either verbal or written, which an employee should reasonably believe to be in keeping with the performance of his duties.

C. Employees will obey all orders from superiors, whether written or verbal, except when compliance with such orders would require the commission of an illegal act. No employee without adequate justification will intentionally issue an order that is contrary to an order issued by a superior. Employees to whom conflicting orders are issued will call attention to such conflict; however, if the conflict is not resolved, the last order will be obeyed. Any order may be countermanded in an emergency. An employee countermanding a prior order will immediately report the reason for his action to the Chief of Police. Responsibility for all prudent and reasonable action necessary for compliance with orders will remain with the superior officer issuing the order. Accountability for all action taken in compliance with orders remains that of the person taking such action.

D. At the scene of any incident, the assigned police employee shall be in charge until relieved at the direction of another police employee senior in rank.

General Order No. 1-2 (Cont.)

VI. CRITICISM

An employee shall not criticize or ridicule the Ridgely Police Department or any other police agency, or the Maryland Judiciary, or any other government agency and/or member, their policies, or their officers by speech, in writing, or by expression in any other matter, when such speech, writing, or other expression is inflammatory, or obscene, unlawful, exhibits a reckless disregard for truthfulness, or tends to undermine the operation of the Ridgely Police Department, other police agencies, the judiciary, or any other government agency by impairing their efficiency or interfering with their operation or maintenance of discipline.

VII. ABUSE OF POSITION

A. While deprived of police power, police employees of the Ridgely Police Department will not wear the uniform and will not represent themselves in an official capacity as an employee of this Department.

B. An employee is prohibited from using his/her official position or Official Identification Card or badge for personal or financial benefit or as a means of obtaining privileges not otherwise available to him, or for avoiding consequences of illegal acts. An employee may not lend his identification card or badge to another person, or permit it to be photographed or reproduced without the approval of the Chief of Police.

C. An employee shall not permit or authorize the use of his name, photograph, or official title identifying him as an employee of the Ridgely Police Department in connection with testimonial or advertisements of any commodity or commercial enterprise, or for personal reasons without the approval of the Chief of Police.

D. An employee shall not sign a petition, without the authority of the Chief of Police when his signature identifies him/her as an employee of the Department; nor shall any employee sign any petition which has an unlawful purpose. However, any employee may sign a lawful petition as a private citizen.

E. An employee shall not address a public gathering, appear on radio or television, prepare any article for publication, act as a correspondent to a newspaper or a periodical, release or divulge investigative information or any other matters of the agency either in an official or unofficial capacity without first having obtained permission from the Chief of Police.

VIII. ASSOCIATIONS

A. An employee shall avoid associations or dealings with persons whom he knows, or should know, are racketeers, gamblers, felons, persons under criminal investigation or indictment, or others who have a reputation in the community for felonious or criminal behavior, except as directed otherwise by a superior. (The purpose of the rule is to maintain the integrity of the employee and to avoid relationships which would tend to impair the operation of the Department.)

General Order No. 1-2 (Cont.)

B. An employee shall not visit or enter a house of prostitution, gambling house, or any other establishment wherein the laws of the U.S., the laws of the State, or any other law or ordinance of a political subdivision are violated except in the performance of duty and while acting in response to lawful and specific orders of a supervisor.

C. Any employee of the Department shall not in any manner affiliate themselves with any organization, associations, movement, group or combination of persons which advocates the overthrow of the Government of the U.S. or any State, or which has adopted a policy of advocating or approving the commissions of acts of force or violence to deny any person his rights under the Constitution of the U.S. or any State.

IX. IMMORAL CONDUCT

Every employee shall maintain a level of moral conduct in his personal affairs which is keeping with the highest standards of the law enforcement profession. No employee shall be a participant in any incident involving moral turpitude which compromises or has the potential to compromise his ability as a law enforcement officer or as an employee of the Ridgely Police Department or causes the Department to be brought into disrepute.

X. CONFORMANCE TO LAWS

An employee shall not violate his oath of office and trust or any other condition of his employment with the Town of Ridgely or commit an offense punishable under the laws or statutes of the U.S. or any Sovereign Nation, the State of Maryland, or public local laws or ordinances. Any employee who has been charged with a violation of any law, statute, or public local law must report the facts concerning such violation immediately to the Chief of Police. Parking violations are exempt except when they apply to a Ridgely Police Department vehicle.

XI. PAYMENT OF DEBTS

A. Employees of the Ridgely Police Department shall make every effort to pay all just debts and legal liabilities. Disciplinary action may be taken when:

1. Judgments of creditors have been finally adjudicated and the employee, even though able to pay, has refused to comply with such judgment, or
2. The effects of such indebtedness have adversely affected the ability of the employee to perform his job or have negatively reflected on the reputation or effectiveness of the Ridgely Police Department.

General Order No. 1-2 (Cont.)

B. Absent extenuating circumstances, disciplinary action shall be inappropriate where:

1. The employee has made a genuine and sincere effort to pay his/her debts, or
2. The employee has filed for a voluntary bankruptcy petition.

XII. SEEKING OR ACCEPTING GIFTS, GRATUITIES/BRIBES

A. A police employee shall not solicit, seek, or accept any gift or gratuity, including food or drink for himself or another from any individual, business establishment, or merchant, where such offer of acceptance can be construed to be an effort to influence his official conduct as a Ridgely Police Department Officer.

B. A police employee shall not receive, seek, solicit or share in any fee, received or other reimbursement for the performance of his official duties, or for his failure to perform official duties, except as directed by the Chief of Police. He shall immediately report any offer, or attempt to offer, of money, gift, or other gratuity made in an effort to influence his/her official conduct.

C. Employees of the Ridgely Police Department shall not solicit or accept any subscription or contribution for any purpose whatsoever except in conformance with the Ridgely Police Department policy.

XIII. POLITICAL ACTIVITY

A. The political association and political conduct of employees of the Ridgely Police Department shall be in conformance with established policies and procedures of this Department.

B. Except as herein noted, all employees of this Department have the same right to engage in political activities as any other citizen. Employees uncertain of the propriety of the political activity in which they desire to participate should request the assistance of the Attorney General's Office.

C. Politically active employees should be familiar with and governed by Article 33 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Election Code.

D. Employees of this office may engage in any political activity not prohibited by local, State or Federal Statues.

E. Employees of this Department shall not use their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the results of an election, or a nomination for office.

F. Employees of this Department will not directly or indirectly coerce, command, advise, or promise to reward a state or local officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a political party, committee, organization, agency or person for political purposes.

General Order No. 1-2 (Cont.)

XIV. LABOR ACTIVITIES

An employee shall not engage in any strike or job action. Strike or job action includes, but is not limited to, a failure to report for duty, willful absence from duty, unauthorized holidays, sickness unsubstantiated by physician's statement, stoppage of work, or the abstinence in whole or in part from the full, faithful, and proper performance of duties of employment for the purpose of inducing, influencing, or coercing a change in conditions, compensation, rights, privileges, or obligations of employment.

XV. AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

A. An employee shall submit all reports both verbal and written, required by the office, on time and in accordance with established procedures. All official business transacted by Ridgely Police Department employees must be processed through channels.

B. The following procedure will govern the submission of reports in administrative investigations.

1. During an administrative investigation an accused employee shall upon order of competent authority, submit a written report detailing the facts concerning his involvement in the incident being investigated where the incident is related specifically, directly, and narrowly to the performance of his/her official duties.

2. Whenever an employee of the Ridgely Police Department is ordered to submit a detailed report concerning an incident in which he is alleged to have been involved and if the authority ordering the report knows or should have known that the report is likely to contain information which may be used as evidence against the employee in a disciplinary hearing then the authority ordering the report, will at the time of such order, provide the member with a copy of notification of complaint - Waiver of Rights. The form should clearly state that the recipient is the subject of investigation, and clearly include the nature of the investigation. These criteria do not apply to the submission of procedural reports.

C. A police employee shall report to his superior all information that comes to his attention concerning organized crime, racketeering, vice conditions, etc.

D. Reports submitted by the employees to this Department will be truthful, no employee shall knowingly report or cause to be reported any false information. A clear distinction must be made between reports which contain false information and others which contain inaccurate or improper information. To prove a preponderance of evidence that one has submitted a false report, evidence must be presented for consideration that such report is designedly untrue, deceitful, or made with the intent to deceive the person to whom it was directed.

E. All reports submitted by employees of the office will be complete and will not contain improper or inaccurate information. Inaccurate or improper information may be characterized by that which is untrue by mistake or accident or made in good faith, after the exercise of reasonable care.

General Order No. 1-2 (Cont.)

F. An employee shall treat the official business of the Ridgely Police Department as confidential. Information regarding official business shall be disseminated only to those for whom it is intended. An employee may remove or copy official records or reports from a police agency only as needed in the performance of their official duties. An employee shall not divulge the identity of a person giving confidential information, except as authorized.

G. The use of the Ridgely Police Department telephones (including fax machines) shall be limited to the conduct of official business except for emergency calls or as approved by the Chief of Police.

XVI. INTERROGATIONS

A. In all instances where an employee of the Ridgely Police Department has been accused of an act of misconduct or of any other impropriety, the commission of which is a violation of any Ridgely Police Department rules of conduct, procedure, the employee shall, after being advised of their rights as specified in the Ridgely Police Department Disciplinary Procedures be subject to the procedures outlined. To the extent that the allegations of misconduct against the employee may also involve a violation of the Criminal Law, the procedures outlined must be administered consistent with established constitutional rights.

B. During any administrative investigation an accused employee shall, at the request of competent authority, submit to an interrogation and polygraph examination. The questions asked during the interrogation and the polygraph examination will be related specifically, directly, and narrowly to the performance of the employee's official duties and to the subject matter of the current investigation.

C. By order of competent authority, an employee shall submit to any medical, chemical, or other tests, photographs, lineups. All procedures shall be specifically, directly, and narrowly related to the nature and scope of the accused employment and conduct.

XVII. REPORTING FOR DUTY

A. An employee of the Department shall not absent himself without properly approved leave.

B. An employee shall report for duty at the time and place specified by his superior and shall be physically and mentally fit to perform his/her duty. They shall be properly equipped and cognizant of information required for the proper performance of duty so that they may immediately assume their duties.

C. Every employee shall log or have logged on the appropriate forms the time his tour of duty began and ended and the times of their arrival and departure from the office they report to. Notification will be made by radio.

D. If an employee of the Department is unable to report for duty due to sickness or other causes, such employee shall, as soon as possible, notify his immediate superior of the reasons for his absence.

General Order 1-2 (Cont.)

E. Police employees, while off duty, shall be subject to call at all times. In the event of an emergency or potential emergency, police employees ordered to an "inactive - on call" duty status and those required to leave word where they may be reached.

XVIII. FICTITIOUS ILLNESS OR INJURY REPORT

An employee shall not feign illness or injury, falsely report himself ill or injured, or otherwise deceive or attempt to deceive any official of the Department as to the condition of his health.

XIX. INTERFERENCE WITH DUTY

A. An employee shall not attempt to bring influence to bear on the Chief of Police for the purpose of avoiding penalties for violations of the Ridgely Police Department Policies, Rules, Procedures or Orders.

B. An employee shall not interfere with cases assigned to other employees for investigation without consent, except by order of a Supervisor. An employee shall not interfere with any lawful arrest or any prosecution brought by other police employees of the Ridgely Police Department by any other agency or person.

C. An employee of the Department shall not be directly or indirectly concerned with making arrangements, agreements, or compromises between a criminal and a person who has suffered from his criminal acts for the purpose of allowing the criminal to escape any punishment prescribed by law. Any employee having knowledge of such an arrangement, or compromise shall report such to his immediate superior without delay.

D. An employee of this Department shall not reveal the identity of a police employee assigned to plain clothes or covert investigative work. Any employee shall not recognize such employees unless such employee recognizes them first.

XX. ABUSE OF PROCESS/WITHHOLDING EVIDENCE

An employee shall not intentionally manufacture, tamper with, falsify, destroy, or withhold evidence or information, or make any false accusations of a criminal charge.

XXI. EVIDENCE/FOUND AND RECOVERED PROPERTY

Property which has been received as evidence in connection with investigations or which, for any other reasons, comes into the custody of this Department will be processed in accordance with established procedures. An employee shall not convert to his own use, manufacture, tamper with, or damage through negligence, or destroy, or in any other way misappropriate any evidence or any other material or property found in connection with an investigation or other police action, except in accordance with the Ridgely Police Department Policies.

General Order No. 1-2 (Cont.)

XXII. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

When the public request assistance or advice, either by telephone or in person, all pertinent information will be taken in an official and courteous manner, and will be acted upon consistent with the Ridgely Police Department Policies.

XXIII. CITIZENS COMPLAINTS

An employee shall courteously and promptly accept any allegation or complaint made by a citizen against any employee of the Ridgely Police Department.

XXIV. IDENTIFICATION

A. During the times that a police employee is not readily identified by the uniform of the Ridgely Police Department, he shall carry his badge or identification card on his person. He shall furnish his name, identification number to any person properly entitled to this information, at any time except when authorized not to do so by proper authority and when such refusal may be necessary for the proper performance of his police duties.

B. When a police employee makes a traffic stop or makes an arrest while in plain clothes, he shall identify himself to the violator and display their badge and/or identification card.

XXV. PERSONAL APPEARANCE

A police employee will maintain a neat, well-groomed appearance and will style his hair and wear his uniform consistent with established Department Policy and Procedure.

XXVI. NEGLECT OF DUTY

A. Agency employees shall be punctual in attendance to all calls, requirements of duty, court appointments, and other assignments.

B. An employee will not read, play games, watch television or movies, or engage in any activity or personal business while on duty that would cause him to neglect or be inattentive to their duty.

C. The failure of a police employee to take appropriate action, either on or off duty, on the occasion of a crime, disorder, or other condition deserving police or administrative attention is considered neglect of duty.

D. A police employee will not, without proper authorization, absent himself from his assigned place of work during his tour of duty.

E. An employee will remain awake and alert while he is on duty. If unable to do so, he will report to his superior officer, who will determine the proper course of action.

General Order No. 1-2 (Cont.)

F. A police employee may be authorized to suspend patrol or other assigned activity, subject to immediate recall at all times, for the purpose of having meals during his tour of duty but only for such periods and at such times as authorized by his supervisor. He will inform the Department of the telephone number and location when he leaves service.

G. A police employee will remain in his assigned patrol, and will remain in radio contact while in service.

XXVII. USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

A. An employee will not drink intoxicating beverages while in uniform or while on duty unless it is necessary for the performance of his duty. In every case where it is necessary for an employee to use intoxicating beverages while on duty, written permission must be obtained from the Chief of Police. An employee given written permission to consume intoxicating beverages while on duty may not do so to the extent that his ability to perform his duty is impaired.

B. An employee will not report to work with any level of alcohol in his system.

XXVIII. USE OF DRUGS

An employee will not use any controlled substance, narcotic, or hallucinogen, except when prescribed in the treatment of an employee by a licensed physician or dentist.

XXIX. GAMBLING

A police employee will not engage in any form of illegal gambling at any time, except in the performance of duty and while acting under proper and specific orders from the Chief of Police.

XXX. TREATMENT OF PERSONS IN CUSTODY

A. A police employee will not mistreat persons who are in his custody.

B. A police employee of the Department will not, without proper authority, release any prisoner in his charge or, through neglect or design, allow any prisoner in his charge to escape.

XXXI. USE OF FORCE

A. A police employee, acting in his official capacity, will not use unnecessary or excessive force. Ridgely Police Department employees will employ the minimum amount of force necessary to affect an arrest and overcome any resistance offered.

B. Firearms shall not be used, displayed, or handled in a careless or imprudent fashion or contrary to Ridgely Police Department Policy.

General Order No. 1-2 (Cont.)

C. Tasers shall not be used, displayed, or handled in a careless or imprudent fashion or contrary to departmental policy.

XXXII. RIDGELY POLICE DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT

A. Ridgely Police Department Equipment will be used and maintained in accordance with established Department procedures and will not be abused, damaged, altered, or through negligence, lost. An employee of the Department will not cause or contribute to the damage, abuse, alteration, or loss of any equipment through negligence or carelessness.

B. An employee will operate an official vehicle in a careful and prudent manner, and will not through negligent or careless operation incur or cause damage to be incurred to agency property or to the property of another. He/She will obey all laws of the State of Maryland and all local ordinances and conform to all agency procedures and regulations pertaining to operation and maintenance of any agency vehicle assigned to him/her on a permanent or temporary basis. An employee will at all times set a proper example for other persons by his operation of a vehicle.

C. Only employees of this Department will be permitted to operate or attempt to operate any Ridgely Police Department vehicle, or use any Ridgely Police Department firearms, or use any other item owned by the Ridgely Police Department; however, specific exceptions to this rule may be authorized by the Chief of Police.

XXXIII. INCOMPETENCE

Employees of the Ridgely Police Department shall be held strictly responsible for the proper performance of their duties. Employees shall maintain sufficient competency to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibilities of their positions. Employees shall perform their duties in a manner which will maintain the highest standards of efficiency in carrying out the functions and objections of the Ridgely Police Department.

XXIV. SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

An employee will not engage in any sexual behavior while on duty. While off duty Ridgely Police Department personnel will not engage in any sexual behavior in a Department facility or Department vehicle. Sexual behavior is defines as any sexual act, sexual contact, or vaginal intercourse as defined in the Annotated Code of Maryland.