



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

DEPARTMENT RULES

DIRECTIVE NO:**FC 0300****EFFECTIVE DATE:****May 07, 2024****CANCELS:**

FC 0300, dated June 11, 2020

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Office of the Chief

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If a provision of a regulation, departmental directive, rule, or procedure conflicts with a provision of the contract, the contract prevails except where the contract provision conflicts with State law or the Police Collective Bargaining Law. (FOP Contract, Article 61).

I. POLICY

The department's policy ensures that all employees maintain an exemplary standard of personal integrity and ethical conduct in their relationships with other employees and the community. Recognizing that our primary responsibility is to the community requires the understanding that police powers are limited and that an officer taking police action, in whatever form, is accountable to the community. The rules contained herein are designed to serve as a professional standard governing employees' conduct. The department also recognizes that employees possess certain basic individual rights. Protection of employee rights enhances the integrity of the department and further promotes the goal of furnishing to the community the highest quality of police services.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Employee: All personnel, sworn and non-sworn.
- B. Officer: A commissioned (sworn) police officer.
- C. Member: All non-sworn personnel of the Department of Police.

III. DEPARTMENT RULES

A department rule is designed to cover situations in which no deviation or flexibility is permitted. It is the employees' responsibility to familiarize themselves with the following rules:

Rule 1 - Conformance to Law

Employees are required to adhere to Departmental Rules and Regulations, Departmental Directives and Memoranda, Montgomery County Personnel Regulations, County Administrative Procedures, Executive Orders, and Montgomery County Code, and conform to all laws applicable to the general public.

Rule 2 - Compliance with Orders

- A. Employees will obey a superior's lawful order. Should a superior issue an order that conflicts with a previously issued order or directive, the employee should respectfully call attention to the conflicting order. If not rescinded by the superior, the order will stand. The responsibility for the order will rest with the issuing superior, and the employee will not be answerable for disobedience of any previously issued order.
- B. Superiors will not issue any order which they know would require a subordinate to commit any illegal, immoral, or unethical acts.
- C. Employees will not obey any order which they know would require them to commit illegal, immoral, or unethical acts.
- D. Employees will also obey a lawful order that has been relayed from a superior by an employee of the same or lesser rank.

Rule 3 - Abuse of Process

- A. Employees must not intentionally manufacture, tamper with, falsify, destroy, or withhold evidence or information, nor make any false accusations or statements regarding a criminal charge for the purpose of influencing the outcome of any investigation or subsequent trial.
- B. Employees are prohibited from providing confidential information concerning department investigations, intelligence, or operations to any unauthorized persons.
- C. Employees are prohibited from providing confidential information obtained from the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), National Crime Information Center (NCIC), or any other source to any unauthorized person, except in the performance of their duties and in accordance with proper police procedure and law.
- D. Department-accessed computer databases will only be used for legitimate law enforcement purposes. A legitimate law enforcement purpose is any purpose that directly pertains to the performance of an employee's duties.

Rule 4 - Abuse of Authority

The lawful authority entrusted to police officers will not be used improperly to interfere with *anyone's* lawful conduct. All officers must carry out their duties in a non-discriminatory manner.

Rule 5 - Reporting Requirements

- A. Employees shall immediately report, or as soon as practical, to their commander/director or bureau chief, any circumstance where the employee is:
 - 1. Arrested;
 - 2. Becomes a defendant in any criminal proceeding that may result in incarceration;
 - 3. Receives an incarcerable traffic citation as defined in the Maryland Transportation Article;
 - 4. Has their driver's license/privilege suspended, revoked, refused, or canceled that affects their ability to operate a county vehicle;
 - 5. Notified that they are the subject of a criminal investigation by any law enforcement agency;
- B. Employees shall immediately report, or as soon as practical, to their commander/director or bureau chief to be reviewed to determine if the matter impacts the employee's ability to perform their assigned police duties; if they were served with:
 - 1. Temporary protective order, temporary Ex Parte order, or other similar temporary order that impacts the employee's ability to carry a weapon or to perform their assigned police duties or any permanent protective order, permanent Ex Parte order or other similar permanent order that impacts the employee's ability to carry a weapon or to perform their assigned police duties;
- C. The employee shall provide the commander/director or bureau chief with the information (i.e., date/time/location of the alleged offense, case/docket/tracking number) required for the employer to obtain additional needed information.
- D. All information shall be considered confidential and shall only be shared on a need-to-know basis. It is recognized that all persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Rule 6 - Punctuality

- A. No employee will be absent from duty without leave or without authorization from the employee's supervisor.
- B. No employee will leave the work site prior to the end of the scheduled workday without the approval of a supervisor.

- C. An employee who fails to report for duty as scheduled or who leaves the work site prior to the end of the scheduled workday without the approval of a supervisor may be considered absent without leave and placed in a non-pay status for the period in question and be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Rule 7 - Attentiveness to Duty/Use of Alcohol/Drugs

- A. To ensure each employee's own protection and the protection of citizens and fellow employees, employees will remain awake and alert while on duty.
- B. Employees will not consume alcohol while at work or on duty except while acting under the proper and specific orders of a superior officer.
- C. Alcoholic beverages will not be consumed while wearing any part of the uniform. Further, all employees are prohibited from operating a county vehicle while, or within four hours after, consuming alcoholic beverages.
- D. An officer will not exercise any police authority, take any official police action, or represent himself as a police officer while impaired by, or under the influence of, alcohol or drugs. Impairment is defined as having a blood alcohol level (BAC) of .05% or higher. Under the influence, it is defined as having a BAC of .07% or higher.
- E. Officers will not be armed while impaired by, or under the influence of, alcohol or drugs.
- F. Employees will not take any narcotic or controlled dangerous substance unless prescribed by a physician.
- G. Employees taking prescription medication prior to or while on duty will notify their supervisor of the medication prescribed.

Rule 8 -Telephone Maintenance

Employees are required to maintain a *phone number* and inform the department of their telephone number. Any change of number will be communicated to the department within 24 hours.

Rule 9 - Carrying of Credentials and Identification

- A. Officers will carry their department credentials while on duty and while off duty when armed unless exempted by the Chief of Police. Credentials will be displayed upon request.
- B. Members of the department will carry their credentials while on duty. Credentials will be displayed upon request.
- C. Employees will furnish their full name and identification number to all persons who request the same when the employee is acting in an official capacity.

Rule 10 – Gratuities

No compensation, reward, gift, or other consideration may be solicited or accepted by employees without special permission from the Chief of Police.

Rule 11 – Secondary Employment

A. Non-Represented Employees and MCGEO Bargaining Unit Members

1. No employee of the Department of Police will engage in any other employment without the prior written approval of the Chief of Police and the County Ethics Commission.
2. Employees will not engage in secondary employment during the actual hours for which they are scheduled to work for the county while on approved sick leave, FMLA, parental leave, disability leave, administrative leave, professional improvement leave, or while on duty.
3. Uniform off-duty security employment is prohibited if the officer's police powers are suspended or revoked, the officer is in a leave without pay status, or the officer is in a leave status defined in section A.2 above.

B. FOP Bargaining Unit Members

Sworn employees who are bargaining unit members shall comply with the secondary employment provisions contained in the collective bargaining agreement between the county and the FOP.

Rule 12 – Conduct Unbecoming

No employee will commit any act which constitutes conduct unbecoming an employee of the department. Conduct unbecoming includes, but is not limited to, any criminal, dishonest, or improper conduct.

Comments:

As county employees, we are constantly being observed and judged by the community we serve. Improper behavior on the part of any employee, on or off duty, tends to reflect unfavorably on all employees and the department. "Conduct unbecoming" is a highly controversial regulation and is often viewed as a "catch-all" offense. Although non-specific, "conduct unbecoming" has been upheld in court for certain acts committed by police officers both on and off duty. The following examples of "conduct unbecoming" have been upheld by various state and federal courts throughout the country: speeding, placing an unauthorized poster in a squad room, lying in a departmental investigation, excessive absenteeism, profane language in public, barroom fighting off duty, ticket fixing, assault on a fellow officer, annoying and/or molesting bar patrons off duty, illegal possession of marijuana, horseplay with firearms, misuse of a police radio to criticize a superior, and the failure to cooperate with an internal investigation. The following examples of conduct that the courts have found not to be unbecoming include embarrassing the department by neglecting "discretion" and vigorously enforcing municipal ordinances; disrespectful but private language to the Chief of Police while under emotional stress; and filing a libel suit. These lists, although not inclusive,

further indicate how courts nationally have viewed police conduct both on and off duty. Although these court cases have involved police officers, no employee will commit any act that would unfavorably affect the department or county government.

Rule 13 - Soliciting/Endorsements

- A. Employees may not solicit votes or contributions for any prize contest nor engage in the sale of tickets or the solicitation of advertisements or business of any nature while in uniform or while representing themselves as employees of the department without prior written approval of the Chief.
- B. Employees will not authorize the use of their names, photographs, or official titles that identify them as department employees in connection with testimonials or endorsements of any product or particular commercial enterprise.

Rule 14 - Mutual Protection

An officer will promptly come to the aid of any officer who, when carrying out official duties, is in need of assistance.

Rule 15 - Untruthful Statements

Employees will not make untruthful statements, either verbal or written, pertaining to official duties.

Rule 16 – Courtesy

Employees *should* be courteous and discreet to members of the public. Employees *should* maintain proper decorum and command of temper and avoid the use of violent, insolent, or obscene language. *There are limited occasions where less than courteous language may be used for de-escalation or gaining control over chaotic situations.*

Rule 17 – Property

Property and/or contraband coming into the possession of an employee in the employee's official capacity will be reported and properly stored or otherwise disposed of in accordance with department procedures and state and local laws. *A minor administrative violation of reporting, processing, or storing property and/or contraband is a training issue, not police misconduct. This issue shall be addressed via a training refresh. Repeated violations may be handled through disciplinary action.*

Rule 18 - Meal Periods

Officers are considered on duty while on meal periods during their workday.

Rule 19 - Recognition of Plainclothes Officers

No department employee will, either visually or verbally, recognize or acknowledge any plainclothes officer until and unless that officer acknowledges them first.

Definition:

A plainclothes officer is any sworn officer who is not working in uniform. This will include Vice and Narcotics officers, Intelligence officers, officers assigned to Investigative Services, Special Assignment Team (SAT) officers, and any uniform officers on special assignment.

Comments:

To provide for the safety of undercover officers and to protect the integrity of investigations, it is imperative that all officers comply with this rule. In regard to this issue, the department recognizes that the initial contact or acknowledgment is normally accidental. This, however, does not reduce the potential for serious repercussions. Particular emphasis is placed on the recognition of officers assigned to the Special Investigations Division (SID) because their activities occur in and out of the county, range 24 hours a day, and occur in unexpected locations. Further, it is an accepted tool of law enforcement for these officers to use different identities and not carry police credentials.

Rule 20 - Discrimination/Harassment and Use of Derogatory Language

- A. Department employees will not discriminate against, harass, or use derogatory language in referring to any other employee or citizen on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or any other basis as prohibited by county, state, and federal law.
- B. Employees will not take nor contribute to any reprisal or adverse action against any individual or group who has opposed discriminatory practices or has participated in a charge, investigation, or proceeding brought under department policy or county, state, or federal law.
- C. Supervisors and/or department managers will conduct a prompt and candid inquiry into any instance of alleged discrimination or harassment that comes to their attention. All information regarding such allegations will be documented and forwarded to the Internal Affairs Division (IAD).
- D. *Discrimination in any form while exercising police powers, including racial profiling, is strictly prohibited, and the department will take immediate and appropriate action to investigate all allegations concerning such actions. Profiling is defined as any law enforcement-initiated action (e.g., traffic stops, investigative stops, etc.) based on an individual's race, religion, national origin, color, sex (including gender, gender identity, pregnancy, and sexual orientation), rather than on the individual's behavior or information identifying the individual as having engaged in criminal activity. Officers will not stop or detain any individual(s) based exclusively on their race, religion, national origin, color, or sex (including gender, gender identity, pregnancy, and sexual orientation) unless this information relates to a specific "look-out" regarding a suspect's physical description concerning a criminal investigation or other legitimate law enforcement action.*

Rule 21 - Recommending Attorneys, Bail Bond Services, or Other Services Prohibited

In the performance of their official duties, employees will not suggest, recommend, advise, or otherwise counsel the retention of any specific attorney, bail bond service, towing service, *funeral home*, or any other specific service to any person coming to their attention as a result of police business.

Comments:

The intent of this rule is to prohibit employees from making suggestions, recommendations, etc., for any specific attorney, bail bond service, etc., by name. General references, such as informing defendants they should retain an attorney or seek legal assistance, are acceptable. When employees are the subject of internal administrative investigations, they should be advised that they have the right to representation and to contact union representatives. In consultation with the employees, the appropriate union will determine specific representation, i.e., shop steward or attorney.

IV. EXEMPTIONS

In certain instances, the Chief of Police may exempt individuals or units from complying with specific rules contained in this directive. Such exemptions will be made on a case-by-case basis in recognition of individual or unit requirements for their job performance.