



CODE OF CONDUCT	Related Policies: Social Media, Use of Force, Use of CEW's, Collaborative Partnerships, Fair and Impartial Policing
<i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable Vermont Statutes/Rules:	
Date Adopted: September 13, 2021	Date Reviewed:

I. PURPOSE

The mission of the Bennington Police Department (BPD or Agency) states in part, "The BPD is accountable to the community for providing everyone, regardless of identity, with respectful and equitable law enforcement, protection, and service." In accordance with that mission, all members of the BPD ("Member" or "Members," as defined in Section III, below) must be fully aware of the ethical responsibility of their position, must strive constantly to live up to the highest standards of professional policing, and must commit to understanding and following all the General Orders (adopted Policies) of the BPD.

The purpose of this policy is to provide standards of conduct embodied in the Law Enforcement Officer's Oath of Honor and this Agency's statement of values and mission so that all officers and employees of the BPD have a clear understanding of Agency and community expectations pertaining to conduct and activities while on and off duty.

II. POLICY

A. PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF A POLICE OFFICER

A Bennington Police Officer acts as an official representative of government who is required and trusted to work within the law. The Officer's powers and duties are conferred by statute. The fundamental duties of a Police Officer include serving the community; safeguarding lives and property; protecting the public; keeping the peace; and ensuring the rights of all to liberty, equality and justice. Officers shall follow the BPD's mission and values statement, oath of honor and this Code of Conduct. If an

officer experiences an ethical conflict with respect to these obligations, the Officer should consult a supervisor for further clarification. Officers shall abide by all laws, regulations, BPD policies, rules and procedures. Officers shall obey all lawful orders.

B. PERFORMANCE OF THE DUTIES OF ALL MEMBERS (See Policy on Fair and Impartial Policing)

All Members shall perform all duties impartially, without favor or affection or ill will and without regard to actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, age, service in the US Armed Forces, disability as defined by 21 V.S.A. § 495d(5), sexual orientation, or gender identity (13 V.S.A. § 1455). All citizens will be treated equally with courtesy, consideration, and dignity.

Members shall not knowingly join or participate in any organization that advocates, incites, or supports criminal acts or criminal conspiracies or that promotes hatred or discrimination toward racial, religious, ethnic, or other groups or classes of individuals protected by law. Members will never allow personal feelings, animosities or friendships to influence official conduct. Laws will be enforced appropriately and courteously and, in carrying out their responsibilities, Members will strive to achieve the greatest level of cooperation from the public. They will conduct themselves in appearance and deportment in such a manner as to inspire confidence and respect for the position of public trust they hold.

C. DISCRETION

A Member will use the discretion vested in the position responsibly and exercise it within the law. The principle of reasonableness will guide the Member's determination, and the Member will consider all surrounding circumstances in determining whether any legal action should be taken.

Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional policing competence, will do much to preserve good relationships and retain the confidence of the public. There can be difficulty in choosing between conflicting courses of action. It is important to remember that a timely word of advice rather than arrest, in appropriate circumstances can be a more effective means of achieving an outcome that is just, equitable, and beneficial to the community, so long as such discretion is not exercised in a manner that is discriminatory.

D. USE OF FORCE (See Use of Force and Use of CEW's)

The BPD and all officers believe "in the sanctity of every human life and in the value of de-escalation and effective communication."¹

A Bennington Police Officer will never employ unnecessary force or violence and will use only such force in the discharge of duty as is reasonable in all circumstances.

¹ See Use of Force Policy of the Bennington Police Department, adopted 8/23/21, p. 1.

The use of force should be used only with the greatest restraint and only after discussion, negotiation, persuasion, or other de-escalation techniques have been found to be inappropriate or ineffective. While the use of force is occasionally unavoidable, every Police Officer will refrain from unnecessary infliction of pain or suffering and will never engage in cruel, degrading or inhumane treatment of any person.

E. CONFIDENTIALITY (See Social Media Policy)

When a Member sees, hears, or learns of information that is generally understood to be confidential in nature, the member will maintain such confidentiality unless the performance of duty or provision of law requires otherwise, or as directed by Court Order.

Members of the public have rights to security and privacy, and information obtained about them must not be improperly divulged. This includes but is not limited to:

- Members are prohibited from using law enforcement sensitive information gained through their position to advance financial or other private interests of theirs or others, or where such disclosure is not reasonably necessary in furtherance of job performance or other official duty
- Members shall not take or release photographs capturing sensitive information or images unless authorized to do so.
- Members shall not, when officially acting as a representative of the BPD, divulge or willfully permit to have divulged any information gained by reason of their position, for anything other than its official, authorized purpose.

F. INTEGRITY

A Member will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will a Member condone such acts by others.

The public demands that the integrity of Bennington Police Department Members be above reproach. Members must avoid any conduct that might compromise integrity and thus undercut the public confidence in the Bennington Police Department. Members will refuse to accept any gifts, presents, subscriptions, favors, gratuities or promises that could be interpreted as seeking to influence the Member from performing official responsibilities honestly and within the law. Bennington Police Department members must not receive private or special advantage from their official status. Respect from the public cannot be bought, it can only be earned and cultivated.

G. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES (See Collaborative Partnerships)

Bennington Police Department Members will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice. In addition, the BPD will collaborate with a variety of community agencies and organizations in order to fulfill its vision and mission; to include, but not limited to: United Counseling Service, Project Against Violent Encounters (PAVE), Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC), Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL), or other agency or organization.

An Officer or Agency may be one among many organizations that may provide law enforcement services to a jurisdiction. (e.g., Vermont State Police, Bennington County Sheriff's Department). It is imperative that all Members assist colleagues fully and completely, with respect and consideration at all times.

When the BPD enters a collaborative relationship with an agency expressed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) a copy of that MOU will be made available to all Members of the department.

H. PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITIES

Bennington Police Department Members will be responsible for their own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve their level of knowledge and competence.

Through study and experience, a Bennington Police Department Member should acquire a high level of knowledge and competence that is essential for the efficient and effective performance of duty. The acquisition of knowledge is a never-ending process of personal and professional development that should be pursued constantly.

I. PRIVATE LIFE (See Social Media Policy)

Bennington Police Department Members will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to the agency or themselves. (see J. below)

Members shall follow applicable law and the policies of the BPD regarding their participation and involvement in political activities. Where legal mandates are silent on this issue, members shall be guided by the following examples of prohibited political activities while on-duty, in uniform, or otherwise serving as a representative of the BPD. Members shall not:

1. Place, affix, or display any campaign literature or other paraphernalia in or on government-owned or controlled property, to include offices and vehicles.
2. Solicit political funds from any member of the BPD or other governmental agency of this jurisdiction.

3. Solicit contributions, signatures, or other forms of support for political candidates, parties, or ballot measures.
4. Use official authority to interfere with any election or with the political actions of other officers or the general public; or
5. Favor or discriminate against any person seeking employment because of political opinions or affiliations.

A Member's character and conduct while off duty must always be exemplary, thus maintaining a position of respect in the community in which they live and serve. The Member's personal behavior must be beyond reproach.

J. CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER

Members shall not conduct themselves in a manner, on or off duty, that:

- casts doubt on their integrity, honesty, moral judgment, or character.
- brings discredit to the Bennington Police Department.
- impairs the BPD's efficient and effective operation.

K. CONDUCT TOWARD THE PUBLIC

Members shall interact with the public in a civil and professional manner that conveys a service orientation to foster public trust and cooperation and adheres to the concepts associated with procedural justice.

- Members shall treat individuals with courtesy, respect, and dignity.
- Members shall not employ an officious or overbearing attitude or use language that might belittle, ridicule, or intimidate individuals.
- Members shall perform their duties equitably in both the enforcement of laws and the delivery of law enforcement services within the community and shall strive to maintain public trust by conducting all law enforcement business in an unbiased, fair, and impartial manner.²

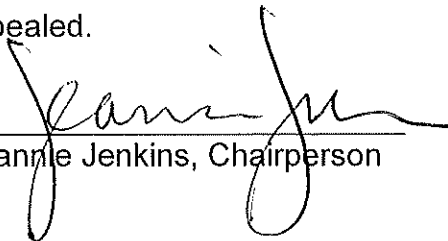
III. DEFINITIONS:

- A) Discretion: A power or right conferred upon officers by law of acting, or not acting, officially in certain circumstances, according to the dictates of their own judgement and conscience and their Oath of Honor.

² See Fair and Impartial Policing Policy

- B) Reasonable: The behaviors and actions that would be used by other reasonable and well-trained officers if faced with the same or similar circumstances.
- C) Member: As used in this document, this means any employee of the Bennington Police Department, whether sworn, civilian, full time, part-time, or otherwise.

This Policy is adopted by the Select Board of the Town of Bennington, Vermont, this 13th day of September, 2021 and is effective as of this date until amended or repealed.



Jeannette Jenkins, Chairperson

IV. PROCEDURES:

A. The following items shall be reviewed annually by all personnel:

1. Mission Statement (see attached);
2. Oath of Honor (see attached);
3. Tenets (see attached);
4. Code of Conduct (see attached);

B. CONDUCT

General conduct includes the following:

1. Officers shall follow the BPD's mission and guiding principals, oath of honor, and code of conduct. If an officer experiences an ethical conflict with these items, they should consult a supervisor for further clarification.
2. Officers shall be truthful in all matters and shall not lie, falsify, conceal, purposely distort, diminish, embellish, or fail to fully disclose facts associated with any law enforcement related matters.

3. Adherence to laws, regulations, and orders:
 - a. Officers shall abide by all laws, regulations, BPD's policies, rules, and procedures.
 - b. Officers shall obey all lawful orders.
 - c. Officers who are arrested or come under investigation for any offense in any jurisdiction shall immediately report this fact to their supervisor.
 - d. A court conviction for a crime that carries a possible sentence of incarceration shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of this policy.
4. Unbecoming conduct – Officers shall not conduct themselves in a manner, on or off duty, that:
 - a. Casts doubt on their integrity, honesty, moral judgment, or character;
 - b. Brings discredit to the BPD; or
 - c. Impairs the BPD's efficient and effective operation.
5. Neglect of duty:
 - a. All officers shall perform their duties faithfully and diligently and shall take responsibility for and exhibit attentiveness, care, and thoroughness in the conduct of assignments and responsibilities.
 - b. Officers shall conduct themselves in an expeditious manner to avoid any unreasonable delays to the public in the performance of law enforcement duties and activities.

6. Accountability and responsibility:

- a. Officers are directly accountable for their actions, through the chain of command, to BPD's Chief of Police.
- b. Officers shall report for duty, including court and off-duty assignments, at the time and place required.
- c. Officers have a duty to intervene to prevent or stop wrongdoing by another officer when it is safe and reasonable to do so.
- d. Officers have a duty to report any misconduct of which they become aware and shall notify a supervisor as soon as possible when another member of the BPD is violating law or policy.
- e. Officers shall cooperate fully in any internal administrative investigation conducted by this or any other authorized agency and shall not attempt to conceal, divert, or mitigate any culpability of theirs or others by falsehoods or omissions.
- f. Officers shall utilize agency supplies, property, and equipment only for their official purpose and in accordance with established agency rules, policies, and procedures and shall not intentionally abuse, destroy, dispose of, or damage these items.

7. Conduct toward fellow officers:

- a. Officers shall conduct themselves in a manner that fosters cooperation among members of the BPD, showing respect, courtesy, and professionalism in their dealings with one another.
- b. Officers shall not use language or engage in acts that demean, harass, or intimidate other officers.

8. Conduct toward the public – Officers shall interact with the public in a civil and professional manner that conveys a service orientation to foster public trust and cooperation and adheres to the concepts associated with the tenets of the BPD.
 - a. Officers shall treat individuals with courtesy, respect, and dignity.
 - b. Officers shall not employ an officious or overbearing attitude or use language that might belittle, ridicule, or intimidate individuals.
 - c. Officers shall perform their duties equitably in both the enforcement of laws and the delivery of law enforcement services within the community and shall strive to maintain public trust by conducting all law enforcement business in an unbiased, fair, and impartial manner.
9. Abuse of law enforcement authority or position:
 - a. Officers may not accept goods, services, or discounts of value not available to the general public and shall report any unsolicited goods or services they receive and the circumstances of the receipt to a supervisor.
 - b. Officers shall not use their authority or position:
 - for financial gain;
 - to obtain or grant privileges or favors;
 - to avoid the consequences of illegal acts for themselves or others; or
 - to barter, solicit, or accept any goods or services, such as gratuities, gifts, discounts, rewards, loans, or fees, whether for themselves or others.
 - c. Officers shall not purchase, convert to their own use, or have any claim to found, impounded, abandoned, or recovered property or any property held or released as evidence.
 - d. Officers shall not permit the use of any BPD issued identification card, badge, or official document by unauthorized persons.

- e. Officers are prohibited from using law enforcement sensitive information gained through their position to advance financial or other private interests of theirs or others.
- f. Officers shall not steal, forge, or tamper with any official law enforcement document. Documents shall not be altered or duplicated unless such actions are approved by a supervisor.
- g. Officers shall not take or release photographs capturing sensitive information or images unless authorized to do so.
- h. Officers shall not undertake any investigation or other official action that is not part of their regular duties without first obtaining permission from their supervisor, unless the exigency of the situation requires immediate law enforcement action.
- i. Officers involved with any civil action that arises from acts performed under color of authority shall inform their supervisor.

10. Prohibited associations and establishments:

- a. Officers shall not knowingly commence or maintain a relationship with any person who is under criminal investigation, indictment, arrest, or incarceration by this or another law enforcement or criminal justice agency or who has an open and notorious criminal reputation in the community (for example, persons whom they know, should know, or have reason to believe are involved in criminal activity), except as necessary to the performance of official duties or where unavoidable or impractical because of pre-existing familial or marital relationships. In such cases where regular household, physical, or telephone contact is unavoidable, the officer shall inform their supervisor of the relationship.
- b. Officers shall not knowingly engage in social or romantic relationships with confidential informants, victims, or witnesses involved with active investigations.
- c. Officers shall not participate or interfere in investigations involving family members or persons with whom they have a close personal or business relationship.

- d. Except in the performance of official duties, officers shall not enter any establishment in which the law is knowingly violated.
- e. Officers shall not knowingly join or participate in any organization that advocates, incites, or supports criminal acts or criminal conspiracies or that promotes hatred or discrimination toward racial, religious, ethnic, or other groups or classes of individuals protected by law.

C. Public Statements, Appearances, and Endorsements

1. Officers shall follow the BPD's policy on social media.
2. Officers shall not, when officially acting as a representative of the BPD:
 - a. make any public statement that could be reasonably interpreted as having an adverse effect upon agency morale, discipline, operations, or public perception of the BPD.
 - b. divulge or willfully permit to have divulged any information gained by reason of their position, for anything other than its official, authorized purpose; or
 - c. unless expressly authorized, make any statements, speeches, or public appearances that could reasonably be considered to represent the views of this agency.
3. Officers shall not solicit or accept contributions for the BPD or, as a law enforcement officer of the BPD, for any other agency, organization, event, or cause except the Bennington Police Association without the express consent of the Chief of Police or their designee.
4. Officers may not, as an agent of the BPD, endorse, recommend, or facilitate the sale of commercial products or services without the approval of the Chief of Police or their designee. This includes but is not limited to the use of tow services, vehicle repair shops, attorneys, bail bondsmen, or other technical or professional services. It does not pertain to referrals to appropriate governmental, community, or social services.

D. Political Activity

Officers shall follow applicable laws regarding their participation and involvement in political activities. Where legal mandates are silent on this issue, officers shall be guided by the following examples of prohibited political activities while on duty, in uniform, or otherwise serving as a representative of the BPD. Officers shall not:

1. Place, affix, or display any campaign literature or other paraphernalia in or on town owned or controlled property, to include offices and vehicles;
2. Solicit political funds from any member of this agency or another governmental agency of this jurisdiction;
3. Solicit contributions, signatures, or other forms of support for political candidates, parties, or ballot measures;
4. Use official authority to interfere with any election or with the political actions of other officers or the general public; or
5. Favor or discriminate against any person seeking employment because of political opinions or affiliations.

The policies and procedures outlined above are hereby adopted by the Chief of Police of the Town of Bennington, Vermont this 12th day of JANUARY, 2022 and is effective as of this date until amended or repealed.



Paul J. Doucette, Chief of Police



**BENNINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
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**PAUL J. DOUCETTE
CHIEF OF POLICE**

BENNINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

**The Bennington Police Department is accountable to the
Community for providing everyone, regardless of
identity, with respectful and equitable law enforcement
protection and service. The Department and the
Community will achieve this through collaborative and
positive relationships which contribute to the betterment
of our quality of life.**



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LAW ENFORCEMENT OATH OF HONOR

**On my honor, I will never betray my integrity,
my character, or the public trust.**

**I will treat all individuals with dignity and
respect and ensure that my actions are
dedicated to ensuring the safety of my
community and the preservation of human life.**

**I will always have the courage to hold myself
and other accountable for our actions.**

**I will always maintain the highest ethical
standards and uphold the values of my
community, and the agency I serve.**



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Tenets of the Bennington Police Department – Moving Forward

Ensure that the fundamental principle of the Bennington Police Department is to value and preserve human life.

- Incorporate this belief into the mission, vision, goals, ethics, and oath of the Bennington Police Department.
- Healing of the community means healing of all. There needs to be acknowledgement and empathy shown to all regardless of position, race, religion, gender, or socio-economic standing.
- Bennington Police Department leadership need to continue to emphasize and prioritize equally both the physical safety and mental well-being of officers and staff. This includes having more open conversations about coping with stress and trauma within the Bennington Police Department and informing the public, as well as elected and appointed officials, of the stress and demands on officers and staff.

Establish shared expectations between members of the Bennington Police Department, the community, and elected and appointed officials.

- Members of the Bennington Police Department and elected and appointed officials must jointly shoulder the responsibility to share expectations and offer solutions. This responsibility includes listening and weighing outcomes of potential decisions and policies. Whenever feasible, policies and practices should be evidence-based and represent the best interest of all involved.
- Ensure that all voices are welcomed and heard. Members of the Bennington community need to be clear in their expectations for the police department. Bennington Police Department leaders and officers need to be able to speak about potential outcomes to operational changes. If members of the Bennington community want changes to police department operations, the Police Chief should inform the public of potential costs and benefits of that change allowing the community to make informed and appropriate decisions. Elected and



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appointed officials are responsible for facilitating this process, ensuring thoughtful changes are implemented, and owning the outcome.

- Acknowledge that past and present inequities in the Bennington community often shape views that drive calls for change. This acknowledgement promotes a greater level of understanding by all, that certain embedded feelings must not be taken lightly or dismissed and will be taken into consideration when developing and receiving recommendations for changes in Bennington Police Department policies and procedures.
- Develop an objective and clearly established evaluation process for the Bennington Police Department based on shared, understood expectations.

Implement a system-wide approach to policies and procedures so to thoughtfully anticipate benefits and cost for sustainable approaches.

- Many police agencies throughout the United States have implemented community-focused police approaches and have policies, procedures and practices in place that emphasize the duty of care as well as strict policies and procedures around police tactics to ensure the well-being and safety of the community and officers. Adoption of these approaches must become wide-spread and serve as principles for the Bennington Police Department.
- However, as communities, elected officials, appointed officials and the Bennington Police Department are developing new and innovative approaches to public safety, the focus should expand beyond just policies and procedures to include both the broader criminal justice and public health ecosystems:
 - Maximize available, thoughtful resources, similar to the process for recommendations from the Commission of Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. This extensive effort in the United States brought together subject matter experts to study and produce recommendations related to the entire criminal justice system. The Commission specifically looked at how to make systematic improvements and enhance coordination between police, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and correctional authorities to



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increase the ability to prevent and control crime, prevent unnecessary incarceration, serve the victims of crime, and improve community-police engagement.

- Embrace proven, evidence-based programs that incorporate broader public health and social wellness into cohesive approaches to community wellness and public safety in Bennington.

Hold prosecutors and the judiciary accountable for their decision-making/discretion.

- The decisions and practices of the Bennington County State's Attorney's Office, The Vermont Attorney General's Office and the Vermont Judiciary directly impact public safety, particularly the trust and confidence the community has in the Bennington Police Department. While there are multiple ways to hold offenders accountable, prosecutorial and judicial discretion is an important tenet of the criminal justice system. As a result, there needs to be continued alignment between the Bennington Police Department and the Bennington County State's Attorney's Office to ensure agreement on the enforcement and prosecution of criminal offenses. Bennington Police Officers are the branch of municipal government that enforces the law, but they do not make the laws. If the Bennington County State's Attorney's Office and the Vermont Judiciary are disconnected from the Bennington Police Department, and/or the laws they are enforcing, the public loses faith in the police.
- Prosecution and punishment should be proportional to the offense alleged and should not vary by race, wealth or status of the defendant.

Recognize that policing involves dynamic, unpredictable, and very dangerous situations.

- Bennington Police Department leadership should, whenever appropriate, educate the Bennington community on policies and procedures, practices, and incidents to further understanding of policing dynamics, advance transparency, and to enhance Bennington community-police engagement.
- The Bennington community should expect excellence, while also recognizing that Bennington Police Officers are human. Bennington Police Department leadership and officers must continue to hold each other accountable for wrongful actions, and always remember that



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officers have a duty to intervene to prevent or stop the use of excessive force by another officer when it is safe and reasonable to do so.

- Complaints against members of the Bennington Police Department must receive thorough, timely, transparent, and objective investigation to determine the validity of the complaint, root cause of failure and work towards improvement.
- When addressing problematic behavior by Bennington Police Officers, the Police Chief and Town Manager should have broad discretion in determining consequences and be able to act swiftly.

The Bennington Community and Bennington Police Department leaders must demand, of their elected and appointed leadership, improvements to social shortcomings that deteriorate lives and perpetuate cyclical involvement with the criminal justice system to include poverty, limited education, substance abuse, and mental health. The Bennington Community and elected officials must provide financial resources allowing the Bennington Police Department to accomplish its mission.

- Bennington Police officers, as the most visible form of Town of Bennington government, are expected to increasingly deal with the social ills that plague our society but often lack the authority, training, or expertise to proactively address these issues. These collective societal failures for those who suffer from homelessness, drug addiction, and mental illness have pushed these problems to the street for members of the Bennington Police Department to deal with.
- Good policing contributes to a safer and better community. As the Bennington community, elected and appointed officials develop policies and procedures, leaders at the Bennington Police Department, as public safety experts, should be aware, consulted, and serve as resources to recommend and deliver better policies, procedures and solutions.

**IACP
Bennington Police Department**



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All members of the Bennington Police Department must be fully aware of the ethical responsibility of their position and must strive constantly to live up to the highest possible standards of professional policing.

The Town of Bennington and the Bennington Police Department Police Officers, Dispatchers and Civilian Staff believes it is important that they have clear advice and counsel available to assist them in performing their duties consistent with these standards, and has adopted the following ethical mandates as guidelines to meet these ends.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF A POLICE OFFICER

A Bennington Police Officer acts as an official representative of government who is required and trusted to work within the law. The Officer's powers and duties are conferred by statute. The fundamental duties of a Police Officer include serving the community; safeguarding lives and property; protecting the innocent; keeping the peace; and ensuring the right of all liberty, equality and justice.

PERFORMANCE OF THE DUTIES OF ALL MEMBERS

All members shall perform all duties impartially, without favor or affection or ill will and without regard to status, sex, race, religion, political belief or aspiration. All citizens will be treated equally with courtesy, consideration and dignity. Members will never allow personal feelings, animosities or friendships to influence official conduct. Laws will be enforced appropriately and courteously and, in carrying out their responsibilities, members will strive to obtain maximum cooperation from the public. They will conduct themselves in appearance and department in such a manner as to inspire confidence and respect for the position of public trust they hold.

DISCRETION

A member will use responsibility the discretion vested in the position and exercise it within the law. The principle of reasonableness will guide the members determinations, and the member will consider all surrounding circumstances in determining whether any legal action shall be taken.



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DISCRETION - CONT'D

Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional policing competence, will do much to preserve good relationships and retain the confidence of the public. There can be difficulty in choosing between conflicting courses of action. It is important to remember that a timely word of advice rather than arrest, which may be correct, in appropriate circumstances can be a more effective means of achieving a desired end.

USE OF FORCE

A Bennington Police Officer will never employ unnecessary force or violence and will use only such force in the discharge of duty as is reasonable in all circumstances.

The use of force should be used only with the greatest restraint and only after discussion, negotiation and persuasion have been found to be inappropriate or ineffective. While the use of force is occasionally unavoidable, every Police Officer will refrain from unnecessary infliction of pain or suffering and will never engage in cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment of any person.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Whatever a member sees, hears or learns of that is of a confidentiality nature, will be kept secret unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise.

Members of the public have right to security and privacy, and information obtained about them must not be improperly divulged.

INTEGRITY

A member will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will a member condone such acts by others.

The public demands that the integrity of Bennington Police Department members be above reproach. Members must avoid any conduct that might compromise integrity and thus undercut the public confidence in the Bennington Police Department. Members will refuse to accept any gifts, presents, subscriptions, favors, gratuities or promises that could be interpreted as seeking



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INTEGRITY - CONT'D

to cause the member to refrain from performing official responsibilities honestly and within the law. Bennington Police Department members must not receive private or special advantage from the official status. Respect from the public cannot be bought, it can only be earned and cultivated.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Bennington Police Department members will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

An officer or agency may be one among many organizations that may provide law enforcement services to a jurisdiction. It is imperative that all members assist colleagues fully and completely with respect and consideration at all times.

PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITIES


Bennington Police Department members will be responsible for their own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve their level of knowledge and competence.

Through study and experience, a Bennington Police Department member may acquire the high level of knowledge and competence that is essential for the efficient and effective performance of duty. The acquisition of knowledge is a never-ending process of personal and professional development that should be pursued constantly.

PRIVATE LIFE

Bennington Police Department members will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to the agency or themselves.

A member's character and conduct while off duty must always be exemplary, thus maintain a position of respect in the community in which they live and serve. The members personal behavior must be beyond reproach.

 1-8-2020