	<b>Abilene Police Department Operating Procedures</b>		
	Subject: <i>General Rules of Conduct</i>	Issued: <b>07/30/2021</b>	TBP: 1.08, 2.12, 2.14, 2.15, 2.17, 2.18

**Violations of Written Directives**

Employees are governed by the applicable Local Government Code Civil Service Law Chapter 143, local Civil Service Rules and Regulations, the regulations established by the Texas Commission on Law (TCOLE), the City of Abilene Policies and Procedures Manual and the written directives contained in this manual. Violations by any employee of any of these written directives may be considered just cause for disciplinary actions such as reprimand, suspension, demotion or dismissal.

**Abide by Laws**

Employees of the Department shall abide by the laws of the United States, the State of Texas and the ordinances of the City of Abilene. This shall include all personnel whether on-duty or off-duty.

**Obey Orders (TBP 1.08)**

Employees shall obey all lawful orders and directions given by a supervisory officer. Such response shall be prompt and willing.

**Insubordination**

The failure or deliberate refusal of any employee to obey any lawful order given by any supervisory officer shall be deemed insubordination. Disregarding the authority of any supervisory officer by obvious disrespect or by disputing their orders shall likewise be deemed insubordination.

**Manner of Issuing Orders**


Orders from supervisors to subordinates shall be in clear, understandable language, civil in tone and issued pursuant to departmental business.

**Unlawful Orders Prohibited**

No commanding or supervisory officer shall knowingly or willingly issue any order that is a violation of any law, ordinance or departmental rule.

**Obedience to Unlawful Orders**

Employees are not required to obey any order which is contrary to the laws of the United States, the State of Texas or the ordinances of the City of Abilene. Such refusal to obey, however, is the employee’s responsibility and the employee shall be strictly required to justify their actions.

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**Criticism of Orders**

Employees shall not publicly criticize or comment in a derogatory manner to anyone about instructions or orders issued by supervisory officers.

**Conflict in Orders**

Should any order conflict with any previous order or instruction issued by another supervisory officer or with any written directive, the employee to whom the order is given shall respectfully call attention to the conflict. If the supervisory officer giving the second order does not change the order to correct the conflict, the order shall stand and the responsibility shall be with the supervisor issuing that order. Orders will be countermanded or conflicting orders issued only when reasonably necessary for the good of the Department or as the emergency situation demands.

**Appeals Regarding Unlawful / Unjust Orders**

Officers may appeal for relief from orders or instructions they believe to be unlawful or unjust. Such appeals must be made in writing to the Chief of Police through the chain of command. Irresponsible or capricious appeals will be considered serious misconduct.

**Obedience to Unjust or Improper Orders**


Employees who are given orders they feel are unjust or contrary to general orders or to the rules of the Department, must first obey the orders to the best of their ability and may then proceed to appeal as provided herein.

**Reporting Unlawful Orders**

Any employee who has knowledge of any unlawful order, shall, at the first opportunity, report in writing the full facts of the incident together with his/her own action, to the Chief of Police through the chain of command. It shall be the responsibility of each level of supervision to forward all such communications.

**Performance of Duty**

Employees shall perform all duties required of them by competent authority regardless of whether such duties are specifically assigned to them in any operations manual.

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**Conduct and Behavior (TBP 2.12)**

Officers, whether on-duty or off-duty, shall be governed by the ordinary and reasonable rules of good conduct and behavior and shall not commit any act that may reflect unfavorably on themselves and/or the Department.

Should an officer respond to a call for service of an employee of the Department they shall notify a supervisor of their call. The supervisor will evaluate the need to respond to the scene.

**Personal Conduct (TBP 2.18)**

Employees are prohibited from establishing or maintaining what a reasonable person would believe constitutes an inappropriate relationship with any person who is a known victim, witness, suspect or defendant of a case being investigated by the Department during such time that the case is being investigated or prosecuted as a result of the investigation.


The buying and selling of anything to or from any complainant, suspect, witness, defendant, prisoner or other person involved in any police related activity that has come to the employee’s attention is not permissible

**Political Activity (TBP 2.15)**

Employees are prohibited, while on duty or in uniform, from engaging in political activity or campaigns. Employees will not distribute or display any campaign material inside the Department or on any city vehicles. This is in furtherance of the City of Abilene Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual.

**Impartial Attitude (TBP 2.17)**

Officers, while being vigorous and unrelenting in the enforcement of the law, must maintain a strictly impartial attitude toward complainants and violators. Officers shall, at all times, be considerate of their duty to be of service to anyone who may be in danger or distress regardless of race, ethnicity, color, gender or creed. Employees must respect the rights of all individuals and shall not engage in acts of discrimination, oppression or favoritism.

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**Duty to be Kind, Courteous and Patient**

Employees shall, at all times, be courteous, kind, patient and respectful when dealing with the public and shall strive to win the approval of all law-abiding citizens by an impartial discharge of their official duties.

Whenever possible, de-escalation methods and tactics should be employed to minimize risk of conflict or injury to employees and/or citizens. Annual training on de-escalation is mandatory for all sworn employees. Procedural Justice is synonymous with fair and impartial policing. It does not preclude an officer from issuing a citation, making an arrest or using force as lawfully necessary. Instead of prescribing outcomes, Procedural Justice establishes four basic rules for interacting with citizens:

- A. Giving individuals “voice” during encounters,
- B. Being neutral and transparent about the decisions you make,
- C. Show care and concern for the person’s safety, and
- D. Treat the citizen with courtesy, dignity and respect.

**Giving Name and Rank**

Employees shall give their name, rank and ID number to any violator or other persons when requested to do so, unless such action is likely to jeopardize the successful completion of a police assignment. Officers will promptly advise their supervisor of a request to speak to a supervisor by a citizen, unless at the time of the request, the citizen is not under complete control of their mental and physical faculties.

**Respect for Fellow Employees**


Employees of the Department shall treat each other with respect and shall cooperate, support and assist each other at every opportunity. Employees, whether on-duty or off-duty, shall not publicly criticize the work or duty performance of fellow employees and shall refrain from using threatening, insulting or profane language which would offend those present.

**Respect for Supervisory Officers**

Supervisory officers will be addressed or referred to by title when on-duty and at any other time departmental business is conducted in the presence of private citizens.

**Circulating Malicious Rumors or Criticism**

Employees shall refrain from circulating malicious rumors about other employees or other governmental employees and shall refrain from circulating criticism of other governmental employees or agencies.

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**Interfering with Assigned Cases**

Employees shall not intentionally interfere with cases assigned to other employees or with the work or operations of any other division, department or of the courts.

**Interfering with Private Business**

Employees shall not interfere in the lawful private business of any person unless necessary for the furtherance of legitimate law enforcement functions.

**Aiding and Protecting Fellow Officers**

Officers shall act together and protect one another in time of danger or in circumstances where danger might be impending.

**Suggestions for Improvement of Service**

Employees wishing to make suggestions for improvement of service shall have the privilege of communication through the chain of command, in writing, to the Chief of Police. Supervisors should encourage suggestions for improvement of service. All suggestions will be forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police.

**Truthfulness (TBP 2.14)**


Employees are required to speak the truth at all times, whether under oath or not; in giving testimony or in writing; in connection with any legal or official order received or in connection with official duties. Untruthfulness is permitted as a legitimate investigative technique if conducted within the limits set by appellate court opinions.

**Carrying Official Identification Cards**

Officers will carry their official identification cards on their person at all times. The exception to this will be when any officer is engaged in an undercover investigation where having such identification on his or her person would place them in jeopardy. Suspended officers shall not carry identification cards unless specifically authorized by the Chief of Police.

**Relationships between Supervisors and Subordinates**

The Department wants to ensure its practices do not create situations such as a conflict of interest or favoritism. Additionally, the Department wants to ensure morale is not negatively impacted by the personal relationships between supervisors or subordinates.

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**Definitions**

A supervisor - a person holding the rank of sergeant, lieutenant, Assistant Chief or the Chief of Police. It also includes training officers and generally applies to any individual who has decision making responsibilities that can directly affect a subordinate's career, assignment or pay.

Close relatives - defined as husband, wife, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step relatives and cousins.

**Policy**

Close relatives, partners, those in a dating relationship or members of the same household are not permitted to be in positions that have a reporting responsibility to each other.

If employees begin a dating relationship or become relatives, partners or members of the same household and one party is in a supervisory position, the person who is a supervisor will be required to inform Administration of the relationship. Administration will determine the most appropriate action for the specific situation. This may include transfer or reassignment of one or both persons.

The Department may apply this policy to situations where there is a conflict or the potential for conflict because of the relationship between employees even if there is not direct reporting relationship or authority involved.