



Town of Lexington

Police Department

Subject: Code of Ethics	
Effective Date: 11-1-2011	Review Date: Annually
By Order of: Mark J. Corr, Chief of Police	

Policy & Procedure

1C

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

A statement of police responsibilities and conduct is a necessity for any police department. Requiring officers to abide by a code or canon of ethics is the first step toward true professionalism in police service. The International Association of Chiefs of Police adopted the following code of ethics. This code of ethics is hereby adopted by the Lexington Police Department.

CODE OF ETHICS

As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to my agency or me. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret, unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and the relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of the police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.

I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession ... law enforcement.

All employees within the Police Department, both civilian and sworn will abide by the principles consistent with this policy, and any and all training that employees receive will be documented in the employee's training file.

Employees will abide by any and all laws pertaining to ethical behavior including but not limited to M.G.L. Chapter 268A and 268B as amended from time to time.

PROCEDURES

- A. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has codified regulations governing the conduct of any public employee as it pertains to political activity (Chapter 55) and conflict of interest (Chapter 268A). The following material is provided by the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission.
- B. Political Activity.
 - 1. Chapter 55 of the General Laws regulates political activity. Appointed, compensated employees may not directly or indirectly solicit contributions, or anything else of value, for campaigns or other political purposes.
 - 2. For more information about political activity, contact the Office of Campaign and Political Finance at **(617) 979-8300** or **(800)462-OCPF**.
- C. Conflict of Interest Law
 - 1. Chapter 268A of the General Laws governs the conduct as a public official or employee. This pamphlet contains some of the general rules that must be followed. Public employees can face civil and criminal penalties for prohibited actions. There **are** some exemptions to these rules, so seek free and confidential legal advice from the State Ethics Commission or Lexington's legal counsel regarding how the law would apply to a particular situation.

2. IN GENERAL:

◆ You may *not* ask for or accept *anything* (regardless of its value), if it is offered in exchange for your agreeing to perform or not perform an official act.

◆ You may *not* ask for or accept anything worth \$50 or more from anyone with whom you have official dealings. Examples of regulated “gifts” include: sports tickets, costs of drinks and meals, travel expenses, conference fees, gifts of appreciation, entertainment expenses, free use of vacation homes and complimentary tickets to charitable events. *If a prohibited gift is offered:* you may refuse or return it; you may donate it to a non-profit organization, provided you do not take the tax write-off; you may pay the giver the full value of the gift; or, in the case of certain types of gifts,

it maybe considered “a gift to your public employer”, provided it remains in the office and does *not* ever go home with you. You may *not* accept honoraria for a speech that is in any way related to your official duties, unless you are a state legislator.

◆ You may *not* hire, promote, supervise, or otherwise participate in the employment of your immediate family or your spouse’s immediate family.

◆ You may *not* take any type of official action which will affect the financial interests of your immediate family or your spouse’s immediate family. For instance, you may *not* participate in licensing or inspection processes involving a family member’s business.

◆ You may *not* take any official action affecting your own financial interest, or the financial interest of a business partner, private employer, or any organization for which you serve as an officer, director or trustee. For instance: you may *not* take any official action regarding an “after hours” employer, or its geographic competitors; you may *not* participate in licensing, inspection, zoning or other issues that affect a company you own, or its competitors; if you serve on the Board of a non-profit organization, you may *not* take any official action which would impact that organization, or its competitors.

◆ Unless you qualify for an exemption, you may *not* have more than one job with the same municipality or county, or more than one job with the state.

◆ Except under special circumstances, you may *not* have a financial interest in a contract with your public employer. For instance: if you are a town employee, a company you own may *not* be a vendor to that town unless you meet specific criteria, the contract is awarded by a bid process, and you publicly disclose your financial interest.

◆ You may *not* represent anyone but your public employer in any matter in which your public employer has an interest. For instance, you may *not* contact other government agencies on behalf of a company, an association, a friend, or even a charitable organization.

◆ You may *not ever* disclose confidential information, data or material which you gained or learned as a public employee.

- ◆ Unless you make a proper, public disclosure - including all the relevant facts- you may *not* take any action that could create an appearance of impropriety, or could cause an impartial observer to believe your official actions are tainted with bias or favoritism.
- ◆ You may *not* use your official position to obtain unwarranted privileges, or any type of special treatment, for yourself or anyone else. For instance: you may *not* approach your subordinates, vendors whose contracts you oversee, or people who are subject to your official authority to propose private business dealings.
- ◆ You may *not* use public resources for political or private purposes. Examples of “public resources” include: office computers, phones, fax machines, postage machines, copiers, official cars, staff time, sick time, uniforms, and official seals.
- ◆ You may *not*, after leaving public service, take a job involving public contracts or any other particular matter in which you participated as a public employee.