

NIAGARA FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

EFFECTIVE DATE:	SUBJECT: COMMUNITY RELATIONS; RESPONSIBILITY AND ROLE OF PERSONNEL	Number 125.00 (NYSLEAP A-29-1; A-29-2)
03/12/2014		
RESCINDS:		Number of pages
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I. Purpose:

- A. The purpose of this General Order is to define the Niagara Falls Police Department policy relating to community relations.

II. Policy:

- A. The Niagara Falls Police Department recognizes the importance of maintaining an atmosphere of openness with the community we serve. Members of the NFPD shall actively seek to establish a cooperative relationship and keep the community informed on matters of public interest.
- B. The Community Services Unit, in conjunction with the Superintendent of Police, shall represent the NFPD at most formal community relations activities. However, the informal community relations function is a responsibility of all members of the Niagara Falls Police Department. All personnel should project a positive image and become involved in community activities. The conduct of each employee reflects on the agency as a whole. Every employee must be aware of the different programs that the NFPD has to offer so they can inform the community.
- C. The Community Services Unit Commander is responsible for the coordination and development of programs in the area of police/community relations including neighborhood watch programs, crime prevention and any other programs as assigned by the Superintendent of Police.

III. Procedures:

A. Relations with the Public:

1. Courtesy: Employees shall be courteous to the public whether in person or on the telephone. Employees shall be tactful in the performance of their duties, control their tempers, exercise the utmost patience and discretion and shall not engage in argumentative discussions, even in the face of extreme provocation. In the performance of their duties, employees shall not use coarse, violent, profane or insolent language or gestures and shall not express any prejudice concerning race, gender, religion, political viewpoint, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, military status, marital status, domestic violence victim, or similar status.
2. Request for Assistance: When any person requests assistance or advice, makes a complaint or report, either by telephone or in person, all pertinent information will be obtained in an official and courteous manner and will be properly and judiciously acted upon consistent with established Department procedures.
3. Citizen Complaint: Employees shall refer all complaints made by citizens against any employee of the Department according to established procedures defined in G.O. 123.10. Employees may never attempt to discourage any citizen from lodging a complaint against any employee of the Department.

B. Interpersonal Communications:

1. To promote understanding and cooperation, there must be interpersonal communication between members of the community and employees at all levels of the Department.
2. Each employee must be aware of the law enforcement needs of the community and their particular assigned area of responsibility.
3. Guided by policy, employees must tailor their performance to obtain the objectives of the NFPD.
4. The NFPD will establish programs that encourage productive dialogue with the public at all levels and to ensure that the unity of the police and the community is preserved.

C. Identification:

1. All employees shall furnish their names and exhibit their badge and ID card to any person requesting that information when they are on duty or holding themselves out as having an official capacity, except when the withholding of such information is necessary for the performance of police duties or as authorized by proper authority.

D. Request for Departmental Speakers:

1. All requests for NFPD personnel to speak outside the normal scope of law enforcement duties or in a position representing the police department at public gatherings, luncheons, service clubs, schools, civic associations, etc. will be made in writing to the Superintendent of Police.

E. Individual Dignity:

1. All persons have a right to dignified treatment under the law and the protection of this right is a duty which is binding on all members of the Department.
2. Employees must treat persons with as much respect as that person will allow and be mindful that the people with whom they are dealing are individuals with human emotions and needs.

F. Equality of Enforcement:

1. Consistency in application is a primary and fundamental element of uniform enforcement of the law.
2. All people, regardless of their backgrounds, have a right to the protection and security that is afforded by fair and impartial law enforcement.
3. All persons must be able to maintain flexibility in their demeanor and enforcement methods. In order to properly respond to the various law enforcement problems, the Department must be able to maintain flexibility in deployment and enforcement methods, consistent with Department policies.

G. Responsiveness to the Community:

1. The Department must be responsive to the needs and problems of the community. This regard for the community must be shown plainly at all levels of the Department by an obvious willingness to listen and a genuine concern for the problems of individuals or groups.

H. Community Access to Police Information:

1. It is necessary that there be full public disclosure of policies and openness in matters of public interest.
2. The Department will disseminate accurate and factual accounts of occurrences of public interest consistent with the safety and protection of the victims, witnesses and the constitutional rights of the accused and with consideration of the necessity for maintaining the confidentiality of Department records.
3. The Department will strive to inform members of the community of its objectives and policies.