



**Baltimore County Sheriff's Office
Towson, Maryland**

**Sheriff
R. Jay Fisher**

General Order

Subject: Code of Conduct	Effective Date 11/19/2007	Number A-2
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Purpose :

This directive was created to familiarize agency members of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, and advise members of their responsibilities related to the code.

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I. Policy

The Baltimore County Sheriff's Office and its members endeavor to maintain the highest standards of integrity and professionalism. To this end, the Baltimore County Sheriff's Office has adopted the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics endorsed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Members of this agency are obligated to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Code of Ethics, and the corresponding rules and regulations of the agency. All members of the agency are required to familiarize themselves with the standards established in this directive.

By Authority of:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.J. Fisher", written over a horizontal line.

R.J. Fisher
Sheriff

**Baltimore County Sheriff's Office
Code of Ethics**

LAW ENFORCEMENT CODE OF ETHICS*

Primary Responsibilities of a Law

Enforcement Officer

A law enforcement 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 law enforcement officer include serving the community; safeguarding lives and property; protecting the innocent; keeping the peace; and ensuring the rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

**Performance of the Duties of a Law
enforcement officer**

A law enforcement officer 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.

Officers 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, officers will strive to obtain maximum 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.

Discretion

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

Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professionalism and 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 law enforcement 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.

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 law enforcement officer will refrain from applying the unnecessary infliction of pain or suffering and will never engage in cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment of any person.

Baltimore County Sheriff's Office Code of Ethics

Confidentiality

Whatever a law enforcement officer sees, hears or learns of, which is of a confidential nature, will be kept secret unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise.

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

Integrity

A law enforcement officer will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will an officer condone such acts by other law enforcement officers.

The public demands that the integrity of law enforcement officers be above reproach. Law enforcement officers must, therefore, avoid any conduct that might compromise integrity and thus undercut the public confidence in a law enforcement agency. Officers will refuse to accept any gifts, presents, subscriptions, favors, gratuities, promises that could be interpreted as seeking to cause the officer to refrain from performing official responsibilities honestly and within the law. Law enforcement officers 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.

Cooperation with Other Officers and Agencies

Law enforcement officers 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 a law enforcement officer assist colleagues fully and completely with respect and consideration at all times.

Personal/Professional Capabilities

Law enforcement officers 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 law enforcement officer can 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

Law enforcement officers will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to their agencies or themselves.

A law enforcement officer's character and conduct while off duty must always be exemplary, thus maintaining a position of respect in the community in which he or she lives and serves. The officer's personal behavior must be beyond reproach.

Baltimore County Sheriff's Office Code of Ethics

**Adopted by the Executive Committee of the International Association of Chiefs of Police on October 17, 1989, during its 96th Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, to replace the 1957 code of ethics adopted at the 64th Annual IACP Conference.*

***The IACP gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Sir John C. Hermon, former chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, who gave full license to the association to freely use the language and concepts presented in the RUC's "Professional Policing Ethics," Appendix I of the Chief Constable's Annual Report, 1988, presented to the Police Authority for Northern Ireland, for the preparation of this code.*