

# Metropolitan Police Academy



## 1.9 Duties, Responsibilities, and Conduct

### 1.9.1 Understand the background and policy of appropriate behavior as a member of MPD

The ability of the Metropolitan Police Department to fulfill its functions and duties is dependent on public approval of its existence, actions, and behavior. This gives MPD the ability to secure and maintain public respect while also establishing legitimacy. Members shall recognize their responsibility as public servants and shall pay particular attention to those in the community who are seeking assistance or information, and who desire to register complaints or give evidence or information.

It is the policy of MPD to ensure that all members preserve the peace, protect life and property, and prevent crime. They shall apprehend offenders, recover property, and enforce all laws and ordinances of the District of Columbia and the United States of America.

The community perception of police officers may be challenging for legitimate historical reasons that you will learn about during your time here at the academy. Your job as a twenty-first century officer is to continue to improve, and sometimes start the process of healing and rebuilding the community relationships critical to our success. You can do this by not letting your emotions take over and get the best of you. You must remain calm, collected, and respectful at all times. You can ticket or arrest someone while being respectful.

Now more than ever, what you do and say is being recorded—both on your body-worn camera (BWC) as well as potentially by possible bystanders. Whether it reflects a negative or positive interaction with a community member, those videos spread very quickly through the community on social media and on the news. Your reaction to handling a situation is what community members will remember.

Use your best critical thinking skills to work through situations rather than becoming emotional and reactive. Following the general orders, applying received training, and being aware of surroundings at all times contribute to becoming an officer that the community can trust and appreciate. You have a tough job, but with the right mindset and heart you can achieve great things, and you will start this by making that first interaction with a community member positive and impactful.

Definitions used in section 1.9:

- **Member** – A sworn or civilian MPD employee or MPD Reserve Corps member
- **Immediate Family** – A member’s spouse, children, siblings, parents, and in-laws

### 1.9.2 Adhere to the regulations, roles, and responsibilities of MPD members

Members shall not discriminate in the enforcement of the law or the provision of police service based on:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- National origin
- Sex
- Age
- Marital status
- Personal appearance
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity or expression
- Familial status
- Family responsibilities
- Matriculation
- Political affiliation
- Genetic information
- Disability
- Source of income
- Status as a victim of an interfamily offense
- Place of residence or business
- Status as a victim or family member of a victim of domestic violence, a sexual offense, or stalking

## Roles and responsibilities of members

- Conduct your private and professional lives in a manner that avoids bringing discredit upon yourself, MPD, or the District of Columbia.
- Avoid regular personal contact with persons or businesses where you know criminal activity has occurred, are under criminal investigation/indictment, or are involved with felonious behavior except as necessary in the performance of official duties or where unavoidable because of immediate familial relationships.
- Do not conduct yourself in a manner that could be construed by an observer as immoral, indecent, lewd, or disorderly.
- Do not accept gifts or gratuities from organizations, businesses, or individuals who could have an official relationship with DC government.
- Do not accept any services that could be seen as provided due to favoritism or to influence your decisions as a representative of DC government.
- Refrain from political and religious conversations while on duty unless they are directly related to police business.

Police officers are held to a higher standard because they hold community members accountable and expect members of the public to act in a law-abiding manner. When officers do not or are perceived to not abide by the laws they enforce, it brings negative attention and causes community members to disrespect and distrust our profession. Law enforcement is a profession that takes an honest heart and mind to do well, and when you conduct yourself as such, your colleagues and community members will respect you. Trust and relationship building are critical not only to the success of your career, but also to the thousands of other women and men who put on the same uniform.

### The Hatch Act

While being able to vote is everyone's right, it is not appropriate to discuss or judge people for their choices in political issues while in the workplace. The Hatch Act prohibits political matters from being discussed at work. Instead, you should exercise your right to vote and have political discussions about political matters in the privacy of your friends and family.

Circular 18-05 provides an overview of permitted and prohibited political activities pursuant to the Local Hatch Act. The provisions of this act apply when an MPD member is on-duty as well as when a member is off-duty.

### **Prohibited Activities**

A. At all times, members **shall not**:

1. Coerce, explicitly or implicitly, any subordinate employee to engage in political activity;
2. Engage in political activity while wearing a uniform or official insignia identifying the office or position of the employee;
3. Display political buttons, bumper stickers, posters or other political material at work, including in a government office or common area of a government building, and on government vehicles;
4. Engage in political activity while using any vehicle owned or leased by the District government;
5. Engage in political activity in any government office;
6. Knowingly solicit, accept, or receive political contributions unless the member is filed as a candidate;
7. File as candidates for partisan political office in District of Columbia Board of Elections regulated elections; and
8. Use official authority or influence to interfere with an election.

B. While on-duty, members **shall not**:

1. Engage in any political activity;
2. Place political material on personal equipment (for example, clipboards) used while on-duty.

### **Permitted Activities**

While off-duty, and subject to the requirements in above, members **may**:

1. Register and vote as they choose;
2. Join and be an active member of political clubs or parties;
3. Contribute money to political campaigns, parties, or partisan groups;
4. Campaign (including making speeches and distributing literature) for or against candidates in partisan elections (where the candidates are running as representatives of a political party, such as the Democratic and Republican party);
5. Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, and municipal ordinances;
6. File as candidates for election to non-partisan political office in District of Columbia Board of Elections regulated elections;
7. File as candidates for election to both partisan and non-partisan political office in non-District of Columbia Board of Elections regulated elections;
8. Hold office in political clubs or parties;
9. Express opinions about candidates and issues;
10. Assist in voter registration drives;
11. Sign nominating petitions; and
12. Attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.

Supervisory and command personnel observing a violation shall take immediate action to terminate the activity. Violators may be subject to disciplinary action.

We live in a time where politics can destroy friendships and family. Imagine how a community member might react to seeing you support or not support certain political candidates or positions while in uniform. You need to always stay politically neutral.

### **In addition, while on duty members shall not:**

- suggest or counsel citizens on the retention of an attorney, bondsman, or tow crane operator.
- question persons about their residency or immigration status unless the member is investigating one or more crimes involving the criminal smuggling and harboring of immigrants or other crimes in which immigration status is an element.
- in accordance with longstanding MPD policy, make arrests solely based on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) administrative warrants or detainers, which are different from criminal arrest warrants. ICE detainers are based on federal immigration violations, to include administrative immigration warrants for persons with outstanding removal, deportation, or exclusion orders. Additionally, **members shall not assist ICE in the arrest or transport of individuals solely based on ICE administrative warrants or detainers.**
- operate any MPD mode of transportation within eight (8) hours of consuming alcohol, taking over the counter (OTC) or prescription drugs that cause drowsiness, sleepiness, or dizziness.

- create, submit, or sign a report naming another MPD member unless authorized to do so by the member or an MPD official.
- interview subjects/suspects of another member's case without authorization from a commanding officer.
- utilize their private modes of transportation for official business unless approved by a superior (GO 301.07).

**While on duty, members shall:**

- immediately report each instance of their use of force or that of another member.
- immediately report to their supervisors any legal or policy violations of another member.
- respond truthfully to anything asked of them.
- forward through appropriate channels via memorandum a request to personally meet with the Chief of Police or bureau head relating to MPD or other matters. This provision is not applicable to incidental contact in the course of business.

**All non-exigent internal matters or inquiries (e.g., leave requests) that require the review and/or approval of an official must go through the chain of command to that official.**

- use sound judgment when speaking to officers in plainclothes to protect undercover and or sensitive situations.
- report any unsafe conditions to the appropriate agency, such as those involving fire hydrants, sidewalks, downed streetlights, or downed traffic signs. If you notice that the problem has not been fixed, you should follow up with the correct agency.
- address officers by their appropriate rank, whether on duty or off duty.
- keep a field notebook for documenting any matter brought to their attention. The notebook must be kept for at least three (3) years after the notebook is filled/complete. The notebook may be discoverable as *Jencks or Brady* material.
- arrive to work or assigned duty on time.
- familiarize yourself with your assignment's area, residents, community concerns, streets, and any general topographical concerns such as bodies of water, nature areas, high/low points of interest, alleyways, etc.).
- constantly patrol your assigned area, check in with dispatch, and monitor your radio.
- take a meal break thirty (30) minutes into your tour of duty, but it may not occur during morning rush hour (0630-0930), evening rush hour (1530-1830), or during the last hour of your tour.
- check MPD email at least once during your tour of duty.

**1.9.3 Members will conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner.**

- ALL members shall be courteous and respectful to ALL members of the community
- Maintain and make an effort to strengthen community relationships at every interaction with a community member

**Summary**

Members shall conduct themselves in a respectful and responsible manner at all times. Members shall observe, uphold, and enforce all laws without bias or prejudice. Members shall perform their duties while treating community members with dignity and integrity. It is your job as an MPD officer to protect and serve persons that live in our city as well as persons who visit.

You will learn more about your duties, responsibilities, and conduct as you continue your academy training. When you apply those things correctly you will be building a foundation for a great career. Take every interaction with community members seriously and treat every community member with respect. Make every interaction count by making a lasting, positive impression. Be the officer people remember for being honorable, respectful, and genuine.