Bias-Based Policing

401.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to department members that affirms the Lewiston Police Department 's commitment to policing that is fair and objective.

Nothing in this policy prohibits the use of specified characteristics in law enforcement activities designed to strengthen the department's relationship with its diverse communities (e.g., cultural and ethnicity awareness training, youth programs, community group outreach, partnerships).

401.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Bias-based policing or improper profiling - An inappropriate reliance on actual or perceived characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin (including limited English proficiency), religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, disability, or affiliation with any non-criminal group (protected characteristics) as the basis for providing differing law enforcement service or enforcement. This includes explicit and implicit biases (i.e., conscious and unconscious beliefs or attitudes towards certain groups).

This also includes use of racial or ethnic stereotypes as factors in selecting whom to stop and search. It does not include law enforcement's use of race or ethnicity to determine whether a person matches a specific description of a particular subject (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471).

401.2 POLICY

The Lewiston Police Department is committed to providing law enforcement services to the community with due regard for the racial, cultural or other differences of those served. It is the policy of this department to provide law enforcement services and to enforce the law equally, fairly, objectively and without discrimination toward any individual or group (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471, Subd. 3).

401.3 BIAS-BASED POLICING PROHIBITED

Bias-based policing is strictly prohibited.

However, nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit an officer from considering protected characteristics in combination with credible, timely and distinct information connecting a person or people of a specific characteristic to a specific unlawful incident, or to specific unlawful incidents, specific criminal patterns or specific schemes.

401.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Every member of this department shall perform his/her duties in a fair and objective manner and is responsible for promptly reporting any suspected or known instances of bias-based policing to the Chief of Police. Members should, when reasonable to do so, intervene to prevent any biased-based actions by another member.

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401.4.1 REASON FOR CONTACT
Officers contacting a person shall be prepared to articulate sufficient reason for the contact, independent of the protected characteristics of the individual.

To the extent that written documentation would otherwise be completed (e.g., arrest report, Field Interview (FI) card), the involved officer should include those facts giving rise to the contact, as applicable.

Except for required data-collection forms or methods, nothing in this policy shall require any officer to document a contact that would not otherwise require reporting.

401.4.2 INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED
Officers shall (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471, Subd. 3):

(a) Introduce or identify themselves and state the reason for a contact as soon as practicable unless providing the information could compromise officer or public safety.

(b) Attempt to answer questions the person may have regarding the contact, including relevant referrals to other agencies when appropriate.

(c) Explain the reason for the contact if it is determined the reasonable suspicion was unfounded.

(d) When requested, provide their name and badge number and identify this department during routine stops.

(e) When requested, officers should inform a member of the public of the process to file a misconduct complaint for bias-based policing against a member of the Department, and that bias-based policing complaints may be made by calling the Attorney General's office (Minn. Stat. § 626.9514).

401.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES
Supervisors should monitor those individuals under their command for compliance with this policy and shall handle any alleged or observed violations in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.

(a) Supervisors should discuss any issues with the involved officer and their supervisor in a timely manner.

    1. Supervisors should document these discussions in the prescribed manner.

(b) Supervisors should periodically review Mobile Audio Video (MAV) recordings, body-worn camera (BWC) media, Mobile Digital Computer (MDC) data, and any other available resource used to document contact between officers and the public to ensure compliance with this policy.

    1. Supervisors should document these periodic reviews.

    2. Recordings or data that capture a potential instance of bias-based policing should be appropriately retained for administrative investigation purposes.

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(c) Supervisors shall initiate investigations of any actual or alleged violations of this policy.

(d) Supervisors should take prompt and reasonable steps to address any retaliatory action taken against any member of this department who discloses information concerning bias-based policing.

401.6 ADMINISTRATION

Each year, the Chief of Police should review the efforts of the Department to provide fair and objective policing, including public concerns and complaints. The review should identify any changes in training or operations that should be made to improve service.

401.7 TRAINING

Training on fair and objective policing and review of this policy shall be conducted annually and include:

(a) Explicit and implicit biases.

(b) Avoiding improper profiling.

401.7.1 ADDITIONAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The Chief should ensure that Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) approved in-service training is provided to officers on recognizing and valuing community diversity and cultural differences, including implicit bias, as required by Minn. Stat. § 626.8469, Subd. 1.

The Chief of Police and supervisors should receive and review training materials prepared by POST on how to detect and respond to racial profiling (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471, Subd. 7).

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