

Basic Course Workbook Series



Learning Domain 00

Becoming an Exemplary Peace Officer

Version 2.0

COMMISSION ON PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING

**Basic Course Workbook Series
Student Materials
Learning Domain 00
Becoming an Exemplary Peace Officer
Version 2.0**

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The mission of the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training is to continually enhance the professionalism of California law enforcement in serving its communities.

THE ACADEMY TRAINING MISSION

The primary mission of basic training is to prepare students mentally, morally, and physically to advance into a field training program, assume the responsibilities, and execute the duties of a peace officer in society.

FOREWORD

The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training sincerely appreciates the efforts of the many curriculum consultants, academy instructors, directors and coordinators who contributed to the development of this workbook. We must also thank the California law enforcement agency executives who allowed their personnel to participate in the development of these training materials.

This student workbook is part of the POST Basic Course Training System. The workbook component of this system provides a self-study document for every learning domain in the Basic Course. Each workbook is intended to be a supplement to, not a substitute for, classroom instruction. The objective of the system is to improve academy student learning and information retention and ultimately contribute to you becoming a peace officer committed to safety, and to the communities you will serve.

The content of each workbook is organized into sequenced learning modules to meet requirements as prescribed both by California law and the POST Training and Testing Specifications for the Basic Course.

It is our hope that the collective wisdom and experience of all who contributed to this workbook will help you, the student, to successfully complete the Basic Course and to enjoy a safe and rewarding career as a peace officer.

MANUEL ALVAREZ, Jr.
Executive Director

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Chapter 1

An Introduction to Peace Officer Training

Congratulations

It's a major accomplishment to begin training to become a career peace officer. You and your family have every reason to be proud of your decision to join a profession dedicated to serving others.

We hope you are looking forward to and are prepared for an intense and challenging experience. Academy training will demand your full commitment, and it will continually test your intelligence and character. If you handle these tests well, you will become a professional peace officer with a promising future.

THE EXEMPLARY PEACE OFFICER (EPO)

No man ever reached to excellence in any art or profession without having passed through the slow and painful process of study and preparation

— Homer
Ancient Greek writer and poet

**Achieving excellence in any endeavor is both a goal and reward.
People of character cannot be comfortable with anything less.
Those who attain it need little more.**

Throughout your training and career, an army of instructors, field trainers, supervisors, and managers will strive to help you reach your highest professional potential. This team is dedicated to helping you develop the intellectual, emotional, and physical qualities to make you an ***Exemplary Peace Officer (EPO)***.

An EPO Is a Model Or Ideal Example Of Policing Excellence

The central mission of your training is to strengthen the four essential characteristics of an exemplary peace officer:

- Good character
- Proficiency
- Professionalism
- Leadership

Essential Characteristics

We will explore these four aspects of policing excellence later in this publication. For now, an overview of the essential definitions should be sufficient.

GOOD CHARACTER

Ethical and moral strength demonstrated by six virtues: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship.

PROFICIENCY

A high level of competence demonstrated by the knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment necessary for the exemplary performance of all aspects of the policing mission.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is demonstrated by the pursuit of the policing mission with honor, courage, composure, competence, and respect in a manner that upholds the highest standards of policing ethics, displays a commitment to continual self-improvement, and generates public trust, respect, and confidence.

LEADERSHIP

Demonstrated by the ability to improve a situation or achieve a socially positive change by influencing the way others think and act and by the ability to take command of a situation.

POLICING IS NOT MERELY A JOB

There is a life that is worth living – the honest life, the useful life, the unselfish life, cleansed by devotion to an ideal. There is a battle worth fighting now as it was worth fighting then, and that is the battle for justice and equality.

— Henry Van Dyke
American poet
1852-1933

Throughout your training you will be encouraged to think of policing as much more than a job with good pay and great benefits. Yes, the compensation, work schedules, opportunities for promotion, and generous medical and retirement benefits are very attractive, but even at its best policing can be an unusually tough job.

We encourage you to think of policing not as a job but in grander terms as a lifetime career in meaningful public service. Policing is a profession with high expectations and high rewards that have nothing to do with your salary and benefits.

The Benefits: Growth And Fulfillment

My greatest ambition is to be held in high esteem by my fellow men and to be truly worthy of their esteem.

— Abraham Lincoln
(paraphrased)

Our souls are not hungry for fame, comfort, wealth, or power. Our souls are hungry for meaning for the sense that we have figured out how to live so that our lives matter, so that the world will be at least a little bit different for our having passed through it.

— Harold Kushner
American rabbi and writer

If you approach policing as a dedicated professional, you will have ahead of you endless opportunities for personal growth and a sense of pride and fulfillment that will come from knowing what you do is meaningful and important.

You also will make lasting and deep friendships and experience the pleasure that comes from working with a team of professionals with shared values and objectives.

Most of all, you will earn the admiration and gratitude of fair-minded people, the pride of family and friends and the supreme satisfaction of knowing you are leading a worthy and honorable life that really matters.

The Investment

As you might expect, these benefits will not come without personal investment. Professional policing requires hard work and dedication. It requires unusual self-control and the ability to keep a positive attitude despite occasional frustration with shortcomings of individuals and the criminal justice system.

During your career you will probably endure unfair criticism and personal attacks from people who want to discredit you and your agency. There will be moments when you wonder whether it's worth it.

These doubts, however, will dissolve if you find it gratifying knowing that when you do your job well you will make people's lives better every single day by enhancing the quality of life in your community and creating an environment where people feel safe, secure, and well-protected.

WHAT PEACE OFFICERS REALLY DO

Face reality as it is, not as it was or as you wish it to be.

— Jack Welch
Former chairman, General Electric

To desire and strive to be of some service to the world, to aim at doing something which shall really increase the happiness and welfare and virtue of mankind – this is a choice which is possible for all of us; and surely it is a good haven to sail for.

— Henry Van Dyke
American clergyman, educator and author

Everyone enters academy training with a preconception of what it will be like to be a cop. Unfortunately, most of these preconceptions are distorted by movie and TV stereotypes of nonstop action, high-speed chases, shoot-outs, fist fights, and roughing up bad guys.

Many popular films feature “one-man-army” avengers who take on incredible odds without back-up; “rules-are-made-to-be-broken” rebels who flout laws and disobey orders and “make-my-day” intimidators who use threats and violence as their primary interviewing tools.

Discipline And Respect for The Law Are Essential

The truth is that professional policing requires much more discipline and a much higher level of respect for the limits and constraints of the law than these depictions suggest. Punishing bad guys and avenging innocent victims is not part of the policing function. That responsibility is left to the courts.

Policing professionals must never forget that their powers to stop, interrogate, arrest and use force are created and confined by the law. When a peace officer disregards the law, even with noble intentions, public confidence is undermined, and the officer is subject to agency discipline and legal action.

The impulsiveness, insubordination, and emotional self-indulgence exhibited by many movie cops will not contribute to a successful career in real life. There is no room in modern policing for irresponsible or undisciplined individuals. In fact, most of these media heroes would be fired or imprisoned.

In the policing profession, exemplary peace officers understand reality and live up to their oaths and their duty to operate within the law; they respect the Constitutional and human rights of all people.

Peace Officers Do More Than Enforce Laws

It's important that you replace any fantasies of policies with a realistic picture of what you will be doing once you put on your uniform and badge.

Professional policing involves much more than law enforcement. Yes, interviewing witness and interrogating suspects, executing search warrants, making arrests, and testifying in court will be part of your responsibilities. And you must be fit and well-trained so you can effectively deal with situations that require physical interaction and the use of weapons. But as important as these aspects of policing are, law enforcement represents only a fraction of what you will do. In fact, **much of your time will be spent helping people in other ways, including resolving disputes, dispensing advice, taking reports, regulating crowds and traffic, and aiding people in danger or distress.**

Think About It:

Why do you want to become a peace officer? Is your goal to help people? To make good money? To catch criminals? People who live the happiest, most fulfilling lives have a clear idea of their purpose in life. Is it just to have as much pleasure as you can or acquire as many things as you can? Or do you have grander goals? For those who seek to live a life of meaning, policing offers extraordinary opportunities. One way to understand your purpose is to think about what you would like people to say about after you die. Then live your life so you earn that eulogy.

You will find your life more rewarding if you identify and nurture deeper personal ambitions that define your purpose in terms of your mission as a peace officer. Take a moment to write down your answers to these questions:

- What gives my life meaning?
- How would I like the value of my days on earth to be measured?
- How does my role as a peace officer fit in?
- What are my career and life objectives? What will success look like in 5, 10 or 20 years?

The Role of The Modern Peace Officer

You've notice by now that we use the term "peace officer" rather than "law enforcement officer." This is because peace officer is a broader concept that more accurately describes the true role of today's policing professionals.

Studies conducted from 1979 to 2006 by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) provide a good picture of what entry-level patrol officers and deputies actually do. The reports identified the following job functions:

- Advising and assisting the public
- Working with the community to reduce crime and address community concerns
- Preparing for and presenting legal testimony
- Apprehending and arresting suspects
- Detecting and investigating crimes
- Managing traffic
- Documenting investigations, enforcement actions, and other patrol contacts
- Maintaining order in the community
- Providing emergency assistance to the public
- Maintaining and improving job readiness
- Handling complaints and incidents
- Enhancing police-community relations
- Serving the public in a consistent, professional, and lawful manner

Later in this publication, as well as at the academy, you will learn more about the ***policing mission*** and how it defines your role and responsibilities, and how it will guide your decisions as a peace officer.

Chapter 2

The Academy Experience

Life is a place of service, and in that service one has to suffer a great deal that is hard to bear, but more often to experience a great of joy. But that joy can be real only if people look upon their life as a service and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness.

— Leo Tolstoy
Russian novelist
1828-1910

The academy is a school for professionals, and you must be a serious and conscientious student if you are to succeed. Everything you will be taught will be relevant to your work and throughout your career. In fact, much of what you learn at the academy can profoundly affect lives, including your own.

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses.

— George Washington Carver
American scientist
1864-1943

You will recall that leadership is one of the four critical qualities possessed by an exemplary peace officer. At the academy you will have many opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership skills.

Take Charge of Your Training Experience

One aspect of leadership is an ability to take charge of a situation and be responsible for making things better. Few settings provide the context to demonstrate and develop this ability than in the academy. Leadership is setting an example worth following.

If you view your upcoming training as the “situation” and your mastery of the academy curriculum as the successful outcome, you will see the opportunity to use leadership principles to help accomplish your goal.

Be Accountable

Effective leaders don’t wait for the conditions of success; they create them. You can do the same in the academy if you accept the fact that ***you alone are ultimately responsible for your education and professional development.***

For example, you may find some segments of your training boring. Some courses may seem too easy or others too hard. You may like some instructors and not others. The crucial point is, regardless of your opinion of the quality of any aspect of your training, you are required and expected to learn. Based on the principles of leadership and personal responsibility, ***you will be held accountable for acquiring the knowledge and skills you need to know.***

This means if you are confused by the content or overwhelmed by the amount of information you must learn, take charge of the situation and seek help in understanding the materials and/or developing more effective study strategies. If you are having difficulty mastering certain skills, practice until you are proficient.

Example:

Taking Charge of Your Education. Cadets Owens and Ramirez are in a class on the laws of arrest and detention, including the difference between “reasonable suspicion” and “probable cause.”

Both cadets find the lectures boring and confusing. Cadet Owens complains about the poor instruction to fellow cadets and says, “How am I ever going to learn this stuff if this guy can’t teach?”

Cadet Ramirez seeks the help of others in class who seem to understand the concept, does some extra reading on his own and poses questions to the instructor.

- Which cadet is demonstrating leadership?
- Which cadet is likely to get the most out of the academy education?
- Which cadet is likely to be more successful in policing?

THE LANGUAGE OF POLICING

You will learn many new things during your academy and field training that will help you become smarter, wiser, and more competent. You will also be introduced to a new language of “police talk” filled with:

- Acronyms – a word formed from the initial letters of a series of words (e.g., “GOA” for “gone on arrival” or “GTA” for “grand theft auto”)
- Jargon – specialized or technical language, including, code sections of important laws (e.g., “211” for robbery)
- Legal Latin (e.g., “habeas corpus” – rights protecting citizens against illegal imprisonment)
- Slang – an informal nonstandard vocabulary composed of invented words (e.g., “blown away” for killed by a shooting or “drop a dime” referring to an informer betraying someone with a call to the authorities)

Don’t be intimidated by any of this. It will soon become second nature.

TECHNIQUES THAT WORK

Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.

— Abigail Adams
U.S. First Lady
1744-1818

Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.

— Confucius
Chinese philosopher
551 BC-479 BC

The best way to do well at the academy is to be actively involved in your education. In short, take your academy training seriously. It's not enough just to pass tests and memorize facts.

You may feel a bit overwhelmed by the amount of material you must learn and you may struggle, with the concepts at first, so to take time to “internalize” important information and techniques. Most cadets need to review the material several times to gain competence and confidence.

Stay Positive

A person is generally about as happy as he is willing to be.

— Abraham Lincoln

Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.

— Buddhist proverb

You will get the most out of the academy and your career if you maintain an upbeat outlook on your life, your job, and society. If you approach life as a cynic, your glass will never more than half full. If you look at your glass in terms of your accomplishments and successes, it will always be at least half full.

This will not be easy. By its nature, police work puts you in frequent contact with dishonest, irresponsible, and disrespectful people. If you are not careful you may begin to think lying and law-breaking are the norm and that no one appreciates all you do as a public servant. This, of course, is untrue. You must remind yourself that the vast majority of people are hard-working, honest folks who need and appreciate your protection.

One way to fight cynicism is to regularly review your day and week and identify the positive moments where you made a difference, or someone expressed gratitude. If you take pride in your work, you will not only be successful, you will be happy.

Think About It:

How to do well in the academy	
Prepare	Read assigned materials, really think about the reflection questions and highlight important points you want to remember or questions you want to ask.
Participation	Listen attentively, ask questions, volunteer answers, and get involved in class discussions. There will be opportunities for you to lead learning activities and similar class processes. If you take advantage of these opportunities, you will more rapidly develop leadership skills.
Study and review	No one can absorb the academy's materials without diligent study. Use study groups to enhance retention. Loop up words and terms you don't understand.
Practice	When possible, practice skills and techniques you have learned. When you can't practice, visualize doing so.

Balancing Humility and Self-Confidence

Confidence is going after Moby Dick in a rowboat and taking the tartar sauce with you.

— Zig Zigler
Motivational speaker and author

Each person comes to the academy with a different background. Experience as a military police officer, correctional officer, or emergency medical technician may give some cadets a head start. Some cadets will have martial arts or marksmanship skills while the courage and coolness of others may have been tested in combat. Finally, some cadets will have superior academic credentials.

Wherever you are in this mix, don't get discouraged or intimidated. If you have to make up ground, persistent effort and a positive attitude are often all you need to catch up. On the other hand, if your experience or skills give you an initial advantage, don't get complacent or arrogant. There is still much to learn – even in areas you think you know. Despite similarities and common elements of previous experiences, policing is different from anything you've done before.

THE POLICING MISSION

To have a great purpose to work for, a purpose larger than ourselves, is one of the secrets of making life significant, for then the meaning and worth of the individual overflow his personal borders and survive his death.

— Will Durant
Philosopher and historian
1885-1981

History Of Policing

Full-time, professional policing is a relatively new idea. In 1829, Sir Robert Peel established the first police force in London, England. Before that, law enforcement functions were handled by the military.

Peel's Nine Principles of Policing

1. The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.
2. The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions.
3. Police must secure the willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public.
4. The degree of cooperation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity of the use of physical force.
5. Police seek and preserve public favor not by catering to public opinion but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law.
6. Police use physical force to the extent necessary to secure observance of the law or to restore order only when the exercise of persuasion, advice, and warning is insufficient.
7. Police, at all times should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.

8. Police should always direct their action strictly towards their functions and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary.
9. The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.

From Law Enforcement Officer to Peace Officer

In the past half century, the public's expectations of police have expanded considerably to include responsibilities that go considerably beyond "law enforcement." Thus, today's officers are often called peace officers rather than law enforcement officers.

Four Elements of The Modern Policing Mission

You should fully understand the scope of the modern policing mission prior to beginning your academy training. There are four major elements:

1. Protect and serve the public
2. Enhance the quality of life
3. Generate and maintain public trust
4. Uphold individual liberties and Constitutional rights

Element	Description
1. Protect and serve the public	<p>Enforce laws. Detain, question, write citations, search, and arrest suspected violators of criminal laws, local ordinances, and traffic regulations.</p> <p>Ensure public safety and protect life and property. Protect, rescue, and safeguard human life or property whenever they endangered by criminal conduct, traffic accidents, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or other causes.</p> <p>Preserve peace and public order. Control crowds and handle public nuisances and disturbances of the peace.</p>
2. Enhance the quality of life	<p>Prevent crime. Perform community education, problem-solving, and anti-gang/anti-drug activities.</p> <p>Reduce fear of crime. Foster an environment where people feel free, safe, secured, and well-protected, and confident in the ability of police agencies to protect and serve them.</p> <p>Solve community problems. In collaboration with other agencies, seek and implement solutions to community problems.</p>
3. Generate and maintain public trust	<p>Generate and maintain public trust. Practice and preserve professionalism and proficiency and avoid any conduct that discredits you or your agency.</p>
4. Uphold individual liberties and Constitutional rights	<p>Uphold individual liberties and Constitutional rights. Protect Constitutional guaranteed liberties regarding freedom of speech, assembly, and religion; freedom from unreasonable arrest, searches and seizures; and the rights to remain silent, to an attorney, and to “due process” of law.</p> <p>Respect human rights and dignity. Demonstrate the highest respect for human rights and dignity by treating all people with respect, and by violating privacy and using force only when reasonable and to the extent necessary to accomplish a proper policing purpose.</p>

The Peace Officer's Role in A Democratic Society

Without commonly shared and widely entrenched moral values and obligations, neither the law nor democratic government will function properly.

— Vaclav Havel
Playwright, former president
of the Czech Republic

At the academy, you will be introduced to values such as justice and respect for the law that are central to professional policing. Although these values underlie the law enforcement function of policing, you will also learn that the process of enforcing laws is itself governed by laws that reflect a firm commitment to other American values expressed in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights relating to a free, fair, and open society.

Importance Of the Constitution And The Bill Of Rights

What makes this country so extraordinary is that it is founded on democratic values including a commitment to truth, justice, liberty, and skepticism of government power.

As a peace officer you will be entrusted with the awesome responsibility of assuring that these values are preserved and protected. Thus, American peace officers are responsible for protecting the rights of all people. This includes not only victims and bystanders, but suspects and perpetrators.

Unfortunately, some law-enforcement officers undervalue this obligation. Consequently, they believe Constitutional limits on police power are unnecessary and unwise and barriers that coddle criminals and handcuff cops. This view is advocated by people who don't appreciate the realities of crime. In effect, they see the Constitution as an obstacle and the courts as unwitting allies to lawbreakers.

These criticisms run counter to the philosophy of government that America has contributed to the world – the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the carefully crafted system of checks and balances designed to preserve individual liberty within a society based on the rule of law.

Though honoring individual rights in certain instances might be contrary to your intuition or instincts, the laws and values that underlie them are non-negotiable standards of modern policing. Your acceptance of them is not optional.

Potential Conflicts Between Professional and Personal Values

As a peace officer, you may run into situations where your personal beliefs conflict with your professional duties. For example, your stands on abortion, civil rights, or political protests may conflict with your duty to enforce laws and protect people who are doing things you find offensive.

Your success in policing depends on your ability to do your duty regardless of your personal beliefs.

Failure to understand this can lead to serious consequences for you, your agency, and your profession.

Examples

Officer Owens and Ramirez disagree strongly on the issue of abortion. Both are called to respond to an anti-abortion demonstration in front of a medical facility known to perform legal abortions. So long as the demonstration is peaceful and lawful, both officers must protect the people within the building as well as the demonstrators' freedom of speech.

Officer Mason believes marijuana should be legalized. During an investigation of a domestic disturbance, he finds five joints of marijuana. The owner urges the officer not to report this. He says that a possession charge will get him fired. The officer has a legal and moral duty to seize the drugs and make the arrest. The legalization of marijuana is an issue for the legislature, not an individual police officer.

Chapter 3

Ethics and Values

What distinguishes humankind from all other living things is our sense of right and wrong based on ethical concerns and sensibilities. Without ethics we would have no conscience or moral compass. Without ethics we could not treasure such virtues as truth, justice, compassion, responsibility, and respect, nor could we condemn their opposites.

During your training you will hear many references to ethics. This attention is not merely academic. Ethics is central to everyday policing. In fact, according to The International Association of Chiefs of Police, one of the greatest challenges facing modern policing agencies is “establishing and maintaining higher ethical standards for police personnel.”

The following introduction field you are about to will enter help you better understand the ethical dimension of the field you are about to enter.

WHAT IS ETHICS?

Ethics is a branch of philosophy concerning human conduct. ***It identifies standards of duty and virtue that define what is morally right, good, and proper, and guides the conduct of good people.***

Most importantly, remember that ethics is a ***prescription, not a description***. This means ethics directs us and prescribes how we should behave. It is a common mistake to use the term ethics as merely a description of the way people do behave. ***Ethics is not about the way things are; it's about the way they ought to be.***

Failure to realize that ethics refers to universal standards of right and wrong leads some people to talk about “personal ethics,” “legal ethics”, or “political ethics” as if the requirements of ethics vary from person to person and job to job.

Ethics Refers to Universal Truths, Not Personal Opinions

A philosophy known as “ethical relativism” holds that there are no objective standards of right or wrong, just personal opinions and social customs. To a complete relativist, there is no basis for distinguishing between Osama Bin Laden and Mother Teresa since both lived up to their own standards of good and evil. By this reasoning, we cannot draw a defensible moral distinction between violent gang members and any other group.

The more dominant view of ethics rests on the conviction that there are certain universal truths, moral standards of right and wrong that govern the behavior of all people in all settings.

The policing profession rejects ethical relativism in favor of the universal view. To facilitate an ongoing conversation about ethics, this publication and other EPO materials employ a common language framework of universal values called the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship.

The Ethical World of The Peace Officers

The ethical world of the peace officer is complex.

In addition to the moral obligation to be a person of character governed by the ***universal ethical duties*** embodied in the Six Pillars of Character, a peace officer is subject to ***professional ethical standards***. These include what we call the Five Principles of Public Service Ethics as well as government ethics laws that apply to all public employees and more specific codes that apply only to peace officers.



THE SIX PILLARS OF CHARACTER

A national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization called the Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics identified six core ethical values that have been widely accepted by educational, governmental, and policing institutions as ethical principles that apply to all people. Called the “Six Pillars of Character,” these values are the foundation of a national character education initiative called Character Counts! The Six Pillars, as summarized below, are the values framework for your Academic training and your professional life beyond.

Pillar	Description
Trustworthiness	Trustworthiness embodies four ethical obligations essential to personal credibility and public trust: integrity (consistency between beliefs, words, and actions), honesty (truthfulness, sincerity, and candor), promise-keeping, and loyalty.
Respect	Respect refers to the moral duty to treat all people with dignity regardless of what you think of them personally. There are two aspects to respect: verbal and physical. Respect is demonstrated by courtesy and professionalism. It is disrespectful and unprofessional to use profanity, to make racial, ethnic or gender slurs, to make sexual comments, or engage in other conduct that could reasonably be construed as rude, crude, tasteless, humiliating, or abusive. The ethical principal of respect also limits the use of physical force.
Responsibility	Responsibility means being personally accountable for our choices and executing duties with professionalism and proficiency. It also means recognizing that our actions matter, and we are morally on the hook for the consequences.
Fairness	Fairness is treating people equally; being consistent, being open-minded, giving people an opportunity to respond to accusations, and making decisions on the merits while avoiding favoritism, bias, or prejudice.

Pillar	Description
Caring	Caring is the heart of ethics, and ethical decisions-making. It is scarcely possible to be truly ethical and yet unconcerned with the welfare of others. That is because ethics is ultimately about good relations with other people. Caring is being kind, compassionate, empathetic, charitable, and forgiving.
Citizenship	Citizenship as an ethical value does not refer to one's residence or status in one country or another. Rather, it speaks to one's duty to be a constructive, law-abiding, member of the community who honors the rule of law, and respects lawful authority, and abides by the letter and spirit of the law. Being a good citizen also involves meeting civic responsibilities by voting and participating in the processes of democracy. Good citizens also demonstrate a concern for the well-being of their neighbors and help protect the environment for future generations.

GOVERNMENT ETHICS CODES AND THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC SERVICE ETHICS

As **public employees**, peace officers are bound by a broad set of ethical principles providing an overarching set of standards that require public servants to use the governmental authority in a manner that produces and preserves public trust.

Effective policing depends on the public's cooperation and lawfulness. When their trust erodes, their willingness to assist peace officers or comply with the law deteriorates. In an environment of mistrust, the peace officer's job is much more difficult.

If policing functions are not performed ethically, there will be no public trust. Therefore, conduct deemed to be unethical will be grounds for discipline, including termination.

Because public servants have a special responsibility to generate and preserve public trust, they must abide by the complex **state and local government ethics codes** governing such issues as conflicts of interest, moonlighting, and the acceptance of gratuities.

The Five Principles of Public Service Ethics

To prevent corruption, waste, and abuse of authority, every state and many local government entities have adopted laws that apply to public employees, including peace officers. In general, these laws:

- Prohibit using public office for private gain
- Define and regulate conflicts of interest
- Require openness and accountability
- Demand that public employees abide by the spirit as well as the letter of the law
- Require public employees to avoid even the appearance of impropriety

Your agency has access to legal counsel to help you understand the details of the laws that apply to you. Don't hesitate to seek advice whenever you face a choice that might be governed by these laws. Once you understand the basic philosophy of the Five Principles of Public Service Ethics, you will be better able to avoid legal entanglements.

Principles	Description
1. Public Interest	Public office is to be used only to advance public interest, not personal gain. These rules include limitation on accepting gifts, gratuities, and favors (including special discounts), and using public property for personal purposes.
2. Objective Judgment	Public employees must exercise objective judgment and act in the best interest of the public. Decisions are to be made on the merits, free of partiality or prejudice, and unimpeded by conflicts of interest. Detailed laws require public servants to identify and avoid conflicts of interest that could impede their objective judgment (including rules governing outside employment).
3. Accountability	Government is to be conducted openly, efficiently, equitably, and honorably so the public can make informed judgments and hold public officials accountable. The Brady Rule, created by the courts, imposes special accountability standards requiring agencies to make available to defense attorneys' information on an officer's personnel file that may bear on honesty and integrity.
4. Democracy	Public employees are required to honor the spirit as well as the letter of the law. Gamesmanship and legalistic tactics that evade the law and undermine public policy are unethical.
5. Respectability	All public servants must safeguard public confidence in the integrity of the government by avoiding appearances of impropriety and conduct unbefitting their office. Because of their high visibility it is especially important that peace officers scrupulously conduct their professional and personal lives in a manner that never tarnishes their badges.

Professional Codes of Conduct

One of the elements that defines a profession is the requirements that its members adhere to a code of conduct. Lawyers, doctors, and ministers are obliged, for example, to keep certain communications confidential. They also have an ethical duty to avoid romantic relationships with clients.

Policing professionals have a similar set of ethical rules. They have a duty to help people in danger, even at risk to their own lives. They are limited to what they can do while in uniform. They are prohibited from endorsing commercial products, and so forth.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police, and **California Peace Officers Association**, and other policing entities have codes of ethics that defined proper conduct.

Remember, professional ethical duties supplement, they do not replace, the universal ethical obligations of the Six Pillars of Character.

Chapter 4

Attributes of an Exemplary Peace Officer

Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.

— Mark Twain
Author
1835-1910

As previously mentioned, academy and in-service training will focus on developing four qualities of an exemplary peace officer: good character, proficiency, professionalism, and leadership.

The goal is to assure that graduates have strong critical thinking, problem-solving and leadership skills, and a keen sense of who they are and how their work will be performed. The test of your training will be your ability to do all you are required to do in stressful, fluid, and uncertain situations.

In the field, you will have a great deal of power and broad discretion on how to deal with circumstances. Consequently, heavy emphasis will be placed on problem-solving and decision-making. The objective will be to teach you how to make exemplary decisions that effectively, legally, and ethically achieve the best possible result.

Remember, however, academy training is only the first phase of your professional preparation. The second phase will be field training where you will apply and refine your skills and knowledge in real-life situations.

Since the attributes of an exemplary peace officer are crucial, further exploration of these qualities should help guide you through the academy.

GOOD CHARACTER

Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson
Writer
1803-1882

I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor.

— Henry David Thoreau
Poet and essayist
1817-1862

Good character is the foundation of exemplary policing. Good moral character is ethics in action built on the foundation of six major virtues. All of your conduct and decisions at the academy and in the field will be judged by these ethical principles: ***trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship***

Without good character, all the knowledge and skills taught at the academy will not make you a good officer.

No matter how smart you are, how good an investigator you are, or how adept you are with weapons, you are not fit or qualified to be an EPO unless you have good character.

No one comes to, or leaves, the academy with perfect character. No matter how strong your character is (or you think it is) when you enter the academy, if you seek to be an EPO you must believe you can be better and strive to do so.

In fact, a major role of academy instructors and field training officers is to strengthen character traits, problem solving, and critical thinking skills to help you become an exemplary peace officer. Don't take this as a personal insult.

Questions About Character

- Do you think your character is permanently established, or are you still capable of growing and choosing who you want to be and how you want to conduct your life?
- Could you become more or less honest?
- Could you increase your sensitivity to issues of individuality or respect or become more callous and cynical about certain populations (e.g., drug users, prostitutes, gang bangers, social workers, lawyers)?
- Could an academy instructor, field training officer, or mentor teach you anything that will help you eliminate or reduce negative characteristics or instill or strengthen positive ones?

This is not because your instructors assume that there is anything wrong with your character. It's because character development is a lifelong process and no matter how good you are, you can be better.

If you are receptive and reflective, you may find your virtues getting stronger as you adopt professional policing values and attitudes that help you become:

- More committed to honesty in all things
- More able to control negative impulses
- More willing to treat people with respect no matter the provocation
- More diligent, thorough, and accurate in what you write and say
- More dedicated to helping others, pursuing justice, and upholding the law
- More likely to summon the moral courage to do the right thing, even when it may be personally risky or costly
- More likely to make effective and ethical decisions

The point is that character is constantly undergoing reformation as life experiences and choices change beliefs about what is right and wrong and our priorities as to what is important.

Screening and Weeding

At each hire and promotion, administrators assess candidates' character to eliminate those who cannot be counted on to be scrupulously trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and law-abiding.

While background investigations sometimes reveal disqualifying character issues, observing performance and behavior will often reveal negative character traits not discovered in the hiring or promotion process. Character assessment (like character building) is never final.

Remember, from the time you enter the academy and throughout your career, your conduct will be continually observed for signs of poor character, including lying or deception, cheating, prejudice, lack of self-control laziness, carelessness, and off-duty misconduct.

Special Issues of Integrity

*Better keep yourself clean and bright.
You are the window through which you must see the world.*

— George Bernard Shaw
Irish playwright
1856-1950

In hiring people, look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. But remember, if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you.

— Warren Buffet
CEO, Bershire Hathaway

Promoting and preserving an ethical environment at the academy and in the field is everyone's responsibility. Despite all efforts to screen out dishonest people from the policing profession, corruption remains a significant concern for police administrators. Every peace officer must learn to perceive and deal with the seductive forces of greed and other pressures of moral compromise.

Training will include, but go well beyond, warnings about the personal consequences of dishonesty (e.g., "If you lie, you die"). You will be reminded that your badge represents the entire profession; any personal misconduct that tarnishes that badge will damage the policing profession itself.

You will also discuss conflicting demands of loyalty and the professional duty to deal with improper conduct by fellow officers. You will learn about your obligation to reject the “Code of Silence” that protects wrongdoers and you will learn that there can be severe consequences if you participate in or “look the other way” from a fellow officer’s misconduct.

Your Integrity is Tested Daily

Your personal integrity will be tested and measured daily by the honesty of your communications, your willingness to abide by the rules – all the rules – and how you conduct yourself in written exams, scenario testing, and physical skills tests such as defensive tactics and emergency vehicle operations.

If you fail a knowledge test or skill exercise, you normally will be given an opportunity to improve and re-test. If you fail the integrity requirements of any task, you will likely be separated from the academy. Your policing career will be over before it starts.

In the academy and in the field, the slightest departure from integrity can have enormous personal consequences. Dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. For example, cheating at the academy is strictly forbidden, but it is not enough that you don’t cheat. You will be expected to set an example of integrity and, if necessary, prevent others from cheating.

Everyone on the academy staff, including administrators and instructors, is responsible to identify and report ethical violations. Students are also expected to report improper conduct by staff or classmates.

If you observe another cadet engaging in conduct unworthy of the trust symbolized by the badge, you are duty-bound to report the conduct to the appropriate authority.

This requirement is consistent with your duty in the field to report and intervene when violations of the law or professional practices occur. Failure to do so diminishes your credibility as a peace officer and can be grounds for sanctions up to and including dismissal.

Accepting responsibility for the integrity of classmates and friends can be very difficult. At times, there may be significant social and professional pressure to look the other way. You must accept that your law enforcement duties require you to do the right thing.

Test Your Integrity

Cadets Chan and Kolinsky are friends. Chan has had difficulty on written exams and believes he will wash out if he does not improve. Chan asks Kolinsky to help him cheat using a method he used in high school.

1. What should Kolinsky do?
2. If Kolinsky helps his friend and it is later discovered, what should the appropriate discipline be for both Chan and Kolinsky?
3. If Kolinsky refuses to help, is that enough? Does he have an ethical obligation to report Chan's past cheating in high school and his attempt to cheat at the academy?
4. If another cadet overhears Chan's suggestion to Kolinsky and reports it to an instructor who then confronts Kolinsky, what should Kolinsky say? If Kolinsky doesn't tell the truth, what should the appropriate discipline be?
5. Suppose an instructor, believing Chan will make a good officer but is failing only because he has test anxiety, gives Chan some answers in advance. Is Chan justified in using them? Is Chan obligated to report the instructor?
6. An instructor wants to help the cadets score well on a test and leaks the answer key to a few cadets. Are the cadets justified in using it? What should the appropriate discipline be for anyone who uses it? What is the appropriate discipline for the instructor? If there is a duty to report the cadets or the instructor, to whom should the violations be reported?

PROFICIENCY

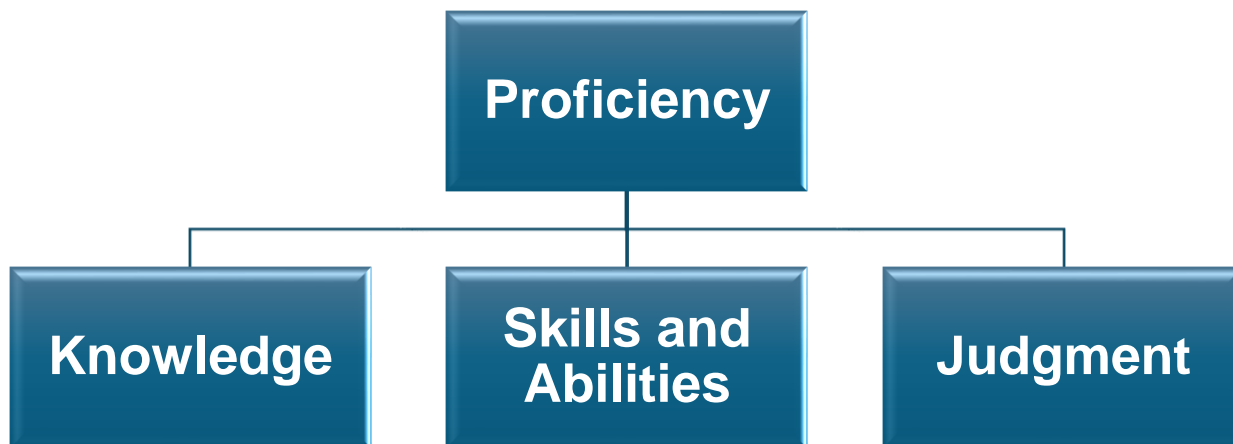
If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception; it is a prevailing attitude.

— Colin Powell

U.S. Army General and former Secretary of State

As a peace officer, you will have many important and diverse responsibilities. You must be able to perform these duties with a high level of professional competence. We refer to this high level of competence as “proficiency.”

Most of your training will concentrate on what you need know and do to be an EPO. The essential elements of proficiency are knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment. A major part of your training will focus on developing these core proficiencies.



Knowledge

You will be required to learn, understand and remember a great deal of information about the law. This includes:

- Constitutional law focusing on the Bills of Rights and court cases interpreting its provisions
- State criminal laws
- Ordinances (city and county laws)
- States and local ethics rules
- Professional standards of conduct

You will also have to learn the tactics and procedures of safe and effective policing.

Skills and Abilities

You will also be expected to master a wide range of **operational skills** (e.g., the effective use of force, how to approach a vehicle safely, how to write reports, testifying in court). These skills will be taught through simulations, practice, and real-life experience. As you develop new skills or improve existing ones, remember that ***what is important is not just knowing what to do, but actually doing it – and doing it well in the field.***

Judgment

As a peace officer, you will regularly face situations requiring you to exercise discretion and make decisions that will significantly impact others. All those affected by your decisions have a stake in what you do. Thus, they are called **stakeholders**.

It's not enough to avoid poor decisions. An exemplary peace officer makes exemplary decisions – decisions that produce the best possible result (BPR). Just as your ability to drive at high speeds or use physical force can be improved through training, your judgment can be enhanced as well.

One of the most effective ways to improve judgment is to understand the components of an exemplary decision, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

PROFESSIONALISM

Policing is a profession and peace officers must conduct themselves as professionals.

Professionalism is demonstrated by the pursuit of the policing mission with courage, composure, competence, and respect in a manner that upholds the highest standards of policing ethics, displays a commitment to continual self-improvement, and generates public trust, respect, and confidence.



Elements of Professionalism

Element	Description
Mission-Focused	Focuses on all mission objectives and achieves as many as possible in every action.
Courage	Stands up for what is right with integrity and zeal despite physical, social, or career risks.
Composure	Presents a bearing and demeanor characterized by poise, coolness, and self-control that inspires confidence in the officer's character and leadership.
Competence	Employs expert knowledge, excellent skills, and exemplary judgment in performing all tasks.
Respect	Treats all people with dignity and courtesy regardless of provocation.
Ethics	Adheres to high standards of policing ethics (including the Six Pillars of Character, the Five Principles of Public Service Ethics, government ethics laws, and professional standards of conduct for peace officers).
Self-Improvement	Engages in continual reflection and self-education to strengthen character and improve proficiency, professionalism, and leadership.
Trust	Behaves in a manner that inspires respect and trust.

Do not follow where the path may lead.

Go instead where is not a path and leave a trail.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson
American author, poet and philosopher
1803-1882

An effective peace officer has good leadership skills.

Leadership is demonstrated by the ability to improve a situation or achieve a socially positive change by influencing the way others think and act and by the ability to take command of a situation.

In policing, the leadership is not simply a matter of rank or official authority. Your conduct as a peace officer will impact the actions of others and you will learn to appreciate the important and highly visible leadership role you will play on a daily basis.

In the academy you will develop two aspects of leadership: command presence and personal influence.

- **Command Presence:** One aspect of leading is command presence. This is the ability to take command and direct others in a manner that effectively responds to the needs of a situation. A leader is someone others expect to take charge.
- **Personal Influence:** Another aspect of leadership is the ability to influence the way others think or act to improve a situation or achieve a socially positive change. This is achieved through the ethical use of authority, persuasion, and/or personal credibility.

Leaders know how to discover, learn from and make positive use of the knowledge skills, and talents each person brings to a situation. Take time to note and appreciate the diversity of your classmates and instructors.

Beyond racial, ethnic, religious, and gender differences, you will also meet people with a wide array of opinions and experiences. Every cadet brings something of value that will aid his or her own training and contributes to the classroom environment.

Examples

After a year on the job, Officer Sanchez is getting frustrated and cynical. “I can’t believe the kinds of things people say to us and we can’t do anything about it, and I’m sick and tired of making arrests and seeing punks let out on technicalities. I’m beginning to understand the attraction of street justice.” Officer Brown says, “I agree, I hate being insulted and ignored, but I really think we’ve got those drug dealers on the run. For me, the aggravation’s worth it.”

Officer Brown chooses to focus on the accomplishments of his work while Officer Sanchez is overwhelmed by negative emotions. Brown is a leader with a healthy perspective about the day-to-day rewards and frustrations of policing.

Which officer do you think will be more effective in his career?

Chapter 5

Aspects of an Exemplary Decision

Every day, peace officers make decisions with great consequences. Poor decisions can jeopardize lives, destroy relationships, and undermine careers. A major objective of your academy and field training will be to improve your critical thinking, judgment, and decision-making.

THE QUALITY OF A DECISION: ACCEPTABLE TO EXEMPLARY

Policing decisions can be ranked as poor, acceptable, good, and exemplary. At the academy you will be taught the differences to help you avoid poor choices and make good and exemplary decisions.

Overview of What You Will Learn

All decisions must have at least three dimensions:

1. They must be legal,
2. They must be ethical, and
3. They must be effective.

The distinction between an acceptable, good, and exemplary decision is found in its level of effectiveness. Acceptable decisions are minimally effective because they accomplish only the primary policing purpose (e.g., making an arrest or disarming an enraged citizen).

Good decisions accomplish the primary policing purpose, but they also avoid unintended and/or undesirable consequences.

Exemplary decisions require a critically thoughtful appraisal of the possibilities of a situation so that the tactic employed will accomplish as many mission elements as possible. The objective of an exemplary decision is the best possible result (BPR).

Decision Making: From Poor to Exemplary

Poor Decision	A poor decision is unacceptable because it is illegal, unethical, and/or ineffective.
Acceptable Decision	An acceptable decision legally, ethically, and effectively accomplishes only the primary policing purpose.
Good Decision	A good decision legally, ethically, and effectively accomplishes the primary policing purpose without causing unintended and/or undesirable consequences
Exemplary Decision	An exemplary decision employs expert knowledge, excellent skills, and exemplary judgment in performing all tasks.

The Legal Dimension of a Decision

The first requirement of every policing decision is legality. ***A decision is legal if it complies with the Constitution, state and local statutes, and agency policies.*** You must have a substantial working knowledge of the law and the ability to find out efficiently what you don't know. This is an aspect of proficiency.

The Ethical Dimension of a Decision

The decision is ethical if the results and means are consistent with ethical principles and professional responsibilities. Thus, all your decisions must be filtered through your various ethical obligations contained in the Six Pillars of Character, the Five Principles of Public-Service Ethics, and professional ethics codes.

The Effectiveness Dimension of a Decision

An effective decision safely and efficiently accomplishes its purposes. A decision is more effective if it also avoids unintended negative consequences. It is most effective if it accomplishes the best possible result (BPR).

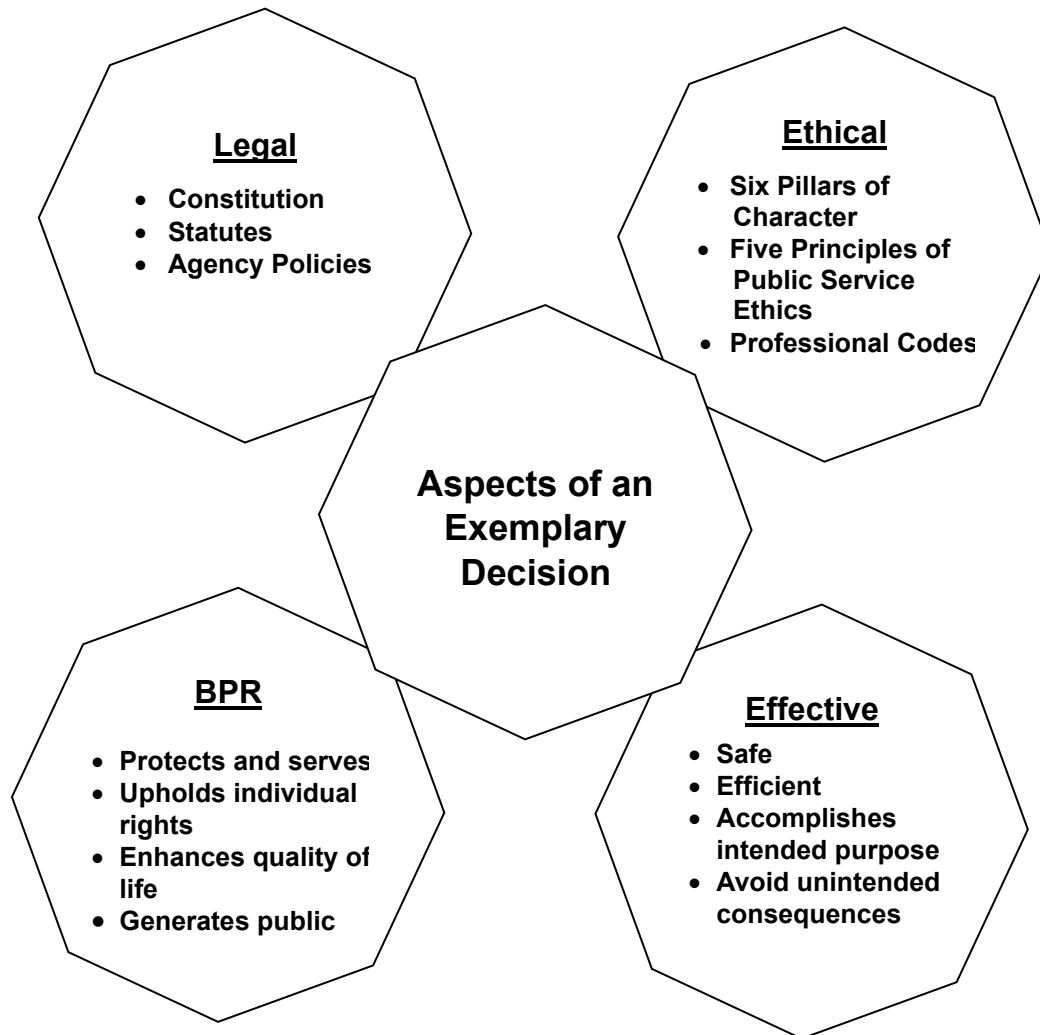
- **Safety:** Safety is an important consideration in all policing decisions. An effective decision reduces the risk of injury or danger to victims, bystanders, perpetrators, suspects, and officers.
- **Efficiently:** An efficient decision accomplishes its goals using the least amount of time, effort, personnel, and money.
- **Accomplishes Its Purpose:** All policing decisions should be purposeful. That means the officer has a particular objective in mind related to the policing mission. An effective decision accomplishes the objective without causing unintended and undesirable consequences.

Achieving the Best Possible Result (BPR)

The essence of an exemplary decision is the ability to identify and achieve the best possible result in terms of the four key elements of the policing mission:

1. **Protect and Serve the Public:** The primary policing purpose is to protect and serve the public by enforcing laws, protecting life and property from criminal or negligent human conduct and natural forces, and by preserving peace and public order.
2. **Enhance the Quality of Life:** An important secondary policing purpose is to foster an environment where people feel free, safe, secure, and well-protected by preventing or discouraging crime, reducing the fear of crime, and solving community problems.
3. **Generate and Maintain Public Trust:** Policing actions should be carried out in a manner that generates and sustains public trust.
4. **Uphold Individual Liberties and Constitutional Rights:** Policing that violates Constitutional rights is illegal. Those that disregard human dignity and moral rights to freedom, liberty, and privacy are unethical.

The first two elements of the mission describe the “what” of policing — the ends. The second two describe the “how” — the means.



In policing, the ends and means are inextricably intertwined. A decision that accomplishes either or both of the first two mission elements but creates widespread public distrust and disapproval because it violates either or both of the other two is usually counterproductive.

An exemplary decision-maker is always aware of potential negative public reaction and while this consideration should not dictate policing behavior, it may influence it.

Identifying the BPR

1. Devise and implement a legal, ethical, and effective strategy to deal with the core policing situation (e.g., disarming a man with a gun, making a required report, stopping youngsters from throwing rocks from an overpass).
2. Choose a method of handling the problem that demonstrates respect for human liberty, dignity, and Constitutional rights (e.g., be polite, professional, understanding, and compassionate).
3. Consider if the method of handling the problem would engender public support and trust if it were videotaped and played on the news.
4. Critically think of how else you could reduce discomfort or the fear of crime and increase a sense of security.

Examples

You are called to the home of an elderly burglary victim who fears the burglar will return. The Immediate task is to take a report but there is an important additional opportunity to reduce fear and increase the victim's confidence in and trust for the police. What could you do to achieve the BPR?

You observe a fellow officer making an inappropriate sexual advance toward a person being interviewed. This may violate the law as well as agency policy and is inherently disrespectful. What would be BPR be? What kinds of things could you do to achieve it?

While on patrol, Officer Olsen a first-year peace officer, is flagged down by someone who says that a gang war is about to erupt a few blocks away. Olsen knows there has been tension in the neighborhood for a week since an eight-year-old Hispanic boy was killed in a drive-by attributed to a black gang. The witness say about 20 youths have gathered and are exchanging insults and threats. Las month, an officer was shot in the same area during a traffic stop. What should the officer do? Should he immediately call

for back-up and approach the scene with a show of force, knowing that a multi-car response might be unnecessary and might actually inflame passions and make the situation more dangerous? Should he drive by the area and investigate for himself and see how bad it really is and if he can disperse the crowd himself? Should he call in and seek guidance from the watch commander? Should he accept the witness' description as complete or accurate? Whatever Olsen does may trigger a chain of events that will make things better or worse.

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Chapter 6

Looking Beyond the Academy

FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

Formal Education

The training you will get in the academy is only the first phase of your preparation to become a peace officer. After graduation, you will start extensive training in the field or other agency-specific setting. In each phase of training there will be formal and informal parts to your education. The formal parts include what your instructors teach and what is contained in your course materials and agency manuals; the informal part is what you learn from listening to classmates, fellow officers, and others.

Informal Education

After you leave academy, you will be assigned to a training officer who will lead your field education. This formal field training will be supplemented by interaction with veteran officers who may give you an informal education consisting of advice and commentary critical of, and sometimes contrary to, what you learned in the academy. Even your training officer may add some “off the record” instruction.

Be Open but Analytical

A common theme of this informal education is to discount some things you were taught in the academy in favor of different strategies or values that you might hear are more realistic for the unpredictable and dangerous environment of the streets.

Usually, the informal education you will receive is sound and helpful and will add a vital supplement to your academy instruction. There are things we don't or can't teach in the academy because policing is often conducted in a fluid and changing environment requiring common sense, multi-tasking, a keen sense of officer safety, and ethical and professional obligations.

Field training is necessary to hone the knowledge and skills you acquired at the academy and provide additional practical application that is vital to help transform you into a competent professional.

Be careful, however, of claims that everything taught in the field is correct and everything you learned in the academy is foolish or wrong. You need to be open to but analytical of new information and opinions so you can develop and maintain attitudes and habits that will help rather than hinder your request to become an EPO.

In some cases, the purpose of such informal advice is to help you (or force you) to fit in with an existing culture. Occasionally, veterans want to assure themselves “you have what it takes” to help them in dangerous or uncertain situations.

They may want you to know the way things “really are.” Some may be unhappy with changes they perceive as unnecessary or unhelpful. Some just want to continue doing what they have been doing despite changes in attitudes and policies over the years and they don’t want you to rock the boat.

You may be told your instructors and agency leaders are out of touch with what it takes to succeed on the streets. You may be told certain policies are political or just don’t make sense, and loyalty to each other is more important than loyalty to the Constitution, the law, or your oath.

Beware of bad advice that reflects erroneous or unacceptable views about the law, agency policies, or good policing practices. These views may be the opinions of the person talking to you or represent a more widely adopted attitude in your agency. Either way, be cautious about any advice that runs counter to what you learn at the academy.

Well-intended or not, efforts to contradict your training and protect an old-line culture can harm your agency and your career.

Times have changed. Methods that were acceptable in the past may be career-enders today.

The gap between the “is” and the “ought”: As you progress in policing you will become aware of gaps between the “is” (the way things really work) and the “ought” (the way things are supposed to work according to policy and law).

Unfortunately, conduct violating official policy may be practiced in some settings. ***But no matter what others do or tell you to do, in the end, agency policies and the law will prevail.*** Those who choose to ignore either will have a short career in policing.

It can be a fatal career mistake to engage in any practice, no matter how common, that involves dishonesty or deceit, the use of unreasonable force, or any other practice that violates agency policy or the law.

Beyond these sanctions, though, the greatest punishment you might face is knowing your actions are inconsistent with your highest moral aspirations and character.

Think About It

Dealing with Informal Education. After graduation from the academy, Officer Jordan is assigned a field trainer who sets the following ground rules:

1. “Forget what you learned in the academy. Most of that stuff has nothing to do with the real world. I’m going to teach you what works.”
2. “Rules and policies don’t protect you on the street. Sometimes you have to bend the rules to get the job done or get home safe.”
3. “Whatever is said or seen in this car stays in this car. If you hear or see something you don’t like or understand, take it up with me. It goes nowhere else unless I say so.”
 - If Officer Jordan adopts and follows these new rules, what positive and negative things may result immediately and over the course of his career?
 - Can a new officer really be expected to do anything but play by the rules of the game as set forth by his TO?
 - Is the TO doing his job properly? Why or why not?
 - What options does Officer Jordan have?

Diversion and Derailment

Officers and deputies who become EPOs will reap enormous benefits from a career in public service. EPOs identify so much with their role and responsibilities that policing becomes a part of their identity. Thus, if an off-duty cop is asked by a stranger “What do you do?” the answer is likely to be a proud response: “I am a peace officer.”

Policing is not just what you do, it’s who you are

Many agencies have compressed work schedules with extended hours resulting in three or four off-duty days each week. These schedules provide the opportunity and, in some cases, temptation to develop a parallel work life doing something else (e.g., landscaping, auto repair, security work, internet businesses). There may also be a temptation to extend yourself beyond your capacity to support your policing career and your elective pursuits.

Some officers can successfully juggle other work responsibilities, others cannot. They become diverted and distracted in ways that derail their careers. Effective policing requires complete concentration and maintaining a sense of balance. How well you balance competing interests – family, community, work – will often determine your ability to make sound decisions. Officers distracted by other business demands or exhausted by excessively long work weeks are far more likely to make mistakes and jeopardize their careers, lives, and the lives of others.

Policing Should Be Your Principle and Primary Role In Your Work Life

You must be vigilant to keep your focus and not allow off-duty activities to impede your performance or your quest to become an exemplary peace officer.

No matter how much you may try, a lack of focus on policing as your primary job will show itself eventually and you will fail to meet your potential. What’s worse, you will fail to meet your responsibility to your agency, your fellow officers, and the public.

Conclusion

We want to close this introduction as we opened it – with congratulations. You are on the threshold of a life-changing experience and a profession that will give you a rare opportunity to be a major force in the lives of others as well as to maintain a free and safe society. What can be more challenging and rewarding than that?

We hope you enjoy the journey.