

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

NOTICE
14.5

November 20, 2019

TO: All Department Personnel

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: INTERNAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The purpose of this notice is to encourage all Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD/Department) supervisors to actively use conflict management skills on a daily basis. Many of these conflict management skills are taught in the Department's conflict management course, "Conflict Management for Law Enforcement Personnel."

Conflict at work can cost our supervisors and managers thousands of hours annually in investigative time; including investigating grievances, personnel complaints, and in some cases employee relations litigation. More importantly, conflict negatively impacts our employees in terms of job satisfaction and physical and mental well-being. At their best, workplace conflicts are challenging, and at their worst, are personally and organizationally destructive. Workplace conflicts damage employee morale and negatively impact the organizational reputation. Therefore, understanding how to better manage internal conflict continues to be a top priority for the Department.

Effective conflict management in the workplace is vital to the health of our organization and our employees, and is every employee's responsibility; however, it requires both a skill set and support from leadership in order for our organization to be successful in the mitigation of conflicts between co-workers. The Department embarked on a partnership with Pepperdine University in 2015 to gain better understanding of internal conflict and to improve the skill set to our command staff officers and supervisors.

The following are the conflict resolution skills supervisors and command staff can deploy when resolving internal conflict:

- **Active Listening** – Supervisors should understand the psychological processes that impede listening, as well as a range of active listening techniques (verbal, non-verbal, contextual). Active listening is a skill used to communicate back to a speaker that their original message has been heard.
- **Competition vs. Cooperation** – Supervisors should be strategic when deciding whether to compete or cooperate in conflict situations.

- **Conflict Coaching** – Supervisors should employ a one-on-one coaching process for helping individuals improve their conflict resolution skills to manage disputes more effectively.
- **Emotional Intelligence** – Supervisors should utilize conflict resolution techniques that align with each of the emotional intelligence competencies: Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills.
- **Evaluation vs. Facilitation** – Supervisors should determine when and how to utilize evaluative and facilitative mediation techniques.
- **Interest Identification** – Supervisors should utilize interest identification. Interests are one-word statements of needs and values. This builds a structure for reconciling interests, rather than compromising between positions.
- **Intergenerational Conflict Resolution** – Supervisors should understand the impact of our multi-generational workforce while increasing understanding, workplace cohesion, and promoting dialogue.
- **Intent/Impact** – Supervisors should distinguish between the intent of a statement and the impact it creates. Rarely do intent and impact align, and helping others make this distinction resolves conflicts.
- **High Conflict Personality** – Supervisors should utilize techniques to help understand and manage the five types of high conflict personalities.
- **Managerial Courage** – Supervisors should tactfully be open and direct with others without being intimidating. This technique requires direct conversations during conflict situations.
- **Reframing** – Supervisors should utilize reframing, a rewording technique that transitions from past to future, negative to positive, and position to interest.
- **Verbal De-Escalation** – Supervisors should utilize techniques to interrupt the defend/attack spiral, and re-engage in meaningful negotiations.

These skills provide both the tactical and interpersonal conflict resolution tools necessary for supervisors to handle conflict that occurs in the workplace at its root. Effective conflict management creates efficiency, effectiveness, increases morale, preserves careers, and protects and serves the LAPD family. Supervisors wishing to enhance their conflict management skills are encouraged to apply for the course.

Supervisors should attempt to use these skills before resorting to negative discipline, as outlined in Department Manual Section 3/156.80:

“The negative disciplinary procedures available to supervisors (Manual Section 3/800) shall be used only after determining that the correction of delinquency by positive disciplinary means is not feasible.”

These skills do not replace the formal complaint system, nor are they intended to deny the rights of aggrieved employees. Rather, they provide a set of tools that will assist supervisors to recognize the initial stages of conflict, understand how to directly correct performance and behavior problems early in the process, and resolve conflict before it rises to the level of misconduct.

My expectation is that supervisors will actively use these skills and attempt to resolve conflicts at the earliest stage possible, and commanding officers will support their supervisors in this endeavor. In cases where the supervisor decides to document the encounter, documentation may be as simple as completing a note in the supervisor’s log, a brief email to the involved employees summarizing the contact and resolution. In the event the supervisor or commanding officer believes the conflict has not been resolved, they are encouraged to contact the Ombuds Section at (213) 486-8127 for the next level of conflict management. The Ombuds Section is a helpful Department resource available for supervisors when attempting to address conflict in the workplace.



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

DISTRIBUTION “D”