

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
Dispatcher, Ethics and Integrity
“To Serve with Integrity”
1850-30933
Expanded Course Outline

POLICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE CORRUPTION PREVENTION

Instructional Goal: Students will explore the dynamics of ethical decision-making and develop a method for examining ethical issues as a Public Safety Dispatcher (PSD) / Officer.

Performance Objectives: Using facilitated discussions and application of concepts through learning activities centered on contemporary ethical issues, students will:

- Understand common terminology and theoretical principles of law enforcement ethics;
- Discuss, explain and recognize ethical dilemmas in policing and dispatching;
- Develop ethical decision-making skills on and off-duty;
- Build a base of information to identify and respond to ethical decisions in the workplace.

**I. INTRODUCTION, ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING ACTIVITY, DEFINITION AND LANGUAGE
(1 ½ HOURS)**

- A. Introduction
1. Instructor(s)
 - a. Name, assignment
 - b. Experience
 2. Student
 - a. Name
 - b. Assignment
 - c. Number of years with LAPD / Law Enforcement
 3. Overview of Training Schedule
 - a. Definitions and language
 - b. Dynamics of ethical choices
 - c. Enhancing the culture of integrity

B. Ethical Decision-Making Activity
LEARNING ACTIVITY (1): Ethical Dilemmas

Purpose: To provide students an opportunity to discuss a video or scenario that reflects an ethical decision, in a negative or a positive environment, regarding an officer’s conduct or action during an incident.

Procedure: Group Discussion

1. Present the class with a video or scenario that involves officers making an ethical decision during an incident.
2. Lead the class in a guided discussion.

C. **GROUP DISCUSSION:** Definitions and Language

Purpose: To provide students with an overview of their primary responsibilities as Dispatchers / Officers when dealing with the subject of ethics.

Procedure: Group Discussion

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1. Identify how past practices, childhood / upbringing, peer pressure, and people (teachers, role models, parents) mold our personal ethics.
2. Identify how “rules of conduct” are determined by societal acceptance, personal beliefs, an examination of goals, or an avoidance of adverse effects.
3. LAPD is guided by the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, and has adopted it as a general standard of conduct.¹

II. DISCUSSION ON VALUES

(2 HOURS)

A. LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Purpose: To provide PSD / Officers with their primary responsibilities regarding the role they play in demonstrating values to others.

Procedure: Group Discussion

1. Definition of Values
 - a. “Fundamental beliefs upon which decisions and conduct are based”.
 - b. A value is a quality of performance or accomplishment. Values are the basis for the determination of objectives and may be both ethical and functional.²
2. Identify the four main areas that influence our values
 - a. Personal conviction (family, one’s beliefs)
 - b. Organizational (core values, rules, policy)
 - c. Professional (peers, education)
 - d. Societal (media)
3. Recognize that a decision involving an ethical dilemma must be guided by the organizational values, not your personal values.
 - a. Recognize how when facing a difficult situation, where two apparent right courses of action are possible, show how to make a conscious decision to take the course of action that will employ the highest value.
 - b. Demonstrate how ethical dilemmas are the most difficult decisions to make.
4. Identify what happens when personal and organizational values are in conflict
 - a. People use rationalizations.
 - b. People try to justify their actions.
 - c. Rationalizations and justifications allow a person to feel better about operating in the gray area, even if they are unsure if they are right.

¹ LAPD Manual 1/210.05 Standard of Conduct

² LAPD Manual 1/020.10 Values

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5. Are there policies and/or procedures as a Public Safety Dispatcher or Officer that you disagree with or have conflict with?
6. How do you deal with those conflicts?
 - a. Accept that the organizational value is different than your personal value and proceed to follow the policy / procedure?
 - b. Carry out your personal value by operating in violation of a policy/procedure?

III. THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

(1 ½ HOURS)

A. LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Purpose: To provide students with an overview of the power of language, and to ensure that mixed messages are not unintentionally being sent whether it is to a colleague, trainee, citizens, or officers in the field.

Procedure: Group Discussion

1. Discuss how language is passed on from generation to generation
 - a. Traditions
 - b. Symbols
 - 1) Language combined with symbolism reinforces the Culture
 - c. War Stories
 - 1) An officer whose father worked 30 years for the department remembers his father’s buddies coming over and telling stories about how the job gets done.
 - 2) A tenured dispatcher tells stories of how things were handled back in the day. Newer dispatchers and trainees are now influenced by those stories.
 - 3) A tenured employee is resistant to changes in the workplace regarding equal employment / non-discrimination policies.
 - d. Cultures
 - 1) When it comes down to it, behavior within a culture is sustained and perpetuated through spoken word: language
 - 2) Examine the police culture for “artifacts” and tell-tale language
 - e. Workplace Environment
 - 1) Equal Employment/Non-Discrimination Policies
 - a) LGBTQIA
 1. Definitions
 - b) Harassment
 1. Protected Characteristics/Class
2. Has the language of a supervisor, instructor, co-worker influenced how you perform your job?
 - a. Has the language caused you to conform to their way as opposed to what is written in policy?

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3. Ethics are passed on via communications and reinforced by others
4. Words are how ethics are passed on and are the expression of a person’s values
 - a. Unfortunately, some sayings and symbols often send implied messages that conflict with the established principles that guide and direct the organization with regards to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics
5. Language also expresses common rationalizations
 - a. Prior History: “We’ve always done it that way”
 - b. Victim Syndrome: “They did it to me” or “They owe it to me”
 - c. Implied Consent: “Everybody does it”
 - d. Necessity: “It has to be done this way or the job won’t get done”
 - e. Pragmatic Expediency: “It works better” or “It’s easier” or “It’s faster this way”

IV. DYNAMICS OF ETHICAL CHOICES (1 HOUR)

A. GROUP DISCUSSION: Black, White, and Gray

Purpose: To provide students with the dynamics of an ethical choice-making process and the strategies available to them.

Procedure: Group Discussion

1. Explain the following concepts and clarify any questions or concerns
 - a. Black and White and Gray – Past scandals are black and white
 - b. Obvious cultural ethical and unethical standards
 - c. What is the gray area?
 1. Ethical dilemmas are in the gray area
 2. Implied consent

B. LEARNING ACTIVITY (2): Decision-Making Model: Dissolving the Gray Area

Purpose: To provide students options available to them when making ethical decisions.

Procedure: Small Group Activity (3-4 groups)

1. Divide class into 3-4 groups
2. Present a video or scenario that emphasizes making an ethical choice
3. The Dynamics of Ethical Choices
 - a. Mapping the Outcome
 1. Actual Spoken Words™ Molding the Ethics™ Which leads to our Actions
 2. Identify the issue or dilemma
 - a. What is going on?
 3. Identify rationalization or justifications
 - a. How is this happening?

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4. Explain the use of the Apply Critical Thinking model (ACTT)
 - a. Think then ACTT (Handout 1)
 1. Alternatives (Identify):
 - a. What can I do?
 - b. List all the alternatives that are available to you personally
 - b. Consequences (Project):
 1. What will result from Action / Inaction?
 - a. Project the consequences for you of each alternative
 - c. Take Action (React):
 1. Implement a strategy you can own
 - a. Make your decision, act, and be prepared to tell your story
 - d. Tell the story (Defend):
 1. Is this defensible in public forum? (Transparency?)
 2. Consider your defense within the agency and your defense outside the agency.

V. ENHANCING THE CULTURE OF INTEGRITY

(1 ½ HOUR)

A. GROUP DISCUSSION: Cultural Issues and Dissonance

Purpose: To show students how to recognize cultural issues and ethical dissonance, as well as how to shape the organizational culture in an ever-changing police department environment.

Procedure: Group Discussion

1. Components of Culture that Guide Behavior
 - a. Shared values
 - b. Common experience
2. Survey for Cultural Artifacts
 - a. Behavior
 - b. Symbolism
3. Identify Shared Values and Experiences
4. Observe the Language Being Used
 - a. Informal conversations vs. work-related conversations
 - b. How do people phrase statements?
5. How can cultural issues and ethical dissonance effect how a PSD or an officer deals with citizens?
 - a. Language barriers
 - b. Personal values vs. organizational values regarding protected characteristics / class
 - c. Does the cultural issue or ethical dissonance change the level of service you provide?

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6. Discuss strategies leaders can use to actively shape the organizational culture to enhance integrity (accepted rules of conduct)
 - a. Embedding Strategies
 - 1) Modeling – appropriate behavior
 - 2) Attention
 - 3) Rewards & punishment
 - 4) Critical incidents
 - 5) Selection & retention
 - b. Reinforcing Strategies / Mechanisms – How to Keep It Going
 - 1) Procedures
 - 2) Organizational structure
 - 3) Space allocation & design
 - 4) Tales, legends & parables – ensure you are sending right message.
 - 5) Statements about philosophy
 - 6) Bring in peer leaders to reinforce the Department Ethics - Accepted Rules of Conduct
7. Eliminate Barriers to Responsibility
 - a. “Holier than thou”
 - b. Demise of a virtue
 - c. Suspicious motives
 - d. Double standards
 - e. Not my responsibility
 - f. Lack of confidence: I might make it worse
 - g. Fear of failure: I might look stupid
 - h. Despair: It makes no difference
8. What are the components of the culture that should be looked for at Work?
 - a. How do people phrase statements?
 - b. Tap into the informal conversations going on.
 - c. Bring in peer leaders to reinforce the Department ethics
 - d. The Supervisor cannot always be the person to deliver the message, however they must ensure that it is delivered.

VI. CLOSING/REVIEW

(1/2 HOUR)

1. Reinforce Key Learning Points
 - a. Set the ethical tone for the workplace
 - b. Survey for cultural artifacts (behavior & symbolism)
 - c. Identify language being used, and stop it if it is sending messages that conflict with the Departments values
 - d. Monitor and reinforce positive ethical decision-making
 - e. Act as the barometer for the ethical climate
 - f. Shape the culture of the workplace to avoid corrupt behavior.

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2. As a PSD / Officer, you have an opportunity and the responsibility to:
 - a. Follow the policies and procedures outlined.
 - b. Conduct your job with values that are in line with the Departments values, regardless of whether they are in line with your personal values.
3. Closing Comments/Evaluation