

	Department of Public Safety	
	Standard Operating Guidelines	
	Subject:	General Rules of Conduct
	Section:	Administration
	Guideline Number:	202
	Effective Date:	January 26, 2009
	Revised Date:	October 1, 2024
Signature of Approval:	Charles R. Pruitt Director of Public Safety 	

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for general rules of conduct for departmental employees (refer also to County rules, regulations, procedures and Code of Ethics).

SCOPE

Applicable to all Department of Public Safety employees.

POLICY

1. Department of Public Safety employees are required to read, understand, and comply with all rules and regulations, general and special orders, policies and procedures or the department and/or the County and the written or verbal orders of a superior. It shall be considered to be neglect of duty to fail to inquire of a superior until the matter is resolved concerning any questions as to the meaning of application of any law, rule or regulations, general or special order, policy or procedure, written or verbal order.
2. All Department of Public Safety employees shall conform to the County of Accomack Code of Ethics, Accomack County Department of Public Safety Rules and Regulations, and established procedures and policies of the Department of Public Safety and of the County of Accomack.
3. Department of Public Safety employees are required to obey and fully execute any lawful order, written or verbal, given by a Department officer/senior employee which shall include, but not be necessarily limited to these rules and regulations; all general and special orders; policies and procedures of the department and/or County. (The term “lawful order” shall be construed as any order in keeping with the performance of any duty prescribed by law or by these rules and regulations or for the preservation of good order, efficiency and proper discipline which is not in conflict with these rules and regulations.)
4. Department of Public Safety personnel shall refrain from public expressions or actions concerning Department of Public Safety’s policies and procedures which are:
 - Defamatory
 - Obscene
 - Unlawful, or
 - Which tend to subvert the good order, efficiency or discipline of this department or which reflect discredit upon the department or any member thereof, or that are prejudicial to the efficiency and discipline of the department.

5. The wearing of an improper uniform, failure to carry all necessary equipment or failure to maintain one's uniform and/or equipment in good order and as outlined in department policy is prohibited.
6. Department of Public Safety employees are required to maintain mental and/or physical conditioning necessary to perform prescribed duties.
7. Insubordination shall be prohibited and shall include, but not necessarily limited to: any failure or deliberate refusal to obey a lawful order by a superior; any disrespectful, mutinous, insolent, or abusive language or action toward a superior, whether in or out of the presence of the superior; lying or giving misleading statements to a superior; or failure to answer a direct question asked by a superior.
8. Neglect of duty is prohibited. Failure to give suitable attention to the performance of duty is prohibited. Examples include but are not limited to: Failure to take appropriate action on occasion of fire; failure to take appropriate action on occasion of emergency medical services calls; disorder or other act or condition deserving attention; absent without leave; failure to report to duty at the time or place designated; unnecessary absence from one's assignment during a tour of duty; failure to perform duties or comply with any rule or regulation, general or special order; or failure to conform to department of County operating policies and/or procedures.
9. Department of Public Safety employees are required to work diligently and with a bearing consistent with the image of a professional employee. Unprofessional examples shall include, but are not necessarily limited to:
 - Unnecessary shouting or using obscene language
 - Tardiness in reporting for work
 - Taking excessively long meal or refreshment breaks
 - Failure to respond promptly to a request for service
 - Failure to return promptly to service after returning from a call for service
 - Lack of courtesy to an individual either on the telephone or in person
 - Gambling
 - Fighting, quarreling, scuffling or horseplay
 - Theft or vandalism
 - Lying or intentionally providing misleading statements
10. Stealing, altering, forging or tampering with any kind of official record, report or citation is prohibited. The removal of any record, card, report, letter, document or other official files from the department, except by process of law or as directed by the Director or a superior is prohibited. Additionally, the obtaining/duplicating, or attempted obtaining/duplicating of any information from department files, sources or reports other than that to which one is properly entitled to in accordance with one's duties/assignments is prohibited.
11. Department of Public Safety employees are required to immediately report all damage to vehicles and equipment and to file the required reports which shall contain all known facts surrounding the cause and nature of the damage. In the event that county property bears evidence of damage which has not been reported, it shall be prima facie evidence that the last person using the property or vehicle was responsible. Additionally, employees shall return all equipment owned by the department when they retire, resign, transfer, or otherwise leave the department and they shall return any equipment when ordered to do so because of suspension or other absence.

12. Allowing unauthorized persons to ride in fire/EMS vehicles is prohibited. Unauthorized persons are those not engaged in official, authorized department related business. Official visitors or guests of the Department of Public Safety or County may be conveyed in sedans, but must not respond with the vehicle in the event of an emergency call unless otherwise authorized.
13. Destroying or defacing any official written notice relating to departmental business is prohibited. The posting or circulation of any notices of non-official, derogatory character relating to any person, group or public safety activity is prohibited.
14. Withholding information concerning criminal activities which are job-related is prohibited.
15. Department of Public Safety employees are required to answer questions, respond to lawful orders, render material and relevant statements in an internal department investigation when such orders, questions and statements are directly related to job responsibilities. Nothing in this section is intended to be a violation of one's Federal and/or State constitutional rights.
16. Department of Public Safety employees are required to report an employee's or their own violation of a law, rule or regulation, policy or procedure, general or special order. All such violations shall be reported, in writing, to your Battalion Chief. Any violation on the part of the Director shall be reported to the County Administrator's office.
17. Department of Public Safety employees are required to notify their supervisor and the Director's Office of any change of address, telephone number, marital status, emergency notification, criminal conviction, criminal detainment, driving convictions and/or suspension/loss of driver's license.
18. Giving a deposition, affidavit or appearing as a witness in a criminal or civil matter stemming from official duties as a department member without the prior knowledge of the Director is prohibited.
19. Department of Public Safety employees are required to render aid or furnish information consistent with their duty. Department employees/employees shall furnish their name, rank and assignment in a respectful manner when so requested.
20. Department of Public Safety employees are required to turn over to the designated agent of the department all lost, stolen, abandoned or evidentiary material which comes into the possession of a department member as a result of the performance of department duties. All such material shall be turned over prior to the completion of the assignment during which the material came into the possession of the member(s) of the department.
21. Acceptance or receipt of any fee or reward by an individual on behalf of his/her personal interests from any source for any services rendered in the line of duty without the knowledge and written consent of the Director and the County Administrator is prohibited.
22. Department of Public Safety employees are required to establish and maintain a working knowledge of laws, policies and procedures, rules and regulations, general and special orders of the department and the County.

23. Firearms in the personal possession or in county or volunteer owned stations and/or equipment while on-duty, unless a sworn peace officer and while acting in the capacity of a sworn peace officer, is prohibited.
24. Department of Public Safety employees are required to make available for inspection by a superior officer any and all assigned equipment and/or gear.
25. Maintaining a residence at a fire station when not on-duty is prohibited.
26. Department of Public Safety employees shall immediately report to their supervisor any accident, sickness, or injury occurring to them while on-duty no matter how trivial.
27. Employees shall not utilize excessive time to conduct personal business while on-duty.
28. The Director shall be immediately notified whenever any of the following occurs:
 - Death or hospitalization of a department member or an immediate family member
 - A life-threatening, lost-time accident occurring within the department
 - Major theft or felony crime committed in the department
 - Significant threat to the department's core mission
 - Legal action, or credible exposure to legal action, such as damages caused by an employee in the conduct of duties
 - Department exposure in the media, such as a positive or negative newspaper story mentioning the organization, or a visit to the organization by a journalist.