

COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject: UNLAWFUL OR IMPROPER BIAS IN PUBLIC SAFETY

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I. Purpose

To establish a policy that prohibits the use of unlawful or improper bias in public safety.

II. Definition

Biased Based Profiling – The selection of an individual(s) for enforcement action based in whole or in part on a trait common to a group, without actionable intelligence to support consideration of that trait. This includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnic background, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, cultural group or any other identifiable characteristics.

III. Statement of Policy

It shall be the policy of the Covington Police Department that the practice of unlawful or improper bias by officers of this agency is strictly prohibited, to include traffic contacts, field contacts and asset seizure and forfeiture efforts. However, it is also the policy of this department to patrol in a proactive manner, to aggressively investigate suspicious persons and circumstances and to actively enforce the law. Citizens will only be stopped or detained when there exists reasonable suspicion to believe they have committed, are committing, or about to commit a violation of the law. Officers shall focus on an individual's conduct and behavior or specific suspect information.

- A. All officers shall exercise their law enforcement powers in a manner that does not unlawfully discriminate against individuals based on race or ethnicity.
- B. No officer shall endorse or act upon stereotypes, attitudes or beliefs that a person's race or ethnicity increases the possibility that the person will act unlawfully.
- C. Officers may consider race and ethnicity in deciding to take law enforcement action **only** when the person(s) possesses specific suspect information that is reliable and is likely to lead to the discovery of that individual.

IV. Training

This department shall develop and deliver training to all officers to provide guidance regarding the consideration of race and ethnicity in their law enforcement activities.

V. Investigation of Complaints

- A. The Covington Police Department will investigate all complaints against the department or its personnel in a manner that will ensure the community of prompt corrective action when police personnel have been alleged to have conducted themselves improperly.
- B. A copy of the citizen's complaint form shall be furnished to any person filing a complaint alleging misconduct on the part of the department and/or its employees.
- C. The complainant shall receive a copy of their complaint once the complaint form has been completely filled out containing facts of the alleged allegation(s). All written complaints will be handled by the shift commander.
- D. If it is determined that further investigation is needed, the Patrol Division Commander will forward a report to the Internal Affairs Officer.

VI. Disciplinary Action

- A. The department shall conduct periodic reviews of officers' conduct to ensure compliance with this policy. Consistent with any complaint of police misconduct, the department will contact the citizen alleging a violation of this policy and advise them of the disposition and action taken regarding their complaint.
- B. Members of the Covington Police Department found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

VII. Annual Administrative Review

A documented administrative review will be conducted on an annual basis to determine if any patterns of excessive use of force and/or unlawful or improper bias exist by any officer(s) of this department. The Patrol Division Commander shall conduct the analysis and forward the report to the Chief of Police and the Accreditation Manager. The Assistant Chief of Police will conduct an analysis of all citizen complaints and any internal affairs investigations to determine if any unlawful or improper bias exists from any officer(s) of this department.

This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

Stacey L. Cotton
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Chief of Police