



PAWNEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
SHERIFF DARRIN VARNELL

Policy #	Related Policies:
<b>Ethics</b>	
<i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable Oklahoma Statutes:	
CALEA Standard:	
Date Implemented: 08/2022	Review Date: 08/2022

- I. **Purpose:** Law enforcement employees, representing government, bear the heavy responsibility of maintaining their own conduct, and the honor and integrity of the government entity that they represent. It is the purpose of this policy to provide additional guidance to the standards of conduct embodied in the law enforcement officer's code of ethics, The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office's mission statement and core values so that employees of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office will better understand prohibitions and limitations pertaining to their conduct and activities while on and off duty.
- II. **Policy:** The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office will maintain the highest standard of integrity by never violating the community's trust. All departmental employees must recognize that they are held to a higher standard than the private citizen because, in addition to representing The Sheriff's Office, they also represent the law enforcement profession. Conduct, on and off duty, must be beyond reproach. Agency employees must avoid any conduct that might compromise the integrity, morale, operations, or efficiency of The Sheriff's Office.
- III. **Definitions:**
  - A. **Ethical Conduct:** In the context of this policy, ethical conduct means the duty of all employees to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects the ethical standards consistent with the rules and values published by The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office.
- IV. **Personal Conduct:**
  - A. **Oath of Office:** All sworn employees will take and abide by an oath of office before assuming sworn status. The oath of office is administered by The Sheriff's Office head or his representative.

- B. Ethical Conduct: The Sheriff's Office will maintain the highest standard of integrity by never violating the community's trust. All departmental employees must recognize that they are held to a higher standard than the private citizen because, in addition to representing The Sheriff's Office, they also represent the law enforcement profession and their local government. Conduct, on and off duty, must be ethical conduct.
- C. All sworn Deputies shall abide by the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics which is written at the bottom of this policy in **Section XIV**.
- D. Abuse of position: Employees shall not use their agency position, identification card, or badge for:
  - a. Personal or Financial gain
  - b. Obtaining privileges not otherwise available except in performance of official duty
  - c. Avoiding consequences of illegal acts
  - d. Employees shall not under any circumstance solicit any gifts, service, gratuity, discount, or anything of value where there is any direct or indirect connection between the solicitation and their Departmental membership, without the expressed written permission of The Sheriff's Office head.
  - e. Employees shall not accept any gift, service, gratuity, discount or anything of value, the acceptance of which might tend to influence directly or indirectly their actions in any police business; or which might tend to cast an adverse reflection on The Sheriff's Office or any employee thereof.
- V. **Associating with criminal element:** No employee, except in the discharge of duty, may knowingly associate with persons engaged in unlawful activities.
- VI. **Informants:** Employees shall maintain a professional relationship with agency informants and shall not have any social, business or any other relationship beyond that required for purposes of agency business with the informant.
- VII. **Violations of ethical standards:** Ethical conduct violations will be investigated by the appropriate authority to determine the validity of complaints and to report findings as prescribed by existing policies and procedures.
- VIII. **Employee responsibilities:** Employees must exercise judgment, initiative, and sound reasoning in all official transactions; strive for efficiency and effectiveness, exercise restraint in difficult situations, seek self-improvement through formal and informal training, and assist fellow Deputies whenever possible. In situations where no written directive or supervisory guidance is available, employees are expected to analyze the situation and react in accordance with the mission statement and the core values of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office.
- IX. In the performance of their duty, Deputies are called upon to make difficult decisions and must exercise discretion in situations where rights and liabilities are affected by conduct and judgment. Decisions are not made easily and involve choices which may cause hardship or discomfort. Deputies must be faithful to their oath of office, the mission statement of The Pawnee County Sheriff's Office, the principles of professional police service, and the objectives of The Sheriff's Office. In the discharge of duty, they must not allow personal motives to govern decisions and conduct.

**X. Conduct Unbecoming an Officer:** The conduct of a public employee, on and off duty, reflects upon The Sheriff's Office. Employees must avoid conduct which might discredit themselves or adversely affect the morale, operations or efficiency of the department.

**XI. Courtesy:** Effective law enforcement depends on a high degree of cooperation between The Sheriff's Office and the public. While the urgency of a situation might preclude ordinary social amenities, discourtesy under any circumstance is indefensible. Employees shall be courteous and civil to the public and others, avoiding harsh, violent, profane, or insolent language or manner, and shall maintain objective attitudes regardless of provocation.

**XII. Association:** Deputies and employees of the Pawnee County Sheriff's Office shall not associate with persons who may bring the Office of the Sheriff or the Department into question or repute by the public, other law enforcement agencies, or government agencies. Employees should have associations which reflect the highest standards. No employee of the Pawnee County Sheriff Office shall have inappropriate relationships which could be considered a crime, unethical, or immoral.

**XIII. Attention to duty:** As most police work is performed without close supervision, responsibility for proper performance of duty lies primarily with the officer. An officer has a responsibility for the safety of the community and his or her fellow Deputies and discharges that responsibility by faithful and diligent performance of duty.

**XIV. Financial Obligations:** Employees should avoid incurring financial obligations which are beyond their ability to satisfy.

**XV. Law Enforcement Code of Ethics** is published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and reads as follows:

As a Law Enforcement Officer my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the Constitutional rights of all men to liberty, equality and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all; maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my department.

Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of the police service. I will constantly strive to

achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession...law enforcement.

**Note:** Training-The Sheriff's Office will strive to include a component of ethics in all in-service training. The Sheriff's Office shall conduct annual in-service training on ethics.