
Bias-Based Policing

402.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to department members that affirms the Becker County Sheriff's Office's commitment to policing that is fair and objective.

Nothing in this policy prohibits the use of specified characteristics in law enforcement activities designed to strengthen the department's relationship with its diverse communities (e.g., cultural and ethnicity awareness training, youth programs, community group outreach, partnerships).

402.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Bias-based policing or improper profiling - An inappropriate reliance on actual or perceived characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin (including limited English proficiency), religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, disability, or affiliation with any non-criminal group (protected characteristics) as the basis for providing differing law enforcement service or enforcement. This includes explicit and implicit biases (i.e., conscious and unconscious beliefs or attitudes towards certain groups).

This also includes use of racial or ethnic stereotypes as factors in selecting whom to stop and search. It does not include law enforcement's use of race or ethnicity to determine whether a person matches a specific description of a particular subject (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471).

402.2 POLICY

The Becker County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing law enforcement services to the community with due regard for the racial, cultural or other differences of those served. It is the policy of this department to provide law enforcement services and to enforce the law equally, fairly, objectively and without discrimination toward any individual or group (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471, Subd. 3).

402.2.1 IMPROPER CONDUCT

Race, ethnicity or nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, age, cultural group, disability, or affiliation with any other similar identifiable group shall not be utilized as the basis for providing differing levels of law enforcement service or the enforcement of the law (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471 Subd. 3).

Deputies may take into account the descriptors delineated above of a specific suspect(s) based on information that links specific, suspected, unlawful or suspicious activity to a particular individual or group of individuals. This information may be used in the same manner officers use specific information regarding age, height, weight, etc. about specific suspects.

402.3 BIAS-BASED POLICING PROHIBITED

Bias-based policing is strictly prohibited.

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However, nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit a deputy from considering protected characteristics in combination with credible, timely and distinct information connecting a person or people of a specific characteristic to a specific unlawful incident, or to specific unlawful incidents, specific criminal patterns or specific schemes.

402.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Every member of this department shall perform his/her duties in a fair and objective manner and is responsible for promptly reporting any suspected or known instances of bias-based policing to a supervisor. Members should, when reasonable to do so, intervene to prevent any biased-based actions by another member.

402.4.1 REASON FOR CONTACT

Deputies contacting a person shall be prepared to articulate sufficient reason for the contact, independent of the protected characteristics of the individual.

To the extent that written documentation would otherwise be completed (e.g., arrest report, Field Interview (FI) card), the involved deputy should include those facts giving rise to the contact, as applicable.

Except for required data-collection forms or methods, nothing in this policy shall require any deputy to document a contact that would not otherwise require reporting.

402.4.2 INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED

Deputies shall (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471, Subd. 3):

- (a) Introduce or identify themselves and state the reason for a contact as soon as practicable unless providing the information could compromise deputy or public safety.
- (b) Attempt to answer questions the person may have regarding the contact, including relevant referrals to other agencies when appropriate.
- (c) Explain the reason for the contact if it is determined the reasonable suspicion was unfounded.
- (d) When requested, provide their name and badge number and identify this department during routine stops.
- (e) When requested, deputies should inform a member of the public of the process to file a misconduct complaint for bias-based policing against a member of the Department, and that bias-based policing complaints may be made by calling the Attorney General's office (Minn. Stat. § 626.9514).

402.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors should monitor those individuals under their command for compliance with this policy and shall handle any alleged or observed violations in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.

- (a) Supervisors should discuss any issues with the involved deputy and their supervisor in a timely manner.

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1. Supervisors should document these discussions in the prescribed manner.
- (b) Supervisors should periodically review Mobile Audio Video (MAV) recordings, body-worn camera (BWC) media, Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) data, and any other available resource used to document contact between deputies and the public to ensure compliance with this policy.
 1. Supervisors should document these periodic reviews.
 2. Recordings or data that capture a potential instance of bias-based policing should be appropriately retained for administrative investigation purposes.
- (c) Supervisors shall initiate investigations of any actual or alleged violations of this policy.
- (d) Supervisors should take prompt and reasonable steps to address any retaliatory action taken against any member of this department who discloses information concerning bias-based policing.

402.5.1 CORRECTIVE ACTION

Employees found to be in violation of this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with this department's Conduct Policy and shall receive additional training and instruction, except when disciplinary action results in termination.

402.6 TRAINING

Training on fair and objective policing and review of this policy should be conducted as directed by the Training Services.

The Sheriff and supervisors should receive and review training materials prepared by the Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471, Subd. 7).

Training should also include in-service training on recognizing and valuing community diversity and cultural differences, including implicit bias, as required by Minn. Stat. § 626.8469, Subd. 1.

402.6.1 ADDITIONAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The Training Officer should ensure that Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) approved in-service training is provided to deputies on recognizing and valuing community diversity and cultural differences, including implicit bias, as required by Minn. Stat. § 626.8469, Subd. 1.

The Sheriff and supervisors should receive and review training materials prepared by POST on how to detect and respond to racial profiling (Minn. Stat. § 626.8471, Subd. 7).