



# Fitchburg State University

## Police Department

<b>Subject:</b> COMPASSIONATE POLICING		<b>General Order</b>  <b>1.1.5</b>
Reference: IACLEA: MPAC:		
<b>Effective Date:</b> September 13,2022	<b>Review Date:</b>	
<b>By Order of:</b> Michael J. Cloutier, Chief of Police		

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this directive is to affirm that all members of the Fitchburg State University police department will perform their duties in a manner consistent with the expectation of the community in which we serve. In doing so, police officers must accept and abide by a high ethical and moral standard that is consistent with the rule of law that they are sworn to uphold.

Police Officers must also demonstrate their adherence to those values, by consistently employing propriety and discretion in their personal lives that reflect favorably on themselves as professionals and the law enforcement agency that they represent. These values are provided through training and General Orders, specifically the following orders:

- 2.1.1 Oath of Office
- 2.1.3 Code of Ethics
- 4.1.1 Professional Conduct

Without these high standards, agencies should not expect to earn the trust, respect, and cooperation of the community, which is essential to public safety.

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Fitchburg State University Police Department that all members, regardless of rank, title, or position will act in a manner consistent with humanity's basic needs, and be advocates for respect for personal dignity, justice, and peace.

## Chapter 01- Organization and Administration

Department members will be mindful of their own implicit bias and treat all members of the community with the utmost respect, regardless of one's race, color, religion (or creed), national origins (or ancestry), sex (including gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, genetic information, or citizenship.

### **PROCEDURES:**

- A. **Police are entrusted with an enormous amount of authority, including the authority to use force when necessary. It is important that the police undertake these tasks in a manner that is both legal and also is respectful to community members.** One of the best safeguards against abuse of authority is embracing a compassionate mindset. Having compassion and empathy for fellow human beings is essential. When officers cannot treat those they serve with compassion and respect, they become ineffective in their duties, and in turn bring on greater liability upon the university, the department, and ultimately, themselves. Being compassionate and demonstrating empathy in how we enforce laws, provide services, and interact with our community, we can properly respond to each situation in a manner that not only brings about a just outcome, but also can be agents of change in the community, and the lives we come in contact with daily.
- B. The Fitchburg State University Police Department embraces the following three core tenets:
1. **The goal is crime prevention, not catching criminals.** If the police stop crime before it happens, we do not have to punish citizens or suppress their rights. An effective police department is one focused on crime prevention, not just the apprehension and prosecution of criminals.
  2. **The key to crime prevention is relationships.** Every community member must share the responsibility of preventing crime as if they were all volunteer members of the force. They will only accept this responsibility if the community supports and trusts the police.
  3. **The police earn public support by respecting community principles.** Winning public approval requires hard work to build a reputation: enforcing the laws impartially, hiring officers who represent and understand the community, and using force only as a last resort.
- C. Not all-policing functions involve enforcing laws or university policies; the vast majority of police interactions are providing services or interacting with the community. A vast number of calls, or requests for police services, can be handled in a manner where the use of force is not necessary to respond to an individual's non-compliance or resistance. There are calls where an officer's actions, or decisions not to take action, can achieve a compassionate resolution by employing one or more of the following:
1. Understand and Counteract Implicit Bias

## Chapter 01- Organization and Administration

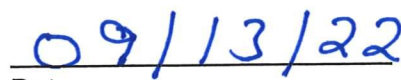
- a. Implicit bias is a term to describe when we have attitudes toward people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge. Officers should be mindful of both their own implicit bias, as well as how the individual may feel towards police. By understanding how both are perceiving the other's actions, officers can focus more on the actions occurring and take the appropriate steps to address those actions or behaviors. (See G.O. 4.1.3 *Bias Based Profiling*)
2. Support Mental Health
    - a. Mental Health is a person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being. Officers encounter individuals who may present themselves anywhere on the spectrum of mental health. Where feasible officers should seek assistance when dealing with individuals experiencing a negative mental health episode. (See G.O. 9.2.6 *Mental Health*)
3. Incorporate Self-Awareness Check-Ins
    - a. Checking in with yourself and assessing your needs helps you to pour into yourself so that you can pour into others. Oftentimes, we check on those around us but neglect ourselves. Officers can do this by being mindful of their attitudes and feelings. Before reacting to circumstances, officers and dispatchers should be cognizant of their personal feelings, beliefs, and experiences, and apply sound judgment and rationale to each interaction,
4. Learn to Identify (and not Judge) Emotions
    - a. Department members should learn and develop the ability to identify emotions, not just their own, but in others. The ability to articulate how one is feeling and not act or react hastily to a situation, not only allows the ability to de-escalate a situation but provides the opportunity to ask "why is this individual acting or behaving in this manner (crying, yelling, staring off in the distance, etc.)."
5. Employ Tactical Mindfulness
    - a. In general, employing Tactical Mindfulness is:
      1. Intentional cultivation of awareness (and return to it again and again)
      2. Attention to what is occurring in the present moment (simply observing thoughts, feelings, and sensations as they arise)
      3. An attitude that is non-judgmental, curious, and kind.
    - b. Employing tactical mindfulness allows an officer to be aware of three important elements present in all encounters:
      1. What is the individual doing and feeling
      2. What is the officer doing and feeling

## Chapter 01- Organization and Administration

3. What is around the two in the environment (other threats, stressors, individuals, etc.)
  
6. Prioritize De-escalation Tactics & Shift the Culture
  - a. Since the 80's policing has adopted "**The warrior concept**" which is consistent with the traditional view of police work -- to search, chase, and capture. However, "**The Guardian concept**" emphasizes social service, valuing community partnerships, and establishing positive contacts. Warrior mentality often leads to more use of force, making it more likely that the officer or the citizen gets injured; whereas, the guardian mentality has very positive outcomes and can lead to a peaceful resolution and leads to a situation where follow-up services and investigation may be possible.
  - b. It is the policy of this department to de-escalate each situation when feasible, and in such, use only such force that is objectively necessary to complete a lawful task.
  - c. All members of the department are obligated to de-escalate a situation as soon as possible, limiting the necessity of having to intervene in the use of excessive force.
  
7. Introduce Trauma-Sensitive Practices
  - a. A Trauma-Sensitive Practices or Trauma Informed Response focuses not on what is 'wrong' with someone, but rather on what they have experienced. The trauma-informed approach is guided by four assumptions, known as the "**Four R's**":
    1. **Realization** of trauma and how it can affect people and groups;
    2. **Recognizing** the signs of trauma;
    3. Having a system which can **Respond** to trauma; and
    4. **Resisting** re-traumatization.

Approval:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Police

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date