



POLICY AND PROCEDURES

NUMBER: 108

SUBJECT: Ethical Standards and Conduct

ACA STANDARDS: 4-ALDF-7D-17

DIRECTOR: Herbert Bernsen

EFFECTIVE DATE: 4/1/86

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I. POLICY

The St. Louis County Department of Justice Services shall ensure that all personnel maintain a code of conduct and practices that is exemplary in both their professional and private lives.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

All St. Louis County Department of Justice Services' staff are responsible for the following procedures.

III. CORRECTIONS CODE OF ETHICS

- A.** As a Corrections employee, my primary concern is to serve mankind; to be ever mindful of the responsibilities entrusted to me by fellow citizens; to protect the lives of those placed in my charge; to safeguard the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence and disorder.
- B.** I will be honest and direct in the dealings with all persons, whether inmates, subordinates, supervisors or fellow citizens.
- C.** I will keep confidential, matters entrusted to me, unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duties.
- D.** I will never behave officiously or self-ingratiatingly or allow personal feelings to affect my professional judgment.

- E. My private life and my official life will exemplify honesty, compassion and self-restraint.
- F. I accept the challenge and the concomitant symbol of faith and will constantly strive to achieve those objectives, dedicating myself to the highest ideals of my chosen profession.

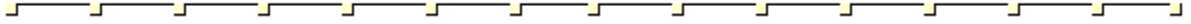
IV. PROCEDURE

- [A. **Loyalty:** In the performance of his/her duties, an employee will be called upon to make difficult decisions. Discretion in situations must be exercised where the rights and liberties of the inmates are affected by the conduct and judgment of the corrections staff. Decisions will not always be easy and will involve choices that could cause hardship and discomfort to the inmate or the corrections staff. Staff must remain faithful to the Code of Ethics, the principles of professional corrections and habilitation, *the standards set forth by the American Corrections Association*, and the mission of the Department. In the discharge of duties, staff must not allow personal motives to govern decisions and conduct.]
- B. **Conduct Unbecoming an Officer:** An employee of the Department of Justice Services is a highly visible representative of the County government. To most people, the Department of Justice Services is a symbol of stability and reliability and employee conduct is judged accordingly. If an employee's actions are found to be excessive or unjustified, criticism is generally more severe than for similar conduct of persons in other professions. The conduct of public employees, on or off duty, reflects upon the entire Department, therefore, employees must refrain from any activity that brings discredit to themselves or the Department of Justice Services.
- C. **Respect for Inmate's Constitutional Rights:** It is the responsibility of all employees to protect the constitutional rights of any person under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice Services. Each employee shall act within the scope of his/her authority to maintain the security and order of the Department, without depriving any person of his/her legal rights.
- D. **Use of Force:** Employees are often confronted with situations in which control of inmates must be exercised to defuse a potentially dangerous situation. All reasonable alternatives, (i.e., counseling, discussion and verbal warnings) must be exhausted and deemed ineffective under the circumstances. If it becomes necessary to control an inmate or inmates by physical force, in order to maintain the safety and security of the inmates, staff or facility, employees shall use the minimum amount of force

necessary to control the situation (*See Policy 823 Use of Force*). Physical force shall never be used as a form of punishment.

- E. Integrity:** The public and the Department of Justice Services demands that the integrity of its employees remains above reproach. Compromising his/her ethics and standards, not only diminishes the individual's effectiveness as a public servant, but reflects negatively on the integrity of the Department and his/her fellow employees.
- F. Courtesy:** Effective public service depends on a high degree of cooperation between the Department and the public. Courtesy in public contact encourages understanding and appreciation. Discourteous actions by public employees breed resistance and disrespect. Staff must remember that the majority of the families of persons under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice Services are law abiding citizens who expect, and deserve, fair and courteous treatment. While it is understood that the urgency of certain situations could preclude customary social amenities, discourtesy under any circumstance is indefensible. Being courteous is consistent with the Department policy of firmness, fairness and impartiality that characterizes the professionalism of a corrections and habilitation facility.
- G. Compliance with orders:** The Department of Justice Services has a clearly defined chain of command that establishes a supervisor/subordinate relationship, (i.e., all staff shall report to the immediate supervisor when completing reports, seeking instruction, making suggestions, requesting changes, etc.) In order to ensure the orderly operation of the facility, staff are expected to comply with the lawful orders and directives of any supervisor or superior staff. If a staff member questions the lawfulness of an order or instruction and believes that compliance with the order will compromise the security of the facility or jeopardize the safety of persons within the Department, he/she remains obligated to register these concerns through the proper chain of command, in order to protect the authority and integrity of the supervisor until the issue is resolved. (For special circumstances, see Policy #110 Internal Affairs Investigation/Employee Cooperation, Section IV,B,1a.)
- H. Legal Advice to Inmates:** Employees with the Department of Justice Services are prohibited from offering legal advice to inmates under the jurisdiction of the Department or the inmate's family/friends. Inaccurate or inappropriate advice from corrections staff could deprive inmates of competent legal assistance and subject the employee and the Department to negative legal action.

- I. **Failure to Comply:** Employees who fail to comply with any part of the policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination.



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