



PRINCE WILLIAM

Police Department

INTRODUCTION

The Prince William County Police Department is committed to our community. In difficult times like these, it's important that we, as a community, come together from constructive discussions and work towards solutions. Over the past several days, we have heard several messages from our community. The relationship between our Department and our community has always been strong, and we know there are always ways to strengthen those ties. One of Prince William County's greatest strengths is our diversity. As a police department, incidents like we've seen in communities across the Country remind our officers of our pledge to the oath we take and the Constitution we protect for everyone regardless of their background. Fair and impartial policing is at the core of our training, treating others with dignity and respect, and being professional with the highest level of integrity. We know the conversation of **unity, equity, and equality** needs to continue, and we are ready to work together.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Prince William County Police Department is to enhance the quality of life by providing police services through shared responsibility with the public.

VALUES STATEMENT

The Prince William County Police Department is responsible for protecting constitutional guarantees and impartially enforcing the law.

We believe that integrity is the basis of public trust and that honesty and equality in the delivery of police services is essential.

We commit ourselves to uphold these values and to foster cooperation and respect within our community.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Is the Prince William County Police Department an accredited agency?

The Department is Nationally accredited through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) which administers a process unique to law enforcement agencies in the United States and several foreign nations. In addition to the Department, our training academy is also accredited through CALEA. The purpose of this program is to improve the delivery of police services by maintaining a body of standards covering a wide range of issues. As a part of this process, our policies are reviewed by an outside team of assessors to ensure compliance. The Department has been accredited since 1987. We continually review and update our policies to ensure each adequately address the issue and reflects contemporary and best practices in policing. Being accredited increases the professionalism of law enforcement agencies and benefits both the agency and the community it serves by ensuring the Department remains committed to providing the highest quality of professional service. It also promotes community cooperation and understanding which are essential to policing in the 21st century.

What is the Department's position on First Amendment demonstrations?

The Department fully supports everyone's right to demonstrate under the First Amendment. However, it is important that demonstrations are peaceful and lawful. The Department will not allow for any violent or destructive behavior to take away from this Constitutional right. Traffic safety is also important to not only those demonstrating, but also motorists. Anyone who is planning a demonstration that involves the use of roadways, please contact the police department at policedept@pwcgov.org. Our involvement is not meant to deter or stop the demonstration, but rather ensure everyone involved is safe.

How does the Department engage with our community?

The Department currently engages with our community in a variety of ways and we are always looking to do more. In 2019, the Department created our "Community Engagement Section" solely dedicated to reaching out to our community and strengthening our relationships with the diverse groups and organizations that make up Prince William County. The Department also created our **Citizens Advisory Board** in 2017 which is comprised of diverse organizations from various backgrounds who consult the Department on process, procedures, and responsibilities. Department staff have also conducted numerous in-person meetings, including the Chief's ongoing community forums "Conversations with the Chief", and virtual discussions over Facebook LIVE. The Department actively participates in many outreach events from coffee with a cop, Santa Cops, National Night Out, Trunk or Treat. to partnerships with events supporting the Special Olympics and other organizations. Call us at **703-792-7270** to learn more about our engagement.

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What level of training do new officers receive and what ongoing training is required for all officers?

The Department has its own training academy, located in the Nokesville area of Prince William County, where officers receive basic training and continuous recertification and retraining. New recruits undergo an extensive six-month training session which covers over 900 hours of varying classes, techniques, and skills. Our academy is also accredited through CALEA to meet certain conditions that make our training process stand out and in line with up-to-date practices and curriculum. New recruits must also complete 450 hours of field training with a trained Field Training Officer. At the core of training is preserving the sanctity of life. Only after the recruit has successfully completed their field training, are they permitted to be released to solo duty. In total, new officers receive over 1,300 hours of training, more than double the minimum required by the Department of Criminal Justice Service (DCJS). Current Department members must also maintain their law enforcement certification by completing of Mandatory In-service Retraining (MIR) as required by DCJS which includes career development, cultural diversity, and legal training. The Department also implements additional required training in addition to what is listed for DCJS certification. This training often encompasses unbiased policing, ethics and discretion, fair & impartial policing, community relations, and additional relevant training. New supervisors also go through training including their roles as a supervisor, legal considerations, community policing, and reporting complaints amongst other topics.

How can community members learn more about the Police Department?

In a variety of ways! Visit our social media pages, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram - [@PWCpolice](#), or our website at pwcgov.org/police. The Department is also on NextDoor where information can be shared directly with residents of Prince William County. If you're interested in applying to become a police officer, we're hiring! Learn more at joinpwcpd.org. We also welcome community members to join us in-person chats or virtually for discussions as they become available. In addition, the Department offers [tours of our facilities](#), [ride-alongs](#), and the opportunity for residents of the County to attend our [Citizen's Police Academy](#). This 10-week program gives residents an overview of the Department through classroom and hands-on instruction from various aspects of police work. Graduates of the course will have a better understanding of the operation of the Department, and a greater awareness and appreciation of the challenges and decisions faced by Prince William County police officers each day.

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USE OF FORCE

What is the Department's use of force model (use of force continuum)?

The Department implements and trains our officers on using force through a model developed in conjunction with the Police Executive Research Forum entitled, “**ICAT: Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics**”. The Department incorporates this use of force model and not a use of force “continuum”, as a continuum implies a progression of force similar to a line. Our current model is circular, there is no beginning or end but rather calls on the officer to continuously assess the situation at hand and gather information to determine the type of individual the officer is encountering (cooperative, resister, or assailant), as well as, the appropriate level of force, if any, to use to defuse the situation. Officers have many tools they can use and knowing when and how to use them a critical component to the training. The model also shows how time and distance can be advantageous to de-escalating an incident by gathering information to aid in assessing the proper action.

How does the Department investigate, and report uses of force (comprehensive reporting)?

Officers are required to thoroughly document and properly articulate in their report the level of force used. All uses of force by Department members is thoroughly investigated and further documented by a supervisor regardless of the circumstance or type of force. A use of force is any action taken by an officer that is beyond that of simply controlling an individual. As part of the investigation, the supervisor will seek to speak to all parties involved and any witnesses to the encounter. Upon completion of the investigation, the Office of Professional Standards will review each situation to determine if the supervisor's investigation was properly conducted and if the member's use of force was legally justified. The Department policy for these investigations is publicly available [here](#).

Is there any other tracking of uses of force?

The Department uses an Early Identification System which monitors individual officer's past uses of force and complaint allegations. Under certain conditions, reports may be generated for any member based on uses of force and complaints. If needed, a Performance Improvement Plan may be initiated to help the member reach their full potential. The results could include additional training, more supervision, further evaluation or counseling, or possibly a transfer or other discipline. The Department policy for tracking this information is publicly available [here](#).

Does the Department release a report on officer uses of force?

Not currently; however, we are researching options to make this information public.

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Do officers train how to de-escalate an encounter?

As explained in a previous question about our **use of force policy**, officers are trained to continuously assess their current situation. Knowing when to de-escalate a situation is just as critical as being able to know when to escalate. Officers must receive training on every tool at their disposal, including chemical spray, impact weapon, electronic-control device, and their firearm. Officers can only use the tools in which they have received specific training to use. One of the most important tools officers have at their disposal is their ability to communicate. Providing clear commands and explaining the actions that are being taken can aid in defusing a situation. Ensuring officers can properly communicate and articulate actions is reinforced through ongoing training. Officers also receive continuous training on using force and in the use of their equipment.

Does the Department ban chokeholds and strangleholds?

The Department does not teach or train officers to apply pressure to someone's neck. This level of force would be considered deadly force and would not be permitted in situations unless the use of deadly force can be articulated and justified. This level of force is not used in situations to gain compliance or control over an individual.

Does the Department have a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) for encountering individuals experiencing a crisis?

Yes, the Police Department partners with the Greater Prince William CIT to train our officers on crisis communication techniques. The Greater Prince William CIT program consists of law enforcement officers and dispatchers from Prince William County Police, Manassas City Police, Manassas Park Police, Prince William County Sheriff's Office, and the Prince William County Adult Detention Center. These individuals have completed an intensive 40-hour training program, which teaches communication skills and tactics to safely de-escalate incidents involving persons who may be in a mental health or intellectual disability crisis. As of May 2020, approximately 37% of current Department members have received this training.

Who determines if deadly force is justified?

The Commonwealth Attorney's Office determines if the use of deadly force was legally justified.

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Does the Department require a verbal warning before shooting?

Shooting a firearm is considered a deadly force situation and must be properly articulated and justified. Per policy, where feasible, a verbal warning will be given prior to the use of deadly force. The Department does recognize that there are some situations where a warning is not feasible and is therefore not required. The circumstances surrounding that decision must be articulated.

What information does the Department release on deadly force encounters involving officers?

In the interest of keeping our community informed of significant incidents involving our officers and efforts to remain as open as possible concerning sensitive investigations, it is the policy of the Department to release the names of officers involved in Police Shootings and other law enforcement critical incidents, (e.g. uses of force resulting in serious injury or death, in-custody deaths, traffic incidents resulting in serious injury or death, etc.). The Department policy for the release of information is publicly available [here](#).

Do officers have duty to intervene to stop another officer's behavior?

Yes, all officers have sworn an oath to protect human life and uphold the Constitution. This applies to not only our own individual actions, but also the actions of our peers. It is the duty of every officer to intervene immediately and report the incident to their supervisor. The Department's policy states, "Each Department member has the individual responsibility to intervene and stop any other member from committing an unlawful or unethical act, including, but not limited to, acts of brutality, abuses of process, abuses of authority, and any other criminal acts or related violations of Department rules and procedures. Successful intervention does not negate a duty to report." The Department policy for the release of information is publicly available [here](#).

Does the Department ban shooting at moving vehicles?

Shooting at a moving vehicle is generally dangerous to both the officer and others. The substantial risks generated by using gunfire against moving vehicles, in combination with the likelihood that such gunfire may fail to achieve its goal, demand that officer's resort to firing only in the most extreme and exceptional circumstances. The use of deadly force in these encounters must be articulated and justified.

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ACCOUNTABILITY

What is the process for hiring police officers?

Every Department member undergoes an extensive background review process which can take 3-4 months to complete. The process looks at past employment history, education, military service, and other aspects of an individual's past. This process includes psychological, physical, and polygraph examinations. The purpose of the process is to know as much about the person being hired as possible. All files are thoroughly reviewed through the chain of command prior to an offer of employment being given. Each person hired by the Department meets with leadership to discuss the agency's values, mission, and to discuss the importance of integrity. The Department has a 3% hire-rate of applicants due to our rigorous standards. In January 2020, the Department also began reviewing hiring standards as part of a diversity study awarded to the **Police Executive Research Forum**.

How does a community member file a complaint against an officer and what is the process?

It is the policy of the Police Department to accept and investigate all complaints or allegations of misconduct on the part of any member. In doing so, the Department will endeavor to be fair to both the complainant and the member(s) involved. To file a complaint, you can speak to any Department supervisor, the Office of Professional Standards, or email a completed form to the Department. Contact can be made in writing, by telephone, or in person. Once your complaint is received, it will be investigated accordingly, and you will be notified of the results. The form to file a complaint is available [here](#). The Department policy for handling complaints and our disciplinary process is publicly available [here](#).

Does the Department release a report on officer complaints?

Not currently; however, we are researching options to make this information public.

Are Department members required to identify themselves?

Yes, members of the Department are required to identify themselves and should not take any measure to purposely conceal their name. Officer's in uniform are required to display their badge and issued nameplate. Some garment, i.e. winter jacket, may not have a nameplate visible. Detectives should have their badge and Department issued ID readily available. If requested, all Department members will provide their name and badge (code) number.

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Does the Department use body-worn cameras or vehicle-mounted (dash) cameras?

The Department began its body-worn camera (BWC) program in 2017. As of June 2020, a total of 448 officers are issued cameras in the following areas of the Department: patrol, K-9, traffic enforcement, crash investigations, and all school resource officers. The Department does not currently use vehicle-mounted cameras. The Department policy for activation of the cameras in the field and the viewing and retention of footage is publicly available [here](#).

Does the Department conduct any surveys to gauge community satisfaction?

Yes, since the early 1990's, the Department has been involved with conducting professional surveys to gauge community satisfaction in a number of different areas to include: meeting community needs, police officer performance, attitudes and behaviors, citizens being treated fairly, crime prevention initiatives and other police services. Typically, these surveys are conducted at the County Government level using an independent, third-party company to collect data and the responses from the community. Based on these survey results, the agency reviews and evaluates its policies and procedures accordingly. Historically, community satisfaction among all races, gender and ethnicities has remained very high. The latest results of the 2018 community survey specific to police services is publicly available [here](#).

Does the Department offer any assistance to officers to handle stress?

Yes, the Department takes the wellness of our officers and staff very seriously. In addition to the County's Employee Assistance Program, Department members have access to the Public Safety Resiliency Center which prioritizes peer support and annual wellness training. The Department also encourages physical and mental fitness of members and incorporates the value of family at the academy level and reinforces that mantra throughout career development. The resiliency center is staffed by licensed behavioral health specialists who offer a variety of resources to Department members to handle stress and cope with difficult situations. This center is offered free of charge to members to encourage them to perform at their very best performance.

What oath(s) do police officers take prior to serving their community?

The Department administers two oaths to every police officer. Officer's recite the **Oath of Office**, typically administered by the Clerk of the Court, at their graduation or other swearing in ceremony. In addition, officers recite the Law Enforcement **Oath of Honor** that is based on a model from the **International Associations of Chiefs of Police**. The Oath of Honor is not only given at graduations and swearing in ceremonies, but also throughout the officer's career at various other ceremonies and events to serve as an important reminder to Department members of the dedication and commitment to the law enforcement profession.

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POLICIES

Below are links directly to policies included in the answers throughout this document. Additional policies are made available to our community on our webpage.

- [Fair & impartial policing](#)
- [Department values & mission](#)
- [Law enforcement code of ethics](#)
- [Community relations](#)
- [Disciplinary actions, general guidelines](#)
- [Complaint investigations](#)
- [Early identification system](#)
- [Use of force investigations](#)
- [Body-worn camera](#)
- [Release of information](#)
- More policies regarding discipline, training, available [here](#)

LINKS

The Department routinely solicits the assistance of many known and renowned law enforcement agencies to mold and shape our policies, procedures, and practices.

- [21st Century Policing report](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.](#)
- [Department of Criminal Justice Services](#)
- [FBI National Academy](#)
- [International Association of Chiefs of Police](#)
- [National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives](#)
- [National Police Foundation](#)
- [Police Executive Research Forum](#)
- [Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police](#)

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Do you have a question that's not addressed in this document? Please send an email with your questions or concerns to policedept@pwcgov.org.

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