



Jeffrey R. Gahler,
Sheriff

HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PERSONNEL POLICY

Code of Ethics

Distribution:	All Employees			Policy Number:	PER 0104
Responsible Unit:	Administrative Services Division			Rescinds:	PER 0104 (08/17/21)
Original Issued Date:	06/22/22	Revision #:	1	Latest Revision Date:	07/01/26
Required 3-Year Review was Completed:		07/01/26		Next Review Due:	07/31/29

1. Purpose

To provide all employees of the Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) with information about the Maryland Public Ethics Law and to provide a Code of Ethics that will be followed by all employees.

2. Policy

All employees will abide by the Code of Ethics outlined in this policy.

3. References

International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Law Enforcement Code of Ethics
Maryland Code Annotated General Provisions § 5-506
Maryland State Ethics Commission (<http://ethics.maryland.gov/employeeofficials/>)

4. Procedures

A. Background

1. The Office of the Sheriff has long stood for the safety and protection of the citizens it serves.
2. The public, rightfully, can expect professional and courteous service.
3. The image the members of the HCSO present, both on and off duty, serves as a tool for the public to measure the level of professionalism of the Office.
4. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all members of the HCSO to guard their actions cautiously and for all personnel to abide by the following Code of Ethics.
5. The HCSO has adopted a Law Enforcement Code of Ethics based on the International Association of Chiefs of Police model.
6. Its aim is to further develop true professionalism in law enforcement and it has its basic objectives:
 - a. Elevating the standing of the profession in the public mind, and strengthening public confidence in law enforcement;
 - b. Encouraging law enforcement officers to fully appreciate the responsibilities of their office;

- c. Developing and maintaining complete support and cooperation of the public in law enforcement;
- d. Ensuring the effectiveness of the HCSO by encouraging the complete cooperation of its members for their mutual benefit;
- e. Striving for full coordination of effort in all official relationships with other governmental agencies; and
- f. Considering police work to be an honorable profession and recognizing in it an opportunity to render a worthwhile service to society.

B. State **Ethics** Requirements – **All Employees**

- 1. All state officials or employees are bound by the Maryland Public Ethics Law.
- 2. Information about the Maryland Public Ethics Law may be found on the State Ethics Commission website (<http://ethics.maryland.gov/employeeofficials/>).

C. Code of Ethics – **Applicable to All Deputies**

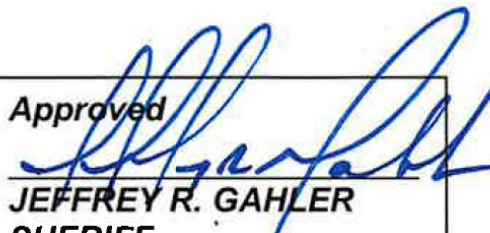
- 1. The HCSO has adopted a Code of Ethics based on the IACP model.
 - a. I pledge to honor and respect the dignity of all persons and the value and sanctity of life by respecting every human life and to act with compassion towards others.
 - b. As a deputy, my fundamental duty is to serve the **community**; safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception; the weak against oppression or intimidation; the peace against violence or disorder; and to respect the Constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and justice.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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 the HCSO.
 - e. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.
 - f. I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise with 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.

- g. 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 this service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other deputies. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.
- h. I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge, my skills and expertise throughout my career, contribute to the collective wisdom of the profession, and actively encourage my associates to do likewise.
- i. I will act in the execution of my duties with integrity, dignity, and honor to merit the trust of the community and the profession, and apply honesty, skill, judgment, and initiative to contribute positively to the well-being of society.
- j. I will treat people with dignity, good faith and equity, without discrimination, and have consideration for the values and cultural sensitivities of all groups within the community affected by my work.
- k. I will follow recognized professional practice and provide services and advice carefully and diligently only within my areas of competence.
- l. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself to my chosen profession as a deputy with the HCSO.

D. The Training Director/Commander will ensure that all employees receive biennial ethics training.

5. Summary of Changes

- A. On July 1, 2026, the Agency 3-year policy review was conducted. While no content-specific changes were made, the document structure was reorganized to improve overall flow and readability.

Approved

JEFFREY R. GAHLER
SHERIFF
DATE 7/3/26