

TOWN OF MARION POLICE DEPARTMENT MANUAL OF GENERAL ORDERS		
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DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION: MISSION, VISION, VLAUES, AND PRINCIPLES		

A. Departmental Mission

The mission of the Town of Marion Police Department is to *enhance the quality of life* of our residents, by providing police services *in a spirit of shared responsibility*.

B. Oath of Office

As a consequence of our department’s mandate to enforce the law and protect constitutional rights, all members are required to take an oath of office before assuming sworn status. The department’s oath is substantially drawn from § 49-1 of the Code of Virginia and reads:

“I _____do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge all the duties incumbent upon me as a police officer with the Town of Marion according to the best of my ability, so help me God.”

C. Departmental Vision

The Marion Police Department delivers core law enforcement services, in a relational tone, and with a professional character consistent with the expectations of our community. We are a genuine and legitimate contributor to the safety and security of our citizens, and thereby a vital part of our shared and flourishing society.

D. Departmental Values

The Town of Marion 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 upholding these values and to fostering cooperation and respect within our community, and the department itself.

E. Guiding Principle

The ethos embraced by this department is historically known as “consent policing”, and commonly expressed in our own day as “community oriented policing”.

F. Historic Expression

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel, founded the London Metropolitan Police Department, his ideals have been articulated into nine principles, *which serve as a historical, but not absolute, example of our guiding ideology* in the Law Enforcement profession to this day:

1. *To prevent crime and disorder, as an alternative to their repression by military [style] force and severity of legal punishment.*
2. *To recognize always that the power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behavior, and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect.*
3. *To recognize always that to secure and maintain the respect and approval of the public means also the securing of the willing co-operation of the public in the task of securing observance of laws.*
4. *To recognize always that the extent to which the co-operation of the public can be secured diminishes proportionately the necessity of the use of physical force and compulsion for achieving [order].*
5. *To seek and preserve public favor, not by pandering to public opinion, but by constantly demonstrating absolutely impartial service to law, in complete independence of [political] policy, and without regard to the [perceived] justice or injustice of the substance of individual laws [which is the responsibility of the legislature], by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of the public without regard to their wealth or social standing, by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humor, and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life.*
6. *To use physical force only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient to obtain public co-operation to an extent necessary to secure observance of law or to restore order, and to use only the minimum degree of physical force which is necessary on any particular occasion for achieving [order].*
7. *To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.*
8. *To recognize always the need for strict adherence to police-executive functions, and to refrain from even seeming to usurp the powers of the judiciary, of avenging individuals or the State, and of authoritatively judging guilt and punishing the guilty.*
9. *To recognize always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them.*

G. Contemporary Expression

The police profession, although well-guided under historic expressions of consent policing, also stands to benefit from a recasting of our ethos, in more modern terms. A promising example of this recasting, which seeks to further democratic culture and virtues, has been offered by Prof. Ian Loader, of the University of Oxford. “Loader’s Principles” have been proposed in 2023 for adoption by all police forces in Canada, and *serve as a further exemplar of our own vision for policing locally*:

1. The basic mission of the police is to improve public safety and well-being by promoting measures to prevent crime, harm and disorder.
2. The police must undertake their basic mission with the approval of, and in collaboration with, the public and other agencies.
3. The police must seek to carry out their tasks in ways that contribute to social cohesion and solidarity.
4. The police must treat all those with whom they come into contact with fairness and respect.
5. The police must be answerable to law and democratically responsive to the people they serve.
6. The police must be organized to achieve the optimal balance between effectiveness, cost-efficiency, accountability and responsiveness.
7. All police work should be informed by the best available evidence.
8. Policing is undertaken by multiple providers, but it should remain a public good.