



# SOUTH KINGSTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

1790 KINGSTOWN RD., WAKEFIELD, RI 02879

POLICY NUMBER	ORDER TYPE	ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
220.01	OPERATIONAL POLICY	6/10/14	8/29/18
CHAPTER : SUBSECTION		TITLE	
HUMAN RESOURCES : PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT		PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT	
REVIEW DATES		REVISION DATES	
1/14/16, 8/15/18		8/15/18	
DISTRIBUTION	REFERENCE		PAGES
ALL PERSONNEL	RIPAC 1.5, 2.2 & 5.1		4

## I. PURPOSE

This policy will clearly establish the professional conduct of all employees of the South Kingstown Police Department. Professional conduct is an important part of any structured organization and will further enhance the professional image of the department.

## II. POLICY

It is the policy of the South Kingstown Police Department to maintain and demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and mutual respect when interacting with department employees, other law enforcement officers and the public.

## III. PROCEDURE

The following regulations will govern the conduct of employees of the South Kingstown Police Department:

### A. Code of Ethics

All employees are expected to abide by the Rhode Island Code of Ethics in Government and, in addition, sworn officers will abide by the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics. Employees will receive biennial ethics training.

### B. Speech

Employees are cautioned that speech, on or off duty, made pursuant to their official duties – that is, that owes its existence to the employee’s professional duties and responsibilities – is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the department. Employees should assume that their speech will reflect upon their office and this department.

### C. Suspension

1. Any ranking officer may suspend an employee for the remainder of the shift for any violation of department policy that warrants such action. In cases where the ranking officer is not the employee's immediate supervisor, the employee's immediate supervisor will be notified of the suspension. It will be the responsibility of the immediate supervisor to assist the ranking officer who suspended the employee in any way possible. Only a Captain or above may override the suspension order.
2. If an employee is suspended from duty, he/she will leave the building in an orderly manner. Any further acts of insubordination or violation of department policy may be grounds for additional suspension time or termination.
3. In all cases, an employee's bargaining unit representative will be notified at the time of any disciplinary action, including suspension. In the case of civilian personnel, the employee is allowed to request the presence of a union representative at the time of any disciplinary discussion. If a representative is unavailable or the conduct of the employee is so disruptive to the professional standards of the department the employee can be relieved of their duties pending a formal review of the matter. At no time will the lack of an available union representative prevent the supervisor from taking appropriate action to immediately address a disciplinary situation.

### D. Supervisors/Ranking Officers

1. Every employee shall accord respect to all supervisors at all times and shall refrain from critical or derogatory comment about them or orders received from or issued by them.
2. Anytime an employee encounters a ranking officer the employee will recognize and acknowledge the presence of the ranking officer in a polite and professional manner.
3. Employees will not ignore or walk away from any ranking officer who is addressing them.
4. Ranking officers will be addressed by their rank or rank and last name at all times, including over the department's paging system.

### E. Orders

1. Criticism - Employees shall not publicly criticize instructions or orders they have received.
2. Obeying – Employees shall promptly obey any lawful order issued by any superior officer. Obedience to an unlawful order is never a defense for an unlawful action.
3. Conflicting – Should any order conflict with a previous order from any other ranking officer, the employee shall promptly and respectfully call attention to such conflict or order for the benefit of said ranking officer. If the said ranking officer does not change the order to obviate such conflicts, the order shall stand.
4. Unlawful – Supervisors shall not knowingly issue any order that is in violation of any lawful ordinance or departmental order or rule.

5. E-mail – Orders can be issued via e-mail or posted on a department bulletin board by a superior officer and shall have the same effect as any other verbal or written order.

#### F. Hand Salutes

1. Officers holding the rank of Lieutenant or above will be saluted by all junior officers. The hand salute should be accompanied by the appropriate greeting such as, “good morning, Sir/Ma’am.”
2. The salute is rendered both indoors and outdoors, whether or not the cover is worn.
3. The junior officer shall salute first at recognition distance, approximately six (6) paces (18-20 feet). The senior officer shall return the salute.
4. The salute is rendered to a superior officer only once a day, at the first meeting, and additionally as dictated by this policy.
5. Where officers are gathered and an officer entitled to a salute arrives, either all officers will salute, or it is permissible for just the senior officer to render a salute.
6. When any junior officer is called to report to an officer holding the rank of Lieutenant or higher, the junior officer shall render the hand salute upon reporting. The salute will not be returned from the seated position.
7. Whenever the National Anthem is played, all officers should come to attention and face the flag if it is displayed; if no flag is displayed, they should face the direction of the music. Officers in uniform and covered will salute at the first note of the music and hold the salute until the last note. If uncovered and indoors, the salute is not rendered, but it is proper to place one’s right hand over the heart.
8. Officers holding the rank of Lieutenant or above in other police agencies will be afforded the same courtesy as members of the South Kingstown Police Department holding that rank.
9. When in doubt, salute.
10. Exceptions to the saluting requirement; salutes are not required when the senior or subordinate, or both are:
  - a. Not on duty;
  - b. Engaged in routine work, if the salute would unnecessarily interfere;
  - c. Carrying articles with both hands so as to make saluting impractical;
  - d. When assembled in a formation, such as honor guard.

#### G. Other

1. Cooperation between the ranks and units of the Department is essential to effective law enforcement. All members are strictly charged with establishing and maintaining a high spirit of cooperation within the department.
2. Employees will adhere to the chain of command. In the case of civilian employees, all employees have a direct supervisor as indicated in the Summary and Duties section of their position’s job description, although based on the nature of the work performed and department hours of operation, all ranking officers will have supervisory authority over the professional conduct of all employees. The provision of this paragraph relates to professional conduct and in no way is intended to impede the normal workflow or normal business operations of this department

or subvert whom the employee normally reports to as defined in the employee's specific job description. Disciplinary matters that do not require immediate action to preserve the professional standards of the department that are addressed by ranking officers involving a civilian employee will be processed through that employee's designated supervisor.

3. Employees shall respond to e-mail, voice mail, or any type of notification left for them by a ranking officer prior to going off duty. If the employee cannot respond to the message completely prior to going off duty, he/she will acknowledge receipt of the message and provide a timeline for responding with the information requested.
4. Constructive criticism that is meant to improve the operation of the department is encouraged. Whenever there are any such constructive criticisms, they shall only be discussed in a professional manner with the members of the department and shall be transmitted up the chain of command for appropriate action.
5. Every employee shall refrain from making any statement or allusion that discredits or disparages any member of the department, except when reporting to superiors as required by this policy.
6. Every employee shall accord courtesy, consideration and cooperation to every other employee.
7. No employee shall make a false official report, or make a false statement or gossip about any officer or member of the Department, or the business of the Department, to the discredit or to the detriment of any such officer or employee, or the Department as a whole.
8. No employee shall knowingly enter or cause to enter in any department book, computer, record or reports, any inaccurate, false or improper police information or other material matter.
9. Any employee receiving a written or oral communication for transmission to a higher command shall in every case forward such communication to the higher command it was intended for without delay.
10. No employee shall refer any citizen to Town Council members or the Town Manager. If the request cannot be handled by an employee it shall be referred through the chain of command.
11. Sworn personnel, whether on or off duty, shall be governed by the ordinary and reasonable rules of good conduct and behavior and shall not commit any act tending to bring reproach or discredit upon the department.
12. Employees shall inform superiors of any matter coming to their attention that may affect the welfare or be of interest to the department or any other town service.
13. Supervisors who witness violations to this policy will act immediately to put an end to the conduct and then take the appropriate disciplinary action.

By Order of:



Joseph Geaber  
Chief of Police