

3-01/075.00 - Personal Relationships Between Department Members

Personal relationships between Department members will inevitably develop within the workplace. The Department respects the rights of its members to associate freely and pursue relationships with colleagues they meet in the workplace. However, members shall use sound judgment to ensure these relationships do not create an adverse impact on their job performance, interfere with the performance of their duties, or compromise the integrity of a professional work environment.

Personal relationships between Department executives, managers, and supervisors and their subordinates can become problematic or cause a potential conflict of interest. It is the Department's responsibility to prevent conflicts of interest and the adverse impact(s) that may occur as a result of personal relationships including, but not limited to, a disruption in the work environment; the perception of unfair, unequal, or disparate treatment; a reduction in productivity; and/or a decline in employee morale. The Department is responsible for taking appropriate action to eliminate such conflicts in order to maintain an appropriate work environment.

It is the responsibility of every member to avoid any situation which may create a real or perceived conflict of interest. This is especially true of Department executives, managers, and supervisors, who must ensure their decisions are fair, impartial, and objective.

In the event Department members develop or become involved in a personal relationship with another Department member within their chain of command, both of the involved Department members shall immediately provide written notification to their respective unit commander. However, it shall be the responsibility of the higher ranking member to ensure that the unit commander(s) of the involved parties have been notified of the relationship. Upon receiving notification, the unit commander shall take appropriate action to ensure that there is not an actual conflict of interest and that workplace conduct does not create an uncomfortable work environment. If an involved Department member is a Department executive, he or she shall immediately notify the Executive Officer or Undersheriff (or the Sheriff if the employee at issue is the Executive Officer or Undersheriff).

Personal relationships not involving a chain of command conflict are not reportable as a potential conflict of interest under this policy.

In addition to the prohibitions stated above, Department executives, managers, and/or supervisors shall neither directly supervise nor make an employment decision concerning a subordinate employee with whom a close, personal relationship exists.

NOTE: Close, personal relationships include family relationships (relatives), dating relationships, off-duty business associations, or other circumstances of an unusually personal nature.

When in doubt about the possibility of a conflict of interest, Department executives, managers, and/or supervisors should err on the side of caution and recuse themselves from the process.
