20-15 - Safeguarding the Integrity of Department Investigations

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
NEWSLETTER
Field Operations Support Services

SAFEGUARDING THE INTEGRITY OF

DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIONS

On a daily basis, the Department responds to and handles various incidents which require the information and facts ascertained during those incidents, remain protected and confidential. It is of the utmost importance the Department and its members maintain the trust of the communities it serves by protecting confidential information and delivering uncompromised investigations.

The following are **summarized** sections of the Department's Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP), which shall be strictly adhered to while responding to or handling ANY crime scene. The full text of the sections below can be found by following links attached in the reference section below.

Department Policy

3-01/100.46, Use of Communication Devices

Absent extenuating circumstances, members shall not use a cellular telephone or other similar communication/recording device for a Department-related business purpose (i.e., coordinating field units to a radio call, contacting a victim or witness) when an established, Department-authorized communication device/system is available and/or a Department-authorized regulation/protocol has been established (e.g., Department radio/communications systems, field supervisor's cellular telephone, station telephone, etc.).

NOTE: This prohibition shall apply to the use of the cellular telephone for both voice communications as well as data (text) communications.

Members shall not use a personal cellular telephone or any other similar personal communication or recording device to record, store, document, catalog, transmit, and/or forward any image, document, scene, or environment captured as a result of their employment and/or while performing official Department business that is not available or accessible to the general public. Official Department business shall include, but is not limited to, confidential, sensitive, or copyrighted information that is printed, audio recorded, photographed, or video recorded; information related to any past, present, or anticipated criminal, civil, or administrative investigation, including reports, declarations, evidence, photographs, videos, or audio recordings; and/or photographs of suspects, arrestees, defendants, evidence, or crime scenes.

NOTE: A personal cellular telephone or any other similar personal communication or recording device used exclusively to record contacts with members of the public during legitimate Department business (e.g., traffic

stops, etc.) are exempt from the provisions of this section.

3-01/100.47, Use of Communications Equipment and Systems

Members shall conduct all Departmental related official business with an established Department authorized, controlled and auditable communications device and/or system. Official Department business includes, but is not limited to, confidential, sensitive, or copyrighted information that is printed or transferred via digital means, Department or County related emails, audio recordings, photographs, or video recordings; information related to any past, present, or anticipated criminal, civil, or administrative investigation, including reports and evidence.

Members shall also observe policies and procedures regarding County information technology assets, computers, networks, systems, and data as detailed in the Acceptable Use and Confidentiality Agreement as related to Board of Supervisors Policy #6.101.

3-01/030.78, Prohibition on Profiteering

In the course of their duties, Department employees frequently acquire non-public information that might enable them to personally profit by utilizing or sharing information to transactional business advantage. Transactions such as purchasing auctioned items, selling information to media, permitting access to locations or records, or utilizing third parties to complete these acts, are examples of improperly utilizing a departmental position to facilitate personal gain.

Personnel are prohibited from using “inside” Department information to benefit in a financial transaction, or to gain any advantage in personal affairs.

Department personnel who are uncertain regarding the propriety of a specific situation shall request that their unit commander approve any activity that could potentially conflict with this policy.

If you have any questions regarding the information contained in this newsletter, please contact Field Operations Support Services, at [REDACTED TEXT]

REFERENCES

LA County Board Policy 6.101 - Use of County Information Assets

3-01/100.45 - Use of Communications Equipment

3-01/100.46 - Use Communication Devices

3-01/100.47 - Use of Communications Equipment and Systems

3-01/030.78 - Prohibition on Profiteering

3-09/090.10 - Release of Information to the General Public and the Media

3-09/110.10 - Responsibility