14-15 - Inappropriate Terms and Phrases-Related Lawsuit

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
NEWSLETTER
Field Operations Support Services, (323) 890-5411

INAPPROPRIATE TERMS & PHRASES - RELATED LAWSUIT

As one of the preeminent law enforcement organizations in the world, our members are expected at all times to perform in a professional manner. While emphasis is always placed on how we treat members of the public, we sometimes fall short regarding interactions we have with each other.

Risk Management Bureau has settled a number of lawsuits wherein the cause of action was similar. The Department recently settled an employment-related lawsuit based on discrimination.

The plaintiff in the case was an experienced, well-liked member of the Department. Unfortunately, discriminatory comments allegedly uttered by a senior Department official led the plaintiff to conclude he was the subject of discrimination. The case settled before trial, and the plaintiff was awarded a large sum of money.

Department members are reminded that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) establishes clear and unambiguous guidelines for relationships between colleagues and relationships between supervisors and subordinates. The following MPP sections provide guidance:

Section 3-01/000.10, Professional Conduct:

> "All Department members shall be held accountable for their utterances, writings, conduct, and visual representations, including electronic and web-based communications, when they conflict with Our Core Values, Our Mission, or Our Creed and personnel can reasonably be identified as Department members."

Section 3-01/010.50, Manner of Exercising Authority:

"Authority in the Department shall be exercised with firmness and impartiality. Under no circumstances shall personal attitudes influence decisions."

Section 3-01/030.15, Conduct Towards Others:

"…members shall conduct themselves in a manner that will foster the greatest harmony and cooperation between themselves and the Units of the Department."

"…members shall not intentionally antagonize any person with whom they come in contact and shall treat all persons in a respectful, courteous and civil manner."

Section 3-01/030.85, Derogatory Language:

"Members shall not use coarse, profane or insulting language nor use threatening or uncomplimentary terms of speech, or use terms which would defame or demean the nationality or culture of any individual."

Section 3-01/121.00 Policy of Equality:

"Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation are absolutely contrary to the values of the law enforcement profession as a whole and to the Core Values of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation are also illegal under local, county, state, and federal law."

"The Department will not tolerate unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age (40 and over), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or medical condition, nor will it tolerate unlawful harassment or retaliation. As a preventive measure, the Department also will not tolerate inappropriate conduct toward others based on a protected status even if the conduct does not meet the legal definition of discrimination or harassment."

Information regarding the content of this newsletter may be directed to Field Operations Support Services.