



City of Cambridge Police Department

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Dr. Branville G. Bard, Jr.
Police Commissioner

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City Manager

General Order 20-13

Date: June 8, 2020
Subject: Duty to Intervene
From: Branville G. Bard, Jr., Police Commissioner

Effective immediately, it shall be the duty of all sworn members of the Cambridge Police Department present at any scene where physical force is being applied, to either stop, or attempt to stop, another member of the Department when force is being unreasonably applied or is no longer required.

Additionally, the following general guidelines shall apply with regards to a sworn member of the Department's duty to intervene:

DEFINITIONS

Intervene — To come between, whether verbally or physically, so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events.

DUTY TO INTERVENE

1. All sworn members of the Department must recognize and act upon the duty to intervene to prevent or stop any member from conducting any act that is unethical, or that violates law or policy (e.g., excessive force, theft, fraud, inappropriate language, sexual misconduct, harassment, falsifying documents, inappropriate behavior, etc.).
2. Intervention may be verbal and/or physical.
3. **Failure to intervene may subject a sworn member to disciplinary action, civil liability and/or criminal prosecution.**

REQUIRED ACTION

1. If aid is required by any individual, ensure that medical attention has been rendered.
2. Take a preventive approach, whenever possible, if observing behavior that suggests that another member is about to conduct unethical or inappropriate behavior.

- a. Examine the circumstances surrounding the incident to determine the appropriate form of intervention.
- b. Intervene verbally or physically, depending on the circumstances.
- c. All sworn members of the Department have been trained in Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics, or “ICAT,” which provides an “overall, integrated de-escalation strategy.” “Operational safety tactics” is a key component of this training, and emphasizes, in part, concepts such as the “tactical pause”; using time to continue communications, de-escalate heightened emotional responses, and bring additional resources to the scene; and teamwork.

EXAMPLE: While providing backup for a vehicle stop after a minor traffic violation, you notice the primary officer raising his/her voice and becoming increasingly agitated with the driver, despite the driver’s cooperative demeanor. In order to prevent an escalation, you could call the officer’s attention to break his/her agitation, walk up next to the officer and ask a follow up question of the driver to slow down the interaction and give the primary officer a chance to collect him/herself, or ask the officer to come speak to you away from the car in order to de-escalate the situation.

3. Take an active approach to intervene to stop any unethical behavior or misconduct, when such conduct is being committed by another member.
 - a. If verbal interventions are not sufficient to stop the act, come between the offending member and the other individual involved.

EXAMPLE: You observe an officer strike an individual without any reason. If appropriate, you could tell the officer to “cool it” or that you’ll take over the matter and have them step aside. If necessary, step in between the officer and the individual or hold the officer back in order to stop him/her from inflicting more unreasonable force.

4. Immediately notify a supervisor after conducting any type of intervention, when safe to do so.
 - a. Under Chapter 2 of the Department’s Rules, a sworn member of the Department shall, upon observing or otherwise becoming aware of a violation by another member of the police force of the Department’s rules, procedures or policies, report such violation to his/her superior officer.
5. Consistent with the Department’s Use of Force Policies and Procedures, when a physical intervention was performed, the intervening officer and any other officers who may have been involved in or witnessed the incident are required to submit a detailed report of the incident, documenting their involvement, the actions that were taken, their observations and all other relevant facts.