

SOUTH BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
PR-346: FAIR AND IMPARTIAL POLICING

Effective: 4/12/2021

Updated: 4/2/2021

1. PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this policy is to require that all South Burlington Police Department employees conduct policing in a fair and impartial manner, to clarify the circumstances in which officers can consider personal characteristics or immigration status when making law enforcement decisions and to reinforce processes and procedures that enable us to provide services and enforce laws in an equitable and impartial way. The South Burlington Police Department is required to adopt each component of the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council’s model fair and impartial policing policy. The South Burlington Police Department may adopt additional components. Nothing in the South Burlington Police Department Fair and Impartial Policing Policy is intended to violate federal law nor interpreted to conflict with any agencies obligations under Vermont’s Public Records Act.

2. INTRODUCTION

- A. Employees are prohibited from engaging in biased policing. This means no member of South Burlington Police Department shall take actions based on any personal characteristics, or immigration status, except as described below, in the services our employees provide to the community in connection with our law enforcement activities.
- B. Because partnership with Vermont residents is the most effective way to ensure public safety, maintaining the public’s trust is a primary concern. To secure this trust personal characteristics, or immigration status, should have no adverse bearing on an individual’s treatment by the South Burlington Police Department. Enforcement of civil immigration law is a federal responsibility and agencies should not engage in such enforcement except as otherwise outlined in this policy. Vermont residents are more likely to engage with law enforcement and other officials by reporting emergencies, crimes, and acting as witnesses; to participate in economic activity; and to be engaged in civic life if they can be assured they will not be singled out for scrutiny on the basis of the personal characteristics or immigration status.
- C. To achieve these objectives the South Burlington Police Department will implement a combination of best practices including but not limited to: hiring, in-service training, policy development, supervision, reporting and investigative processes, appropriate discipline, and community outreach and partnerships.

3. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Biased policing” is conduct by law enforcement officers motivated by an individual’s actual or perceived or self-identified personal characteristics.

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- B. "Personal characteristics": May include but is not limited to actual or perceived identity, race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, mental or physical disability, age, religion and socio-economic status.
- C. "Immigration status": Generally, refers to the legal rights, if any, of a non-citizen to enter or remain in this country. Examples include, without limitation, "lawful permanent resident," "temporary worker," "refugee," and "undocumented."
- D. "Reasonable suspicion": Suspicion, for which an officer can articulate factual reasons, does not need to rise to the level of probable cause.
- E. "Probable cause": Facts or circumstances that would lead a reasonable person to believe that a crime has been committed, or is being committed, or is about to occur.
- F. "Member" or "employee": any employee employed by the South Burlington Police Department, regardless of their assigned tasks or duties.
- G. "Federal immigration authorities": federal agencies, departments, or employees or contractors thereof, tasked with enforcement of immigration law and border entry, including without limitation, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigration Control and Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).

4. POLICING IMPARTIALLY

- A. As required by law, all enforcement actions by law enforcement officers, such as investigation, detentions, traffic stops, arrests, searches and seizures, etc. must be based on reasonable suspicion, probable cause or other or relevant exigent circumstances, supported by articulable facts, circumstances, and conclusions that support the given action.
- B. South Burlington Police Department employees may consider reported race, ethnicity or other personal characteristics of persons based on credible, reliable, locally relevant, temporally specific information that links a person of specific description to particular criminal incidents and is combined with other identifying information.
- C. Under federal and state law, law enforcement agencies are required to provide qualified interpretation services, either in person or telephonically, to any person in need of it. South Burlington Police Department employees shall not contact federal immigration authorities for interpretation services, unless a clear emergency requires it and qualified interpretation services are not available through any other means. Unless one of the exceptions included in Section 10 applies, the South Burlington Police Department shall not ask about the immigration status of the person for whom interpretation is sought.

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5. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

To cultivate and foster transparency and trust with all communities each South Burlington Police Department member shall do the following when conducting pedestrian and vehicle stops or otherwise interacting with members of the public unless circumstances indicate it would be unsafe to do so:

- A. Be courteous and professional;
- B. Introduce him/herself to person (providing name and agency affiliation), and state the reason for the stop as soon as practicable unless providing this information will compromise officer or public safety, or a criminal investigation;
- C. Ensure that a detention is no longer than necessary to take appropriate action for the known or suspected offense and the South Burlington Police Department conveys the purpose of the reasonable delays;
- D. Provide South Burlington Police Department employee name verbally when requested. South Burlington Police Department may also provide the information in writing or on a business card;
- E. In addition to the above, employees should answer relevant questions the person may have if doing so will not compromise safety and/or the investigation.

6. RESPONDING TO BIAS-BASED REPORTS OR REPORTS REGARDING BIAS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- A. If any South Burlington Police Department employee receives a call for service that appears to be based solely on an individual's perceived personal characteristics or immigration status, the South Burlington Police Department employee will attempt to ascertain if there are other circumstances or facts that would constitute reasonable suspicion or probable cause. If the complainant can offer no further information, the complainant will be advised that the shift supervisor will be in contact at the first opportunity.
- B. The shift supervisor will be notified and apprised of the circumstances of the call. The supervisor should attempt to familiarize the caller with the South Burlington Police Department Fair and Impartial Policing policy and explain that the Department does not respond to incidents based solely on the personal characteristics of the person(s) involved.
- C. At the conclusion of the call, the shift supervisor will document the contact using the South Burlington Police Department's incident report system.

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- D. If a South Burlington Police Department employee receives a report of a potentially biased or hate-motivated incident, employees shall handle the incident as outlined by PR 310 Hate Crimes – Bias incident Response.

7. TRAINING

- A. The South Burlington Police Department will ensure that, at a minimum, all members and employees are compliant with Council and legislative requirements regarding fair and impartial policing training.
- B. Additional trainings may include but not be limited to instruction on anti-bias, power and privilege, non-English speaking communities, undocumented communities, and victim/witness services.
- C. It will be the responsibility of the Support Services sergeant to ensure that member will receive training upon this policy being enacted and then during odd numbered years thereafter on related issues. Training shall include a review of the Departments policy on biased based profiling, compliance with the VCJTC and legislative requirements, and any applicable legal updates that relate to this issue.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE

- A. Accountability and trust are vital elements of inclusive policing. The process for making a complaint about biased policing shall be readily available to the public. All reasonable efforts shall be made to accommodate language barriers.
- B. All South Burlington Police Department employees are required to promptly report allegations, complaints or knowledge of biased policing or suspected violations of this policy to their supervisor and the department’s internal investigation function. Where appropriate, employees are required to intervene at the time the biased policing incident occurs. Upon request, South Burlington Police Department employees will explain how a person can make a complaint regarding an officer’s conduct.
- C. State law requires all Vermont law enforcement agencies to conduct valid investigations of alleged biased law enforcement, even if the named member or employee resigns. Effective July 1, 2018, South Burlington Police Department is required to report to the Criminal Justice Training Council instances in which officers have willfully engaged in biased law enforcement or substantially deviated from policies prohibiting such enforcement. The regulating authority may, in turn, impose sanctions up to revocation of officers’ certification.ⁱ
- D. Violations of the policy shall result in appropriate disciplinary action as set forth in the South Burlington Police Department rules and regulations. Supervisors shall ensure that

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all employees in their command are familiar and in compliance with the content of this policy. Supervisors will be alert for and respond to indications of potential biased policing.

- E. Supervisors shall ensure that all personnel in their command are familiar with the content of this policy. Supervisors should randomly review records such as reports of video/audio recordings, or otherwise monitor the conduct of the officers in their command for the purpose of ensuring compliance with this policy and to identify training issues. Supervisors will be alert and respond to indications of potential biased policing.

9. ESTABLISHING IDENTITY

- A. Notwithstanding other provisions of this policy, South Burlington Police Department employees may make attempts to identify any person they detain, arrest, or who come into the custody of the South Burlington Police Department.
- B. Acceptable forms of identification, which must include a photograph of the individual, include, but are not limited to, driver's licenses from any U.S. state or foreign country, government-issued IDs by a U.S. jurisdiction, foreign passports, and consular ID cards. All identification is subject to reasonable scrutiny and follow-up for authentication consistent with the provisions of this policy.
- C. An individual shall not be stopped or detained solely for the purpose of establishing his or her identity. However, if the individual has already been stopped for a lawful purpose, he or she may be subject to objectively reasonable additional detention in order to establish identity (*e.g.*, inquiry into identity during the course of a lawful traffic stop).
- D. In exercising their discretion to use federal resources to establish an individual's identity, South Burlington Police Department employees should remain mindful that (1) their enforcement duties do not include civil immigration enforcement and (2) the South Burlington Police Department stands by its mission to serve all Vermonters, including immigrant communities, and to ensure trust and cooperation of all victims/witnesses. Contact with federal authorities made to determine an individual's identity is restricted to the purpose of determining his or her identity.

10. FEDERAL CIVIL IMMIGRATION LAW: STOPS, DETENTION, ARRESTS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE WARRANTS/DETAINEES

South Burlington Police Department employees do not have authority to enforce federal civil immigration law. The Constitution's Fourth Amendment and the Vermont Constitution's Article 11 right against unreasonable search and seizure apply equally to all individuals residing in Vermont.

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- A. South Burlington Police Department employees will not inquire of a person about that person's immigration status unless it is necessary to the ongoing investigation of a criminal offense. Agency members shall not use individual personal characteristics to ask about or investigate immigration status. See Section 13 below.
- B. South Burlington Police Department employees shall not facilitate the detention of undocumented individuals or individuals suspected of being undocumented by federal immigration authorities for suspected civil immigration violations. See Section 13 below.
- C. South Burlington Police Department employees shall not initiate or prolong stops for the purpose of enforcing civil immigration matters, such as suspicion of undocumented status, nor shall they prolong stops for the purpose of allowing federal immigration authorities to conduct such investigation.
- D. South Burlington Police Department employees shall not arrest or detain any individual based on an immigration "administrative warrant" or "immigration detainer." These documents have not been issued or reviewed by a neutral magistrate and do not have the authority of a judicial warrant. In addition, these documents do not meet the probable cause requirements of the Fourth Amendment and Article 11 of the Vermont Constitution.
- E. South Burlington Police Department employees shall not hold for, or transfer people to, federal immigration agents unless the federal agents provide a judicial warrant for arrest. An immigration detainer is not a warrant and is not reviewed by a judge, and therefore is not a lawful basis to arrest or detain anyone. Valid criminal warrants of arrest, regardless of crime, shall not be confused with immigration detainers. This provision does not affect the proper handling of arrests and detentions associated with judicially-issued criminal arrest warrants.
- F. Personal characteristics and/or immigration status, including the existence of a civil immigration detainer shall not affect the detainee's ability to participate in pre-charge or police-initiated pre-court processes such as referral to diversion or the Community Justice Center. Furthermore, personal characteristics and/or immigration status shall not be used as a criteria for citation, arrest, or continued custody under Rule 3 of the Vermont Rules of Criminal Procedure.

11. FEDERAL CRIMINAL LAW: BORDER CROSSINGS

South Burlington Police Department officers shall not make warrantless arrests or detain individuals on suspicion of "unlawful entry" unless the person in question is apprehended in the process of entering the United States without inspection.

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12. VICTIM AND WITNESS INTERACTION

The cooperation of immigrant communities is essential to prevent and solve crimes and maintain the safety and security of all residents. The following provisions are intended to support crime victims/witnesses and enhance trust between the police and community.

- A. South Burlington Police Department employees shall not ask about or investigate immigration status of crime victims/witnesses, except as allowed in subsections (b) and (c) below. Federal law does not require law enforcement officers to ask about the immigration status of crime victims/witnesses.
- B. To effectively serve immigrant communities and to ensure trust and cooperation of all victims/witnesses, South Burlington Police Department employees will not ask about, or investigate, immigration status of crime victims/witnesses unless information regarding immigration status is an essential element of the crime (such as human trafficking).
- C. If a victim/witness is also a suspect, South Burlington Police Department employees should follow the provisions in Section 9 related to stops, detention and arrest and Section 10(a) related to ongoing criminal investigations.
- D. South Burlington Police Department employees will ensure that individual immigrants and immigrant communities understand that full victim services are available to documented and undocumented victims/witnesses. South Burlington Police Department employees should communicate that they are there to provide assistance and to ensure safety, and not to deport victims/witnesses. In considering whether to contact federal authorities South Burlington Police Department employees shall not share information about crime victims/witnesses with federal immigration authorities, unless it is with the individual's consent.
- E. South Burlington Police Department members may, in appropriate situations, advise an individual that if they are undocumented they may be eligible for a temporary visa. For example, an individual might qualify for a U, S, or T visa if they are a victim or material witness to certain serious offenses

13. COLLABORATION WITH FEDERAL IMMIGRATION OFFICERS

- A. South Burlington Police Department employees shall not contact federal immigration officials solely on the basis of a suspect's or arrestee's race ethnicity, or national origin.
- B. Sweeps intended solely to locate and detain undocumented immigrants without reasonable suspicion or probable cause of a crime shall not be conducted unless acting in partnership with a federal agency as part of a formal agreement entered into by the governor.

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- C. South Burlington Police Department employees are not permitted to accept requests by ICE or other agencies to support or assist in operations that are primarily for civil immigration enforcement.
- D. Unless ICE or CBP agents have a judicially-issued criminal warrant, or the South Burlington Police Department has a legitimate law enforcement purpose exclusive of the enforcement of civil immigration laws, South Burlington Police Department employees shall not grant ICE or CBP agents access to individuals in the South Burlington Police Department's custody.
- E. Officers shall not prolong any detention solely in order to investigate immigration status or to allow federal immigration officers to investigate immigration status.
- F. No information about an individual shall be shared with federal immigration authorities unless necessary to an ongoing investigation of a felony, for which there is probable cause, and the investigation is unrelated to the enforcement of federal civil immigration law. Such information includes but is not limited to the individual's custody status, release date/time, court dates, whereabouts, residence, employment, identification numbers, appearance, telephone number, and familial relations.
- G. The Officer in Charge shall be the point of contact for any requests for cooperation from federal immigration authorities.

14. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

- A. The Chief of Police shall direct an annual review of all citizen's complaints. The review will make note of any patterns that suggest a need for further investigation and/or additional training. Any suspicion of bias based policing practice will be handled as set forth in Section 8, Accountability and Compliance.

As required by 20 V.S.A. section 2366, this Fair and Impartial Policing policy includes each component of the model Fair and Impartial Policing Policy approved and mandated by the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council on 12-07-2017.

APPROVED BY: 

DATE: 04/02/2021

ⁱ VT Act 56 (2016), *codified in* 20 V.S.A. § 2402(2) (biased enforcement as Category B unprofessional conduct), § 2403 (duty to report to Council), § 2404 (duty to investigate) and § 2406 (Council-issued sanctions).