

Atlanta Police Department Policy Manual		Standard Operating Procedure
Effective Date: April 15, 2013		APD.SOP.1020 Oath of Office and Law Enforcement Code of Ethics
Applicable To: All employees		
Approval Authority: Chief George N. Turner		
Signature: Signed by GNT		Date Signed: 5/8/13

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1. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for administering the Oath of Office, provide officers with a copy of the Oath of Office and the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, and to describe the scope and limits of the law enforcement authority of Atlanta Police Officers.

2. POLICY

It is the policy of the Atlanta Police Department that employees will take the Oath of Office prior to assuming sworn status. All sworn employees will adhere to and abide by the Oath of Office and the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics. All sworn employees will perform their duties within the limits of the laws, ordinances, rules, written directives, Oath of Office, Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, and Georgia POST Regulations. All civilian employees will also adhere to and abide by a canon of ethics concerning their responsibilities and duties. (CALEA 1.1.2 and State Law Enforcement Certification Program, 5th Edition, Standard 1.3).

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Chief of Police, or his or her designee, will administer the Oath of Office to incoming officers and ensure that the officers understand the meaning of the Oath of Office and the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics.

3.2 All employees taking the Oath of Office will read it and request clarification on any points they do not understand. Employees will not take the Oath of Office until they understand the meaning of both the Oath of Office and Law Enforcement Code of Ethics.

3.3 All sworn employees will be familiar with and perform his or her duties within the limits of his or her authority.

3.4 All employees, within the department, will receive mandated ethics training on an annual basis as provided by city ordinance and standards of conduct. Civilian ethics training can be in the form of classroom, roll call training, computer based training and bulletins, or any combination of



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methods as determined by the city. (CALEA 1.1.2 and State Law Enforcement Certification Program, 5th Edition, Standard 1.3)

4. ACTION

4.1 Oath of Office

The Oath of Office will be administered to police recruits after they have successfully completed all of the required training at the Atlanta Police Academy, but before they are assigned to field training.

4.2 The employee will sign the Oath of Office form, just as his or her name appears on the form, after taking the Oath of Office. A notary public will immediately notarize the employee's signature and the Oath of Office will be placed in each employee's department personnel file.

4.3 Each reinstated employee will be sworn in after successfully completing the required reinstatement training but before being permanently assigned.

4.4 A copy of the Oath of Office and the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics will be given to the officer.

4.5 Limits of Authority

4.5.1 All Atlanta Police Department sworn employees have limits of authority as defined by laws, ordinances, departmental policies, rules, written directives, Oath of Office and POST regulations. Sworn officers have the authority of peace officers within the geographical boundaries of the City of Atlanta as defined by the laws of the State of Georgia.

4.5.2 Atlanta Police Officers receive police powers from the City of Atlanta through their employment with the Atlanta Police Department.

4.5.3 Police powers are conveyed from the City of Atlanta to the Atlanta Police Department through City Code Section 98-27 (Function and Duties of Department).

4.5.4 Police powers are conferred on the City of Atlanta and other municipalities by Article 9, Section 2, paragraph 3, of the Georgia Constitution.

4.5.5 Police powers delegated to Atlanta Police Officers by the City of Atlanta are regulated by POST.

4.5.6 Atlanta Police Officers must comply with POST certification and/or registration requirements in order to perform as peace officers in the State of Georgia. Each police officer is required to have POST certification and/or registration to have arrest powers in the State of Georgia.

1. The POST Act was enacted July 1, 1970.
2. Employees employed on or after July 1, 1970, by the Atlanta Police Department as a police officer, who received a POST certification number, are certified peace officers.
3. Police officers employed by the department prior to July 1, 1970, who voluntarily met the POST certification requirements and received a POST certification number, are certified peace officers.



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4. Police officers employed prior to July 1, 1970, who did not voluntarily meet the POST certification requirements but were registered by the department with POST, are registered peace officers.

4.5.7 The POST Council may revoke or suspend a peace officer's certification or registration or impose other discipline if the officer holding the certification or registration:

1. Is convicted by any state or by the federal government of a felony.
2. Is convicted of sufficient misdemeanors to establish a pattern of disregard for the law. Sufficient misdemeanors as used herein means three misdemeanor convictions within the immediate past five years.
3. Is suspended for thirty days or longer, or discharged by his or her employing law enforcement unit for disciplinary reasons. Disciplinary reasons, as used, mean any action taken for any recognizable offense against the employee-employer relationship. Causes for adverse action run the entire gamut of offenses against this relationship, including inadequate performance of duties and improper conduct on or off the job.
4. Fails to comply with annual POST in-service training requirements.
5. POST may add to or revise these conditions. This list is accurate as of the date of this directive.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 Certified Peace Officer: A person employed as a peace officer who has satisfied all POST pre-employment and training requirements and has been issued a POST certification number.

5.2 Law Enforcement Code of Ethics: a code of conduct published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and adopted by the Atlanta Police Department as an official code of ethics. The code is as follows:

As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the Constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities, or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.



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I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.

I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession...law enforcement.

5.3 Oath of Office:

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I am duly qualified, according to the Constitution and laws of Georgia, to perform the duties imposed upon me as a Police Officer (or Special Police Officer) of the City of Atlanta, Georgia, and that I will, to the best of my ability, discharge the duties thereof, and preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Georgia.

I swear that I am not the holder of any office of trust under the government of the United States, any other state, or any foreign state which I am prohibited from holding by the laws of the State of Georgia, nor am I the holder of any unaccounted for public money due this state or any political subdivision or authority thereof.

I further swear that I will enforce the criminal laws of the State of Georgia and the ordinances of the City of Atlanta, that I will abide by the rules governing the Atlanta Police Department, adhere to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, and uphold the Ethics Code of the City of Atlanta. In doing so, I will be mindful of the trust that has been placed in me to improve the quality of life and make every effort to live up to that trust. I will not persecute the innocent, nor help to shield the guilty, nor will I be influenced in the discharge of my duties by fear, favor, or affection, reward, or the hope thereof.

So help me God.

5.4 POST: Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training.

5.5 POST Council: Governing body of POST that is appointed by the Governor of the State of Georgia.

5.6 Peace Officer: Any person who, by virtue of his or her office or public employment, is vested by law with a duty to maintain public order or to make arrests for offenses, whether that duty extends to all crimes or is limited to specific offenses. (OCGA 16-1-3)

5.7 Registered Peace Officer: A person employed as a peace officer prior to July 1, 1970, who has registered as a peace officer and has been issued a registration number by POST.



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5.8 Revocation: An action taken by POST Council whereby the certification or registration of a peace officer is canceled and the officer shall no longer perform the functions of a peace officer.

5.9 Suspension: An action taken by POST Council whereby the certification or registration of a peace officer is discontinued temporarily and the officer shall not perform the functions of a peace officer during the period of suspension.

6. CANCELLATIONS

APD.SOP.1020 Oath of Office for Police Officers and Code Enforcement Agents, July 26, 2013

7. REFERENCES

State of Georgia Constitution

Official Code of Georgia, Section 16-1-3(1) "Peace Officer" and Chapter 35-8 "Peace Officers"

City of Atlanta Charter, Section, 98-27 "Function and Duties of Department"

The International Association of Chiefs of Police, "Law Enforcement Code of Ethics"

Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies: Standards 1.2.1; 1.1.4; and 1.1.5

State Law Enforcement Certification Program, 5th Edition. Standard 1.3