PISCATAQUIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

STANDARDS of CONDUCT

Number: 21 Effective: 01/25/2021

Clarifies Law Enforcement Code of Ethics Reviewed & Revised: 08/05/2026

Division: Law Enforcement

I. Purpose

This policy provides specificity to the standards of conduct embodied in the law enforcement officer's code of ethics mission, so that deputies have a clear understanding of agency expectations pertaining to conduct and activities while on and off duty.

II. Policy

It is the policy of this law enforcement agency that deputies conduct themselves both on and off duty in a manner that reflects high ethical standards consistent with the values and mission established by this agency and the expectations of the jurisdiction it serves.

III. Definitions

Accountability: The duty of all deputies to truthfully acknowledge and explain their actions and decisions when requested to do so by an authorized member of this agency without attempting to conceal, divert, or mitigate any culpability by falsehoods or omission—and an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for such actions.

IV. Procedures

A. General Conduct

1. Deputies shall be truthful in all matters and shall not lie, falsify, conceal, purposely distort, diminish, embellish, or fail to fully disclose facts associated with any law enforcement business.

B. Adherence to Laws, Regulations, and Orders

2. Deputies shall abide by all laws, regulations, agency policies, rules, and procedures.

3. Deputies shall obey all lawful orders.

4. Deputies who are arrested, cited, or come under investigation for any offense in any jurisdiction shall immediately report this fact to their supervisor.

5. No employee of the agency shall make any expenditure nor incur any obligation on behalf of the agency without the knowledge and permission of competent authority.

This pertains to articles or supplies that may be purchased and work which may be ordered in the name of the agency.

6. No employee of the agency shall possess an alcoholic beverage, or other intoxicant, within the confines of headquarters or in any agency vehicle, except that which has been seized as evidence, contraband or found property.

7. Employees of the agency, unless with supervisory permission in the performance of duty, shall neither consume nor purchase any alcoholic beverage while on duty. Under no circumstances shall an employee consume an alcoholic beverage in public view while attired in uniform or any part thereof. Alcoholic beverages, or other intoxicants, shall not be consumed off duty to the extent that their use is detectable when an employee reports for a regularly scheduled duty assignment.

8. The use of any medication by an employee, prescribed or non-prescribed, which may result in an altering of mental or physical capacities or affect the ability to perform required duties, shall be immediately reported to a supervisor. No employee rendered incapable of performing required duties due to the effects of such medication will be allowed to report or remain on duty. The use of marijuana or products containing cannabis is prohibited by all agency employees.

9. An employee of the agency shall neither smoke nor chew tobacco while conducting agency business with the public. Tobacco may be smoked or chewed on duty provided one is not in general view of the public and no smoking restrictions exist at the chosen location. All smoking is prohibited in agency vehicles, within agency headquarters, and within any and all agency sub-stations.

10. Employees of the agency are required to maintain a valid license to operate a motor vehicle within the State of Maine. An employee shall report any changes in phone number, residence and dependent or marital status to the appropriate agency authority within one working day of such change. All personal information is considered confidential. Employees shall not use the agency's mailing address for personal uses.

11. Employees in full uniform will render a hand salute to the national colors and anthem at appropriate times. Non-uniformed personnel shall place the right hand over the heart at appropriate times.

12. Employees of the agency are required to report for duty physically, mentally and emotionally fit. If, for any reason, a supervisor believes an employee to be unfit for duty, the supervisor may relieve the employee from duty. Employees of the agency shall report for duty, properly attired and equipped, at the time and place specified by their assignment. An employee shall complete the number of hours on duty required by the assignment.

13. Deputies must take proper police action whenever it is required. Assignment of a deputy to a special detail or specific unit does not relieve one of the responsibilities to take necessary and proper police action even though such action may be outside the

scope of one's assignment. An exception to this rule may occur when a deputy is performing an undercover assignment and revelation of his official position would jeopardize such assignment. However, one must evaluate such situations and take police action if necessary. Under no circumstance is an employee to engage in covert investigations or undercover activities without the prior approval of an appropriate supervisor.

14. No employee shall leave his assigned duty post or geographical area of assignment unless dispatched to do so or authorized to do so by a supervisor or in the performance of a legitimate police action. No on-duty employee shall leave the jurisdiction except when engaged in official business, authorized to do so by a supervisor or in the performance of a legitimate police action.

15. Deputies shall not conduct themselves in a manner, on or off-duty, that casts doubt on their integrity, honesty, judgment, or character; brings discredit to this agency; or impairs the agency's efficient and effective operation.

C. Neglect of Duty

1. All deputies shall perform their duties faithfully and diligently and shall take responsibility for and exhibit attentiveness, care, and thoroughness in the conduct of assignments and responsibilities.

2. Deputies shall conduct themselves in an expeditious manner to avoid any unreasonable delays to the public in the performance of law enforcement duties and activities.

3. Employees shall maintain sufficient competency to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibilities of their positions. They shall perform their duties in a manner that will maintain the highest standards of efficiency in carrying out the functions and objectives of the agency. Unsatisfactory performance may be demonstrated by a lack of knowledge of the application of laws required to be enforced; an unwillingness or inability to perform assigned tasks; the failure to conform to work standards established for the employee's rank, grade, or position; and the failure to take appropriate action on the occasion of a crime, disorder, or other condition deserving police attention.

D. Accountability and Responsibility

1. Deputies are directly accountable for their actions, through the chain of command, to the Sheriff.

2. Deputies shall report for duty, including court and off-duty assignments, at the time and place required.

3. Deputies have a duty to intervene to prevent or stop wrongdoing by another deputy when it is safe and reasonable to do so. A supervisor shall be notified as soon as possible when another member of the agency is violating law or policy.

4. Deputies shall cooperate fully in any internal administrative investigation conducted by this or any other authorized agency and shall not attempt to conceal, divert, or mitigate any culpability of theirs by falsehoods or omissions.

5. Deputies shall utilize agency supplies, property, and equipment only for their official purpose and in accordance with established agency rules, policies, and procedures and shall not intentionally abuse, lose, or damage these items.

E. Conduct Toward Fellow Deputies

1. Deputies shall conduct themselves in a manner that fosters cooperation among members of this agency, showing respect, courtesy, and professionalism in their dealings with one another.

2. Deputies shall not use language or engage in acts that demean, harass, or intimidate other deputies.

3. No member of this agency may record a conversation of any other member of this agency without the expressed knowledge and consent of all parties. Internal Affairs interviews will be recorded regardless of consent.

4. Deputies shall interact with the public in a civil and professional manner that conveys a service orientation that fosters public respect and cooperation, and adheres to the concepts associated with procedural justice.

5. Deputies shall treat individuals with courtesy, respect, and dignity.

6. Deputies shall not employ an officious or overbearing attitude or use language that might belittle, ridicule, or intimidate individuals. Swearing or foul language is not used.

7. Deputies shall perform their duties equitably in both the enforcement of laws and the delivery of law enforcement services within the community and shall strive to maintain public trust by conducting all law enforcement business in an unbiased, fair, and impartial manner.

F. Abuse of Law Enforcement Authority or Position

1. Deputies may not accept goods, services, or discounts of value not available to the general public and shall report any unsolicited goods or services they receive and the circumstances of the receipt. This does not include:

a. Discounts and prizes available to the public, or opportunities and benefits to a class consisting of all Government employees or all uniformed law enforcement;

b. Modest items of food and non-alcoholic refreshments, such as soft drinks, coffee and donuts, offered other than as part of a meal;

c. Items of little intrinsic value and intended primarily for presentation, such as plaques, certificates, trophies and greeting cards;

d. Items associated with official duty presentations on speaking days;

2. Deputies shall not use their authority or position for financial gain; to obtain or grant privileges or favors; to avoid the consequences of illegal acts for themselves or others; or to barter, solicit, or accept any goods or services, (such as gratuities, gifts, discounts, rewards, loans, or fees) whether for themselves or others.

3. Deputies shall not purchase, convert to their own use, or have any claim to found, impounded, abandoned, or recovered property—or any property held or released as evidence.

4. Deputies shall not permit the use of any identification card, badge, or official document by unauthorized persons.

5. Deputies are prohibited from using law enforcement sensitive information gained through their position to advance financial or other private interests of theirs or others.

6. Deputies shall not steal, forge, or tamper with any official law enforcement document. Documents shall not be altered or duplicated unless such actions are approved by a supervisor.

7. Deputies shall not undertake any investigation or other official action that is not part of their regular duties without first obtaining permission from their supervisor, unless the exigency of the situation requires immediate law enforcement action.

8. Deputies involved with any civil action that arises from acts performed under color of authority shall inform their supervisor.

G. Prohibited Associations and Establishments

1. Deputies shall not knowingly commence or maintain a relationship with any person who is under criminal investigation, indictment, arrest, or incarceration by this or another law enforcement or criminal justice agency or who has an open and notorious criminal reputation in the community (for example, persons whom they know, should know, or have reason to believe are involved in criminal activity), except as necessary to the performance of official duties or where unavoidable or impractical because of familial or marital relationships. In such cases where regular household, physical, or telephone contact is unavoidable, the deputy shall inform his or her supervisor of the relationship.

2. Deputies shall not knowingly engage in social or romantic relationships with confidential informants or suspects or victims or witnesses involved with active investigations.

3. Deputies shall not participate or interfere in investigations involving family members or persons with whom they have a close personal or business relationship.

4. Except in the performance of official duties, deputies shall not knowingly enter any establishment in which the law is knowingly violated.

5. Deputies shall not knowingly join or participate in any organization that advocates, incites, or supports criminal acts or criminal conspiracies or that promotes hatred or discrimination toward racial, religious, ethnic, or other groups or classes of individuals protected by law.

H. Public Statements, Appearances, and Endorsements

1. Deputies shall not, as a representative of this agency, make any public statement that could be reasonably interpreted as having an adverse effect upon agency morale, discipline, operations, or public perception; divulge or willfully permit to have divulged any information gained by reason of their position, for anything other than its official, authorized purpose; or unless expressly authorized, make any statements, speeches, or public appearances that could reasonably be considered to represent the views of this agency.

2. Deputies shall not solicit or accept contributions for this agency or, as a law enforcement deputy of this agency, for any other agency, organization, event, or cause without the express consent of the Sheriff or his or her designee.

3. Deputies may not, as an agent of this agency, endorse, recommend, or facilitate the sale of commercial products or services without the approval of the Sheriff or Chief Deputy. This includes but is not limited to the use of tow services, vehicle repair shops, attorneys, bail bondsmen, or other technical or professional services. It does not pertain to referrals to appropriate governmental, community, or social services.

I. Political Activity

1. Employees are to refrain from using their influence publicly for or against any candidate for political office. While working on-duty or in uniform, deputies shall not:

2. Place, affix, or display any campaign literature or other paraphernalia in or on government-owned or controlled property, to include offices and vehicles;

3. Solicit political funds from any member of this agency or another governmental agency of this jurisdiction;

4. Solicit contributions, signatures, or other forms of support for political candidates, parties, or ballot measures;

5. Use official authority to interfere with any election or interfere with the political actions of other deputies or the general public; or

6. Favor or discriminate against any person seeking employment because of political opinions or affiliations.