

OREGON DPSST  
*ETHICS BULLETIN*

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The Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (BPSST) has the legislative mandate to establish and enforce the physical, mental, and moral fitness standards for all law enforcement officers, telecommunicators and emergency medical dispatchers in the state.

This requirement also defines the procedure for the Department and Board to use when denying or revoking certification of an officer, telecommunicator or emergency medical dispatcher who has fallen below the moral fitness standards.

The Ethics Bulletin is published to provide insight into the types of misconduct that could result in revocation or denial of certification. The following cases of misconduct resulted in **revocation and denial** of certifications by DPSST in **June 2004**.

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**Case 1**

**Officer A** resigned from his public safety position and was subsequently arrested on multiple felony sex offenses. Officer A was then convicted of six felony crimes including Sodomy and Sexual Abuse. The crimes were committed while Officer A was employed as a corrections officer and, according to the court record, the crimes occurred during the time the victim was between the ages of 11 and 15. Officer A's conduct ended his 6-year career.

**Officer A's Basic Corrections certification was Revoked**

**Case 2**

**Officer B** was discharged for cause after an investigation revealed that while on duty he engaged in sexual activity with an intern. He used agency property to promote the sexual activity including his cell phone, vehicle, and office. Officer B's conduct ended his 15-year career.

**Officer B's Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Parole and Probation certifications, and his Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Corrections certifications were Revoked**

**Case 3**

**Officer C** resigned and voluntarily gave up his DPSST certification one day after he was convicted of Private Indecency, a misdemeanor crime. Officer C offered a recently released female inmate a ride home. Upon arrival at her home, Officer C exposed himself and sought a sexual relationship with her. The inmate rebuffed him and told her probation officer. Officer C's conduct ended his 4-year career.

**Officer C's Basic Corrections certification was Revoked**

#### **Case 4**

**Officer D** was discharged for cause after an internal investigation revealed that he used unnecessary force against a prisoner. After a pursuit, and after the prisoner was restrained, Officer D approached the prisoner, kicked him in the head, and told him that's what he got for running from the police. Officer D then lied on a subsequent report. Officer D's conduct ended his 12-year career.

**Officer D's Basic Police certification was Revoked.**

#### **Case 5**

**Officer E** resigned after turning himself in to his agency head, admitting he had a drug problem, and admitting he took small amounts of confiscated narcotics for personal use. Officer E pled guilty to Official Misconduct and Tampering with Physical Evidence. Officer E voluntarily signed a Stipulated Order revoking his certifications. Officer E's conduct ended his 11-year career.

**Officer E's Basic and Intermediate Police certifications were Revoked.**

#### **Case 6**

**Officer F** resigned shortly before being convicted of three counts of felony Theft in the First Degree. Officer F's conduct ended his 11-year career. Officer F voluntarily signed a Stipulated Order Revoking his certifications.

**Officer F's Basic Police, Basic Telecommunications and Basic Emergency Medical Dispatch Certificates were Revoked.**

#### **Case 7**

**Officer G** retired and was later convicted of Theft in the First Degree and Misapplication of Entrusted Property. Officer G's conduct tarnished his 30-year career. Officer G voluntarily signed a Stipulated Order Revoking his certifications.

**Officer G's Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Police certifications were Revoked.**

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## **The Code Of Ethics And A Code Of Silence Cannot Coexist**

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In public safety agencies, the term "Code of Silence" is used to describe the unspoken rule that encourages people to lend a blind eye, a deaf ear and a mute tongue to unethical, immoral or improper actions on the part of others. The code is an invisible barrier to the free flow of communication. It leads to an unsafe environment, injuries and lawsuits. It also costs otherwise good employees their jobs, reputations and livelihoods.

We recognize that it's natural for bonds of friendship and camaraderie to develop among people working together in complex environments such as we have in [public safety]. However, some people take those bonds too far, and see loyalty to their co-workers as a valid basis for the Code of Silence. This is not true. The Code of Silence is a form of corruption. It is a corruption that begins with one person and spreads both in its severity and the number of people involved. The Code of Silence can't exist where higher principles are held as the top priority; we trust that you will place loyalty to honor and integrity above all else.

The Code of Silence is not a time-honored tradition. It is a hindrance to safe, sound and secure [public safety services] and it demeans each of us as [public safety] professionals. Pleading ignorance, lack of training, or honest mistakes as excuses for unethical behavior is unacceptable.

*Reprinted excerpts with permission from author Max Williams, Director, Oregon Department of Corrections*

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