

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 **May 2005**.

Case 1

Officer A was discharged for cause and thereafter charged with numerous felony crimes involving forcing inmates to engage in sexual contact with him. Officer A was provided the option of voluntarily signing a Stipulated Order Revoking Certifications, which he did. Officer A's conduct ended his 6-year career.

Officer A's Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Corrections Certifications were Revoked.

Case 2

Officer B pled guilty to Endangering the Welfare of a Minor, a Class A Misdemeanor. This is a mandatory disqualifying crime, for purposes of certification as an Oregon Public Safety officer. Officer B then resigned from his employment. Officer B's conduct ended his 11-year career.

Officer B's Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Corrections Certifications were Revoked.

Case 3

Officer C was discharged from employment after a DPSST investigation revealed that he had attended the Basic Police Academy (several years earlier) under false pretenses; he had been a reserve officer, and the police department he had worked for was abolished four days prior to his attendance. Further investigation revealed multiple instances of untruthfulness in applications to several Oregon public safety agencies and in documents that he submitted to DPSST. False assertions included claims of a 4-year degree, claims of completing training and his qualifications, and claims of being a Oregon police officer were untrue. This case was reviewed by the Police Policy Committee, which recommended denial based on falsification and violation of the moral fitness standards. The Board affirmed their recommendation.

Officer C's Basic Police Certification was Denied.

PLEASE DISSEMINATE THIS INFORMATION TO ALL PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS

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This speech was recently given to a graduating DPSST Basic Police class by guest speaker, Chief Frank Grace, Gladstone Police Department, Gladstone, Oregon. Chief Grace has been in public safety for over 35 years, in various disciplines, and is a tenured and well-respected instructor of Ethics, frequently teaching this topic at the DPSST Academy.

With Chief Grace's permission, the following are some excerpts from his speech.

Graduates,

You have entered a career where everyday you have the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life. [some commentary omitted]

A law enforcement officer must make sound ethical decisions daily. As a member of the criminal justice system, the public expects more from us than most other employees. Don't be tempted into taking the easy way out of an expected obligation you have for up holding the peace, laws, and rights of the public. From a small dent in the bumper of your police car, to other challenges that may come your way, always take the professional way – the ethical decision you make will impact the public, your family, your professional career, and the image of this very proud and honorable position.

You went through a lot of time and effort to get to this point and to achieve the status of a peace officer. You are in a position of authority. People will confide in you. People will share information with you that they may not share with other family members. You are in a position of trust; please don't take that position lightly. You have entered a field that has high values of; TRUST, HONESTY, INTEGRITY, ETHICS, and SERVICE TO YOUR COMMUNITY. You have a badge of authority that brings with it a history that many occupations do not!

Take your job seriously, but remember; a good sense of humor is important in any job, but not to the extent that it causes harm to another human being.

Law Enforcement is a high profile, demanding and very rewarding job

Everyday you will come into contact with someone new. The impression you make will reflect upon you, your agency and the entire law enforcement profession.

And make every contact you have with the public the best; so they will tell 10 people, and they in turn will tell 10 people, and so the story goes! It will go a long way in destroying stereotypes and do more good than harm.

Remember, as a member of the criminal justice system, we have core values of TRUST, HONESTY, INTEGRITY, ETHICS, and SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.

Because of your highly visible role in society, you are in a great position to impact the lives of those around you, in the course of your work, and away from the job. You are a role model for the community, friends, and even offenders. You are a role model for ethical behavior 24 hours a day! [some commentary omitted]

You are intelligent, professional, and are a proud member of the criminal justice system. You can make a difference!



For more information on this topic, or to contact the author, please send an email to Chief Grace at grace@ci.gladstone.or.us