

OREGON DPSST
ETHICS BULLETIN

Volume No. 31



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** of certifications by DPSST in **March 2006**.

Case 1

Officer A was discharged for cause after an internal investigation revealed that he failed to meet departmental standards relative to physical agility, missed several court dates and improperly processed evidence. Officer A was served with a Notice of Intent to Revoke Certification and he made a timely request for a hearing. A hearing was held and the Administrative Law Judge issued a Proposed Order revoking Officer A's certifications. Subsequent to this, Officer A signed a Stipulated Order Revoking Certification. Officer A's conduct ended his 18-year career.

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

Case 2

Officer B resigned in lieu of termination after an internal investigation revealed that while he was on duty he had accessed numerous pornographic websites. In this case Officer B was assigned as the School Resource Officer and was accessing the pornographic websites, and downloading pornographic images, from the school's computer. Officer B voluntarily signed a Stipulated Order Revoking Certification. Officer B's conduct ended his 7-year career.

Officer B's Basic Police Certification was Revoked.

Case 3

Telecommunicator C resigned and was subsequently convicted of six counts of Sex Abuse in the First Degree and two counts of Sodomy in the First Degree. Telecommunicator C was served with a Notice of Intent to Revoke Certification and he did not make a timely request for a hearing.

Telecommunicator C's Basic Telecommunicator and Emergency Medical Dispatch certifications were Revoked.

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***“Above Scrutiny”, a Professional Standard
Random drug testing something to think about!***

By Dallas Police Chief James Harper, President, OACP

In today's society, perception is a true reality. This is especially true for law enforcement professionals. The standards and guidelines that law enforcement set allow us to mold our profession, and it is hoped that one day we truly will be recognized as a profession. Some of the best indicators of a profession are standards that portray and ensure an image the public can believe in. Sometimes these standards may seem invasive or even unfair, but must be evaluated by what they achieve. Assurance of our professional standards must be the highest because of the incredible amount of power we are granted.

What does all this mean? For law enforcement it is a question of setting the right standards to ensure the perception of integrity. An important standard to reassure the public, and to set an example of a drug-free workplace, is a random drug testing system.

It is ironic in Oregon's law enforcement world that only a few agencies have taken the lead to promote such an image. Yes, this holds us to different standards from the rest of society, but we are truly the symbol of what is right and honest. As law enforcement officers, we are judged by the example we portray, whether right or wrong, even in our personal life. Our image should always reflect integrity where checks and balances reinforce this special image.

As law enforcement officers, we should embrace the standards that move us toward fulfilling a professional image that cannot be questioned. A way to start is random drug testing. Yes, we can argue that drug testing is a violation of our liberties, or testing has a potential for a false positive. The testing-validity question can be overcome by backup procedures and employee-assistance programs. The reality is our profession is based on a public image. That image should reflect the highest standards of checks and balances. These standards may even require minor sacrifices of our personal liberties. As officers, we should strive to achieve a public perception that surpasses and even surprises the public's expectations.

Let us seriously look at proactively controlling what we project to the public. After all, when we are in a reactive mode, the public reads our flaws, not our successes. Being proactive will answer the public's questions before they are ever asked.

*James Harper is the Chief of Police for the Dallas Police Department, Dallas, Oregon. Chief Harper has served in Oregon public safety for over twenty-nine years and as the Chief for nearly twenty years. Chief Harper is the current president of the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP). Chief Harper is a graduate of the FBI National Academy, Class 148. Chief Harper holds a Masters Degree in Correctional Administration and is a graduate of the Pacific Program with the University of Oregon. Chief Harper is an OEDI (Oregon Executive Development Institute) graduate, and continues his long-term relationship with DPSST as a part-time firearms instructor.
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