

La Plata Police Department Police Department – General Order

	Title: Introduction to the Manual		Order #: 101	
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Approved by: Chief Carl Schinner				CALEA 5 th Edition
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The La Plata Police Department embraces the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police, the police being members of the public who devote full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen.

The Department is one branch of Town government, and has an obligation to function as part of that government as well. The Department’s role as primary law enforcement agency within local government mandates continuous interaction with other Town agencies toward providing maximum service to citizens in the most efficient manner possible.

To prevent crime and identify criminals, positive interaction between the community and the police is essential. It is the responsibility of employees to strive continually to establish and maintain a climate in which officers may perform their duties with the acceptance, understanding and approval of the public. Through its formal activities and the daily actions of every employee, the Department will strive to achieve the willing participation of the public in obeying and enforcing the law and in preventing crime and disorder.

The Department is a civilian police force operating in a democratic society. It represents one facet of the executive branch of government. The La Plata Town government is duly constituted, with elected leaders serving at the pleasure of the people. As long as they are in office, the leaders are mandated by the citizens of La Plata to provide leadership and direction to the Department. By the mandate, the Department is accountable for the conduct of its affairs to the elected government.

The recognition of equality among people is vital in a free system of government. Just as all people are subject to the law, all people have a right to equal treatment under the law. The protection of this right is a primary responsibility of the police department.

It is the responsibility of every employee to treat people with as much respect as they will allow. This

is not a duty imposed in addition to the employee’s other responsibilities; rather it is inherent in the duties.

The La Plata community is an amalgamation of people representing different ethnic, cultural, religious and racial population. Many of these groups are, by their number, minority populations. The Department will foster and maintain a positive relationship with minority groups within the community, as it does with all people.

The Department recognizes that minority populations may have special needs as they relate to language, protection from the illegal acts of bigots and extremists, and access to community services. It will provide for such public safety needs while maintaining impartiality and continued service to all people within the community.

Citizens must be well-informed about public safety issues and their police. This is inherent in a free society, necessary for accountability, and essential if citizens and the police are to function as one in meeting community needs. As an agency of government, the Department is open to any reasonable and timely examination by the public of information not precluded by law from being released, and so long as public examination does not disrupt everyday working activities or jeopardize investigations.

The Department will actively seek to establish a cooperative climate in which the news media may obtain information on matters of public interest in a manner which does not hamper police operations. Of course, the Department expects the media to hold in confidence information which may result in undue risk of personal harm to a citizen or employee of the Department.

To enhance its operations and goals, the Department will make available all possible seminars, college courses, special schools and in-service training programs.

