

## GENERAL ORDER 22.5.1

### Employee Relationships

**GENERAL ORDER CROSS-REFERENCE: 26.1.1, 33.4.1, 33.5.1, 26.2.2**

#### SUMMARY

Describes the Springfield Police Department's Workplace Relationship expectations.

#### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance concerning the types of relationships that are improper, to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the Department's chain of command and to prevent impropriety and conflicts of interest that arise out of employee relationships.

Intimate relationships between co-workers, particularly between supervisors and subordinate employees may result in favoritism or the perception of favoritism and undermine confidence in the Department and its personnel system. In addition, some intimate relationships that develop through professional associations can create conflicts of interest or potential discrimination, sexual harassment and hostile work environment claims.

The policy of the Department is to ensure that the workplace is free of actual or perceived biases and conflicts of interest, to ensure that work-related activities, benefits, assignments, and other personnel actions are not related to, or influenced by familial or intimate relationships and to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and bearing in providing services to citizens.

We advise our employees to consider any possible conflict of interest before they enter into a workplace relationship (including romantic and/or sexual) with a coworker. Employees must inform their direct supervisor when they enter into a romantic or intimate relationship with a colleague, and keep discussions of personal issues, which interfere with the efficient operations of the Department, out of the workplace.

Romantic or intimate relationships must not interfere with any employee's professionalism, including treating others with respect and refraining from behavior that may make others feel uncomfortable (for example, flirting, overt physical displays of affection, and/or using sexual language).

#### DEFINITIONS

**Conflict of Interest:** Any situation in which an employee has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to influence the objective and impartial exercise of his/her official public duties for personal benefit.

**Employee(s):** For purposes of this policy, employees are persons who perform services for or on behalf of the Department and whose duties and assignments are directly controlled by the Department, to include Reserve Police Officers and Volunteers.

**Family Member(s):** Spouses, children, step-children, parents, grandparents, siblings, siblings' in-law, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, legal guardians and individuals with common biological children.

**Fraternization:** A relationship that falls outside of normal work-related interactions and communications.

**Household Member(s):** Any person who is dependent upon, or resides with the employee, and can include a family member.

**Intimate Partner(s):** Any persons with whom an employee has an intimate relationship.

**Romantic or intimate relationship:** A relationship where both parties are willing participants, including, but not limited to, individuals who are dating, cohabitating, or are domestic partners, or one with whom an employee is sharing or has shared an intimate or sexual relationship, residence, or finances within the preceding twelve (12) months. All of these terms are intended to be interpreted broadly.

**Recruit employee:** A newly hired employee who is in training and has not finished their probationary employment period as specified in G.O. 32.2.1 and the SPA collective bargaining agreement.

**Subordinate(s):** Any employee, sworn or non-sworn, who is subject to the supervisory authority of any other employee, regardless of the individual assignments of the employees.

**Supervisor(s):** Anyone who oversees, directs, or evaluates the work of others, including, but not limited to directors, managers, supervisors, chiefs, captains, lieutenants, and sergeants.

## POLICY

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#### DEPARTMENT ASSIGNMENTS

The Department will not knowingly assign employees who are family members, household members, or intimate partners to positions:

1. Where one employee will directly supervise, evaluate, appoint, remove, or discipline the work of the other, or;

2. Where circumstances exist which would place employees in situations where a reasonable and prudent person would believe that;

a. The relationship interest could interfere with the performance of the employee's official duties, or

b. Some action by the Department is necessary in order to avoid improper influence or conflicts of interest.

The Department will not knowingly assign former intimate partners to positions when the Department believes conflicts of interest or disruption to the workplace will occur.

## **II SUPERVISOR / SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIPS**

Anyone employed in a supervisory role needs to heed the fact that personal relationships with employees who report to them may be perceived as favoritism, misuse of authority, or potentially sexual harassment.

No person in a supervisory position shall have a romantic or intimate relationship with an employee whom they directly supervise or whose terms or conditions of employment they may influence (examples of terms or conditions of employment include hiring, promoting, terminating, disciplining and compensating).

Fraternization is discouraged with any employee who reports to a supervisor or whose terms and conditions of employment such as pay raises, promotions, and advancement are potentially affected by that supervisor.

Management personnel are expected to set a high standard of professional conduct both at work and in any work related setting outside of the workplace. For this reason, management personnel are prohibited from social interaction with subordinates that is or might be perceived as inappropriate (for example, unwanted flirting, touching or other behavior that may be regarded as sexual harassment).

Relationships between supervisors and subordinate employees must not diminish the Department's integrity or its organizational structure; therefore, the following shall apply;

Supervisors/Command officers are strictly prohibited from entering into a romantic relationship with a subordinate member of the Department.

## **III TRAINER / RECRUIT RELATIONSHIPS**

Field training officers and Department training instructors (Firearms, Use of Force, EVOC, etc.) are prohibited from entering into a romantic relationship with any recruit employee.

Field Training officers are prohibited from entering into a trainer/subordinate relationship with a family or household member.

#### **IV DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS**

All employees engaged in a romantic or intimate relationship with another City employee are required to immediately notify their direct supervisor or the Chief of Police.

#### **V REMEDATION**

Refer to the City of Springfield Administrative Regulation on Workplace Relationships (Policy#03-07.11) for details regarding Remediation.

#### **VI PROHIBITIONS & LIMITATIONS**

While normal interaction between employees in the workplace may involve reasonable discussion of social contacts and activity outside of employment hours, the guiding rule is that personal relationships shall be pursued on personal time with personal resources.

Employees are expected to set a high standard of professional conduct both at work and in any work related setting outside of the workplace. For this reason, employees must treat others with respect and refrain from behavior such as unwanted flirting, touching or other behavior that may be regarded as sexual harassment.

Physical intimacies in Department buildings, facilities, work spaces and vehicles are prohibited.

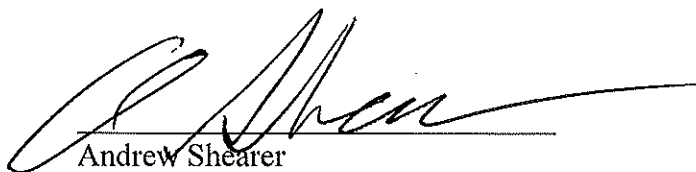
Physical intimacies during working hours are prohibited.

#### **VII PRIOR EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS**

A supervisor who has had a previous romantic or intimate relationship with a subordinate or employee whose terms and conditions of employment they may continue to influence will not be involved in decisions relating to that individual's promotions, raises, termination or other terms and conditions of employment.

**VIII  
NON-RETALIATION**

Employees are prohibited from engaging in retaliatory conduct against individuals who report concerns about consensual relationships or otherwise seek to comply with this policy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Shearer', is written over a horizontal line.

Andrew Shearer  
Chief of Police