

ORONO POLICE DEPARTMENT

SOCIALLY RESPONSIVE POLICING STATEMENT

Socially responsive policing is a self-regulated management model intended to help a police department be more socially accountable to the public, itself, and other stakeholders. Socially responsive policing ensures that the policies and procedures adopted by police departments reflect the desires of the community while still providing effective police services. Through the practice of socially responsive policing, the Orono Police Department maintains awareness of community desires and the impact they have on all aspects of society, including social, economic, and cultural. Orono Police Department is committed to the following tenets:

Understand the community

Orono Police Department will provide services aligned with the community's priorities. In order to understand those priorities, the police department is formalizing its department-wide community policing approach. Our goal is to have a more structured and available avenue for non-emergent communications about issues that may not require a patrol officer. Additionally, we will host annual community meetings to discuss police activities and receive in-person feedback from the community.

We desire to collaborate with the community to help ensure the safety and security of all its residents and visitors in a respectful and dignified manner.

Practice a guardian mindset

By practicing a guardian mindset, police officers are geared toward activities that place service first. This mindset emphasizes relationship building, information sharing, and the use of soft skills to accomplish goals whenever possible.

Prioritize de-escalation techniques

Orono Police Department is committed to producing outcomes that minimize harm whenever possible. To achieve this, Orono police officers are required to decrease the intensity of a situation using non-violent techniques. By taking the time to drain the emotional bubble, officers can improve communication, reduce the need for force, and improve decision-making. Prioritizing de-escalation also enables the officer to better identify those people who may be experiencing a psychological crisis. In turn, the individual can be better managed based on their needs.

Commitment to use the minimal amount of force

The Orono Police Department recognizes and respects the value of each person that its officers encounter. Using force is not a desirable option, and officers are required to allow an individual a reasonable amount of time to submit to arrest before force is applied. Regrettably, not every interaction with an individual can be managed through talking or de-escalation techniques. When those circumstances arise, officers must follow the established Situational Use of Force policy adopted by the department. This policy requires that officers use the minimal amount of force necessary to gain compliance from an individual.

While the application of force generally follows a continuum, there are allowances made for times when an officer must employ lethal force to protect their life or the life of another. These occurrences are infrequent but warrant mentioning because there is always a possibility that the use of force will need to be elevated to meet the threat.

Duty to intervene

Orono police officers are required by internal policy and trained on how to intervene when they witness another officer employing what they believe to be an unreasonable or unnecessary use of force. Protecting the safety and rights of those involved is a priority for the department.

Duty to report

Officers in the Orono Police Department are required to report any use of force necessary to gain an individual's compliance. Use of force may include using a protective hold, drawing a Taser, likewise, when an officer intervenes in other officers' actions, they must also report the occurrence. All reports are reviewed by the Captain of Police and escalated up the chain of command and potentially to the Maine Attorney General's Office, depending on the circumstances. Respect and organizational integrity are of the utmost importance to us. We strive to identify officers who do not fit our culture and maintain public trust by examining these occurrences and taking corrective action when necessary.

Commitment to restorative justice

While we believe there is value in the restorative justice process and encourage its use, we are limited in our ability to implement it. Law enforcement is only a gateway into the criminal legal system. The District Attorney's Office or other regulatory agency performs the application of restorative justice, mediation, or other techniques. We will continue to support and facilitate programs that encourage reformation over incarceration when appropriate.