

Introduction

The recent events in Minneapolis involving the tragic death of George Floyd have reignited concerns about relationships between the police and communities nationwide. As your police chief, I want to assure our community, the Astoria Police Department does not train or condone the use of the techniques I observed Minneapolis police officers use during this horrific incident which led to his death. I've since received questions about our training, use of force, use of body cameras and a few other topics. I think it's reasonable for people to have questions in light of the tragic George Floyd incident. I've prepared this document to provide additional insight and information into our profession.

Agency Core Values

The Astoria Police Department's core values are: Service, Respect, Accountability, Excellence, Collaboration and Learning.

Hiring

The hiring of a prospective police officer is an extensive and exhaustive process to find the right person to be successful in this career. The efforts to ensure that those who wear a badge and enforce the law in Oregon remain above reproach begin before an individual is hired. Individuals must also meet State Board-established minimum age, education, physical and moral fitness standards prior to being employed as a law enforcement officer. The process starts with a written industry-standard test looking for ability in reading, writing, comprehension, recall and other important skills. Successful applicants move to an oral board process where they answer hypothetical scenario questions, questions related to their interest in the career (versus looking simply for a job) and questions to measure their integrity and ethics. The panel generally consists of two police officers, a civilian police employee and a member of the community. Applicants successful in the above two phases will be ranked and then move into a very comprehensive background investigation. The applicant will complete a 28-pages Personal History Questionnaire to include references, prior agencies applied for, prior employment, education, military experience, legal (criminal & civil) and driving record. The background investigator then conducts interviews of family, friends, neighbors, current and former employers and other references. An applicant successful in the background process will move to the psychological test phase which includes a battery of written assessments and a meeting with a psychologist. Lastly, the successful candidate will undergo a medical and drug screening. It is not unusual to lose applicants at every phase in the process. Historically, only a few candidates out of a hundred are successful in the process. Once an officer is hired and who meet required standards and successfully complete the required training are certified by the DPSST.

Decertification

In Oregon, we have a very robust decertification/revocation process that results in a low tolerance for violations of public trust/ethics. This is another system that holds law enforcement officers accountable. That certification allows an officer to be employed by a law enforcement agency in the state and that certification is held in high regard. DPSST manages all decertifications, licensing and training for the wide range of public safety professions (i.e., police, fire, telecommunicators, and corrections). When DPSST becomes aware of an incident of misconduct, they will decertify certain egregious conduct automatically. Other conduct will be reviewed by a policy review board (BPSST) who makes a decertification decision. It is not uncommon for the BPSST to initiate certification revocation proceedings against officers who are no longer employed as officers to ensure they are not hired in another agency. In a review of decertifications over a five-year period from 2009-13, BPSST decertified a total of 203 police officers (out of about 5500 police officers who are certified in the state or roughly 4%). I do not have more current data at this time.

Training

Initial Academy training - In Oregon, all officers attend a core academy and only one entity provides this training. The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Academy (DPSST) is the only authorized training facility in the State. This allows for consistent training throughout the state.

A newly hired officer attends the full-time Academy in Salem for a period of 16 weeks. The curriculum is comprehensive and includes, at a minimum, the following topics:

- Communication - 10 hours
- Community Competency - 6 hours
- Community Crime Prevention - 2 hours
- Community Policing - 6 hours
- Effective Interactions - Deaf/Hard of Hearing Community - 2 hours
- Emotional Intelligence - 7 hours
- Ethics - 8 hours
- Implicit Bias - 6 hours
- Legitimacy and Procedural Justice - 4 hours
- Problem Solving - 1.5 hours
- Problem-Oriented Policing - 2 hours
- Behavioral Health - Awareness - 8 hours
- Behavioral Health - Legal Considerations - 2 hours
- Behavioral Health - De-escalation - 4 hours
- Behavioral Health - Veterans Awareness - 4 hours

Behavioral Health - Scenarios
 Domestic Violence - 12 hours
 Supporting Victims of Crime - 1 hour
 Use of Force - Law - 4 hours
 Use of Force - Decision Making and Report Writing - 18 hours
 Use of Force/Decision Making Scenarios
 Firearms - 60 hours
 Tactical Emergency Casualty Care - 2 hours
 Behavioral Health Scenarios - 8 hours
 Domestic Violence Scenarios - 4 hours
 Use of Force/Decision Making Scenarios

Once the recruit graduates from the Academy, they are placed in the Field Training Program at their respective agency. Our officers spend three to four months in this phase. They are placed with different officers during this phase which includes the signing off of hundreds of performance objectives to ensure they have the required knowledge to perform on their own.

The initial training doesn't stop after they are out on their own. All training is documented and tracked by DPSST and Astoria PD. DPSST requires a certain amount of training in certain categories for an officer to remain certified. There is also required ongoing training in certain perishable skills areas such as use of force, first aid, firearms, etc. In addition to the required training, Astoria PD provides additional in-house training and provides off site training opportunities above and beyond the required training. A review of training records reveals the following information:

- We have seventeen sworn Police Officers in Astoria
- Combined years of service is 242 years.
- Total training hours for all current officers amount to 27,909.
- Average hours of training per year for each officer is 115
- Six of the most senior officers have the equivalent of over a year of training if they trained full time.

Ongoing training topics include the following areas:

BIAS	Counter Bias Training
	Implicit Bias Deadly Force Decision Making
FIRST AID	First Aid/CPR
	Narcan/Naloxone
DE ESCALATION	Confrontational Simulation

	De Confliction
	De Escalation
SPECIAL NEEDS	Identifying and Dealing with Autism
	Communicating with the Deaf
	Mental Health
	Effective Contacts with Mentally Ill
	Suicide Intervention
QUALIFICATIONS	Qualifications FOR OC Spray, AR15, Baton, Taser, Rifle, Pistol and Less Lethal
ETHICS	Ethical Use of Handcuffs
	Ethical Use of Taser
	Ethics in Policing
POLICING	Police Legitimacy
USE OF FORCE	Use of Force

In-Car Cameras

Around 20 years ago the Astoria Police Department purchased in-car video cameras. These were permanently mounted in the car and recorded audio and video. These cameras are automatically activated when the police car's overhead emergency lights are activated or activated manually by the officer. These cameras are effective in capturing the activity from the front of the police vehicle but were limited when the officer was away from his or her vehicle. As technology rapidly improved over the years and we saw an increase in high-profile police incidents, body mounted cameras became popular.

Body Cameras

In 2015 the Astoria City Council saw the need to outfit officers with body cameras and approved the expenditure to purchase body cameras for every officer and upgrade the in-car cameras to integrate the two technologies. The body cameras have allowed the police department to capture incidents in video and audio in places where the cars could not go. The body cameras are welcomed by the officers as many times they have shown that the officer has acted appropriately when accused of an improper action. The cameras have been effective in the prosecution in criminal cases as well. Department policy requires the cameras to be activated in most enforcement situations. Most important is that having the officers wear body cameras increases the public trust, transparency and legitimacy.

Police Department Policy

The Astoria Police Department subscribes to Lexipol which is a provider of law enforcement policy to thousands of law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

These policies are based on state and federal law, court decisions and best practices. They are regularly reviewed and updated so that we are always in compliance with current laws.

Policy Related to Use of Force

Astoria Police department policy requires that use of force by members of this department other than mere presence, directional control, escort holds or commands, shall be documented promptly, completely and accurately. Officers shall articulate the factors perceived and why he/she believed the use of force was reasonable under the circumstances. Every use of force is reviewed by the command staff team for policy compliance, training needs, resource allocation, analysis and related purposes.

Astoria Police policy requires that any officer present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force. An Officer who observes another employee's use of force that exceeds the degree of force permitted by law should promptly report these observations to a supervisor.

Statistical Transparency of Policing (STOP)

The STOP program was mandated by the state legislature in 2017 requiring that by 2021 all Oregon law enforcement agencies must submit data regarding officer-initiated traffic and pedestrian stops to the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission. The Commission will then analyze the data for evidence of racial or ethnic disparities on an annual basis. The STOP program's implementation was to be phased in based upon agency size. Astoria has been providing this reporting since 2019, though the requirement does not go into effect for our agency until July 1, 2020. Astoria Police Department began collecting racial profiling data in 2009, recognizing the collection of this information as important for agency transparency.