

	<b>GENERAL ORDER</b> <b>Effective: 02-28-2022</b>	<b># 02-01</b>
	<b>Section:</b> <b>Conduct &amp; Appearance</b>	<b>Replaces or Modifies:</b> <b>G. O. 02-01</b>
	<b>Title:</b> <b>Core Standards of Conduct</b>  <b>Issued by:</b> <b>Chief Deputy Mattie Provost</b>	

**I. Purpose:**

To establish the core expectations of conduct for all Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office (FBCSO) employees.

**II. Policy Statement:**

All employees will conduct themselves in a professional manner worthy of the trust placed in them by the public they serve. To aid employees in this mission these core standards of conduct are enacted and each employee is expected to adhere to these standards.

**III. Definitions:**

Core Expectations- The most essential and necessary expectations

**IV. Details and Procedure:**

A. Employees are subject to disciplinary action concerning the following behaviors (the title of the inappropriate action is followed by the description detailing the expectations of appropriate action and/or examples of inappropriate action):

1. Violating FBCSO Code of Ethics - Employees shall follow the Code of Ethics at all times. See GO #01-02 for details.
2. Violation of Law - Employees shall not violate the Laws of the State of Texas or its political subdivisions. Employees shall not violate Federal Laws. If any employee becomes a suspect in a criminal action, is arrested or charged with a criminal offense, becomes aware that a warrant or capias has been issued for the employee's arrest, and the offense is not for a Class C Misdemeanor non alcohol related traffic offense - the employee shall immediately report this to supervisory personnel for reporting through the chain of command to the Chief Deputy. If the offense is a Class C Misdemeanor non alcohol related traffic offense, the employee shall report this to supervisory personnel and this shall be reported through the chain of command to Division Commander (further reporting will be at the discretion of the Division Commander).
3. Failure to follow Policy - Employees shall follow the policies enacted by the FBCSO -this term includes General Orders (inclusive of Special Orders), Bureau Manuals, and Divisional SOPs. See GO #01-01 for details on the Policy System.
4. Inappropriate Use of Force or Authority - Employees shall only use the degree of force that is

necessary to accomplish their legitimate duties in compliance with the law and the policies of the FBCSO. Employees shall not use the authority of their position to improperly influence anyone in order to obtain personal gain of any type or avoid the consequences of illegal activity. Employees shall not use the authority of their position to improperly influence any criminal or civil action, proceeding, or investigation.

5. Neglect or Inattention to Duty - Employees shall perform all duties required by law, policy, or direction from superiors for their particular position and shall execute these duties within the framework of the policies of the FBCSO and direction of supervisory personnel. Employees are to respond to and take appropriate action for all requests for service in a timely manner. Employees are to be alert and ready to take appropriate action at all times when on duty. Employees will remain in their duty assignment and area in accordance with instructions given by supervisory personnel. Employees will not abuse break times when/if allocated during a tour of duty and those working in field assignments will not spend excessive time in places when or where they are not actively engaged in their assigned duties except as authorized by supervisory personnel. Employees shall not sleep while on duty unless it is an action approved by supervisory personnel in the furtherance of a legitimate agency need. Employees shall exercise diligence, proper demeanor, intelligence, and interest in the performance of their duties. Employees are expected to perform their assigned duties on their own initiative and employees who show a pattern of needing supervisory reminders to perform their assigned duties are demonstrating Neglect or Inattention to Duty. Employees who are Peace Officers carry the expectation to preserve the peace at all times whether on or off duty, failure to appropriately act in situations reasonably seen to require police action whether on or off duty is a violation of this standard.
6. Failure to Report for Duty - Employees shall report for duty on time and at the appropriate place. Reporting for duty late or in the wrong place is a failure to report for duty. Being absent from work without first having supervisory approval of leave time is a failure to report for duty. An employee who is absent and fails to call in for 3 successive days to report the absence will be considered to have voluntarily terminated employment. It is not a violation if an employee is able to show that the reason for being late or absent was reasonably unavoidable, is not a pattern of such activity on the part of the employee, the circumstances were not caused by the employee's own carelessness or lack of foresight, and the employee notified supervisory personnel as soon as possible. Failure to report for assigned training is a violation of this standard in the same manner as failing to report for duty. During times of emergency, employees may be called to duty without prior notice - failure to timely report in these situations is a violation of this standard.
7. Insubordination - Employees shall accept the authority of supervisory personnel in a respectful manner. Actions such as abusive language or displaying hostility towards any supervisor or public ridicule or criticism of any supervisor (including instructions or orders given) are insubordination. See GO #03-01 for further details on the supervisor- employee relationship. Public ridicule or criticism of the FBCSO Administration or its decisions is also insubordination. Public in this section includes but is not limited to social networks such as Facebook, blogs, and twitter. The appropriate way to address concerns with supervision and administrative practices is through the grievance processes that are in place to provide employees an avenue for legitimate redress of inappropriate actions.
8. Disobeying a Lawful Order - Employees shall follow all lawful orders issued by a superior. See GO #03-01 for further details on the supervisor-employee relationship.

9. Dishonesty - Employees shall be truthful at all times and any dishonesty due to action or omission on the part of an employee is prohibited. Actions of this nature include but are not limited to falsifying any report, perjury, lying, fabricating evidence, knowingly withholding evidence, or not reporting actions of this nature concerning other employees to appropriate supervisory personnel. It is not dishonesty if the action involves legitimate investigatory techniques that do not otherwise violate policy or law.
10. Failure to Properly Care for Entrusted Property - Employees shall provide appropriate care for any property entrusted to them in compliance with FBCSO Policies. Property categories include but are not limited to items owned by Fort Bend County; items in custody of FBCSO (including but not limited to evidence); money; animals; real property; and personal belongings of persons under care, custody, or control of the FBCSO. Property destroyed, damaged, or lost as the result of negligence or carelessness on the part of an employee; any misappropriation of property for personal use; failure to return County owned property upon request by a supervisor; and failure to follow policies on the handling of money collected in the course of FBCSO business are violations of this standard. Any damage, destruction, or loss of property by an employee will be reported by the employee to supervisory personnel so that a determination may be made concerning culpability under this standard and specific policies dealing with the care of property - failure to report damage is a violation of this standard.
11. Incompetence - Employees shall obtain, maintain, and exhibit sufficient job knowledge to properly perform their duties and exercise their job responsibilities. Employees shall obtain, maintain, and exhibit a good working knowledge of FBCSO Policies and laws that pertain to their duty assignments. Failure to successfully complete training required for a position or duty assignment may be considered a form of incompetence.
12. Unfit for Duty - Employees shall maintain their physical and mental condition to the degree necessary to perform any duty or assignment that may be normally expected or required. Upon presentation of facts supporting a belief that an employee is unfit for duty, the Chief Deputy may order a physical and/or mental examination to verify that the employee is fit for duty.
13. Cowardice - Employees who are Peace Officers or Correctional Officers shall not display cowardice or fail to perform a duty due to cowardice. Cowardice is defined as a lack of courage in facing danger, pain, or difficulty.
14. Unprofessional Conduct - Employees shall conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. It is understood that employees will be put into situations that are stressful and demanding and at times will deal with irate and even irrational individuals, being professional yet resolute in handling these situations is imperative and nothing in this standard is meant to prohibit an employee from using reasonable strategies to deal with difficult situations and/or individuals. Some examples of unprofessional conduct may include but are not limited to abusive language, profane language, unwarranted threats of action, violating policies on dress and appearance, using their official position to solicit favors, entering into debts that the employee should reasonably realize are beyond his/her ability to honor, not paying legitimate debts when the employee has the means to make payment, failing to provide appropriate financial support to dependents when the employee has the means to provide this support, and other actions that may be reasonably seen to have the potential to bring discredit to or harm the public image of the FBCSO or another employee of the FBCSO. The standard applies to interactions with all (public, coworkers

and other agencies, etc ... ).

15. Misuse of Information - Employees shall treat information collected, used, and/or maintained (no matter the format) as confidential and for official use only in accordance with law and FBCSO Policies on release / maintenance of information as further regulated by the Texas Public Information Act. Employees shall not use confidential information they obtain as a result of their position within the FBCSO to garner private gain of any type, in a manner that hinders any ongoing investigation or operation of the FBCSO (or other Law Enforcement Agency), or in violation of any law or policy concerning confidential information. Confidential information categories include but are not limited to information on active criminal investigations, information obtained from State or Federal databases, and information on law enforcement tactics dealing with certain emergency tactical response procedures. Nothing in this standard is intended to prevent legitimate release of public information in accordance with law and FBCSO policy. In cases where there is dispute concerning release of information to the public the matter shall be referred through the chain of command to the Chief Deputy for resolution.
16. Inappropriate Relationship - Employees are prohibited from certain relationship activities due to the negative impact potential on public safety and integrity of FBCSO operations. Employees shall not fraternize with, engage the services of, accept service from, or do favors for any person in the custody of the FBCSO (this prohibition also applies to family members of the person in custody and to persons being used as confidential informants). Employees who have or enter into a personal relationship with a person who is or becomes a suspect or victim in a criminal investigation will refrain from being directly involved in the investigation without specific supervisory approval and in all such cases will report any conflict to supervisory personnel. Employees shall not fraternize with known felons, gang members, or any other persons engaged in ongoing criminal activity (if an employee's relative fits this category, the employee shall report this immediately to supervisory personnel and while it is understood that there may be some interaction in these cases it is the employee's duty to insure that this relationship does not hinder the law enforcement or public integrity expectations of the FBCSO). Employees shall not act as an agent for or while performing their duties make recommendation of attorneys, bonding companies, or wrecker companies.
17. Unauthorized Statements - Employees shall not represent themselves as a spokesperson for the FBCSO or make public statements on behalf of the FBCSO unless authorized by FBCSO Policy. Public statements include those made in public gatherings; or for distribution via radio, television, or print media. Further, employees shall not use an official letterhead or similar instrument to convey messages except in accordance with legitimate FBCSO business needs and with the appropriate level of authorization either through existing policy or supervisory approval.
18. Failure to Provide Identification - Upon request by any person an employee (whether on or off duty) shall identify himself / herself as an employee of the FBCSO and show official FBCSO Identification. Further, upon request by any person an employee will provide the name of his / her supervisor. This standard does not apply in emergency situations that do not immediately allow for such identification (when the emergency situation no longer exists identification will be shown if request is made), in situations where the employee is working in an undercover capacity, and in circumstances when doing so would have an adverse impact on a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

19. Inappropriate Involvement in Personal Disputes - Employees should avoid involvement in personal controversies or neighborhood quarrels while off-duty. Employees should not take any police action unless the appropriate law enforcement agency is not immediately available or a situation requires immediate police action to protect life or property. Employees taking police action shall report said actions to a supervisor in a timely manner.
20. Violation of Drug and Alcohol Policy - An employee violating the FBCSO policy on drugs and alcohol (see GO #03-04) is subject to disciplinary action.
21. Unauthorized Social Networking Practices - Employees are prohibited from posting, transmitting, and/or disseminating the employee's official title; any report, photograph, video, or audio recording that is related to incidents investigated by or involving the FBCSO; a likeness or image of logos or emblems of the FBCSO; or badges, uniforms or other material that specifically identifies the FBCSO on any webpage, social networking or commercial site without authorization of the Sheriff or Chief Deputy. In addition a violation of any other specific General Order on Social Media / Networking is a violation of this Core Standard of Conduct.
22. Inappropriate Communication Practices - To assure a reasonable expectation of privacy concerning casual, business, and personal conversations - FBCSO employees will not audio or video record another FBCSO employee without the recorded employee's knowledge and consent. This prohibition does not apply to situations where the recording is in compliance with another policy that authorizes the recording or when the recording is part of an action authorized by the Chief Deputy or Sheriff due to an ongoing investigation of possible employee misconduct. Nothing in this section is to be interpreted to prohibit recordings by security cameras placed in County buildings / property. Nothing in this section is to be interpreted to allow recordings otherwise prohibited by policy or law.
23. Sound Judgement- Employees are expected to exercise sound judgement at all times. Employee's behavior shall be limited to conduct that is reasonable and prudent. No employee shall commit any act on or off duty in an official or private capacity that may bring reproach, discredit, or embarrassment to the Sheriff's Office.