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Chapter 42 - IFPO - CPO

Ethics and Professionalism

Purpose

Ethical and professional conduct by protection officers is necessary for all concerned; the officer, the organization they represent, and the public that they protect.

Officers who wish to have long and fulfilling careers need to develop an ethical approach; they must be ethical and perform in a professional manner at all times.

Ethics and Professionalism: Trends

- ▶ A steady increase in the number of security personnel, particularly in the contract service sector.
- ▶ Increased contact with the public.
- ▶ Gradual, assumption of duties formerly performed by public entities, such as maintaining order at special events, transporting prisoners, and responding to alarms (due to privatization).
- ▶ Within organizations impacted by serious ethical scandals, there are legal costs, increased personnel turnover, and lowered efficiency by a demoralized workforce.
- ▶ Protection officers must have the decision making skills and professional knowledge to make the right choices in stressful or uncertain situations.
 - ▶ **Command Presence:** A protection officer must learn to respond in a timely and professional manner.
 - ▶ **Communicating with Angry People:** Requires patience, good “read” skills, a proper tone of voice and verbal cues.
 - ▶ **Communication:** Listening is a skill required of all protection officers.
 - ▶ **Dealing with Mentally Challenged Persons:** The professional must be protective, take control of the situation, and keep an understanding demeanor as they call for additional help.
 - ▶ **Defusing Conflict and Crisis:** The protection officer must immediately engage and ask questions to clarify the situation, resolving a potentially violent or dangerous situation before escalation.
 - ▶ **Tactical Communications:** Protection officers must make radio calls, cell phone calls, and send text messages. These must always be professional in nature.
 - ▶ **Public Relations:** A protection officer is always dealing with the public, whether manning the front entrance of a building, walking on the premises, patrolling the parking lot, or answering phone calls for assistance. Professionalism in these situations is paramount.

Key Terms and Concepts

► Ethics:

- The study of the branch of philosophy involving systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct within a profession.
- Ethics deal with the examination of moral philosophy, combined with the duties and obligations within a certain profession.
- Ethical behavior leads to ethical decision-making.
- **IFPO Code of Ethics:** The protection officer shall:
 1. Respond to an employer's professional needs
 2. Exhibit exemplary conduct
 3. Protect confidential information
 4. Maintain a safe and secure workplace
 5. Dress to create professionalism
 6. Enforce all lawful rules and regulations
 7. Encourage liaison with public officers
 8. Develop good rapport within the profession
 9. Strive to attain professional competence
 10. Encourage high standards of officer ethics

Key Terms and Concepts

- ▶ **Loyalty:**

- ▶ The officer must be loyal to the employer, the client, and the public.

- ▶ **Exemplary Conduct:**

- ▶ Maturity and professionalism are the key words to guide all officers.

- ▶ **Confidentiality:**

- ▶ The officer will likely encounter confidential information which must be carefully guarded and never compromised.

- ▶ **Safety and Security:**

- ▶ The officer must fully understand all necessary procedures to identify, mitigate, or eliminate security and safety risks.

- ▶ **Department:**

- ▶ Each officer must dress in an immaculate manner. Crisp, sharp, clean, and polished will convey professionalism and competency to the public.

- ▶ **Law Enforcement Liaison:**

- ▶ It is the responsibility of each officer to make every effort to encourage and enhance positive relations with members of public law enforcement.

Key Terms and Concepts

▶ **Strive to Learn:**

- ▶ To become professionally competent, each officer must constantly strive to be knowledgeable about his or her chosen career.

▶ **Develop Rapport:**

- ▶ Officers can enhance their image by reaching out and building relationships with peers and security leaders throughout the industry.

▶ **Honesty:**

- ▶ By virtue of the duties and responsibilities of all officers, honest behavior and acting with utmost integrity are absolutely essential at all times.

▶ **Prejudice:**

- ▶ All persons must be treated equally, with dignity and respect, regardless of color, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or political beliefs.

▶ **Self-Discipline:**

- ▶ With the position of trust comes the responsibility to diligently protect life and property. Self-discipline means trying harder and caring more.

Key Terms and Concepts

▶ **Duty:**

- ▶ A task or action one is required to perform as part of a job or a professional obligation. Duties may be established by statute, custom, policy and procedures, or your contract.

▶ **A Professional:**

- ▶ One who practices a profession; one who has special knowledge and skill that results from advanced training and education.

▶ **Manners:**

- ▶ An accepted means of conducting oneself in public (i.e., politeness). They consist of consideration and respect for others.

A Professional

- ▶ A true professional has the following skills and traits:
 - ▶ Training for required tasks and duties.
 - ▶ Experience within the profession, whether an apprenticeship, internship or on-the-job proficiency.
 - ▶ Professional education.
 - ▶ Collegiality with coworkers. This includes being mutually respectful, aiding and assisting, and never demeaning colleagues.
 - ▶ A commitment to the profession, marked by continuously striving for excellence.

Manners

- ▶ Allow others to speak and express their views; do not interrupt, but listen. Not only does this reflect good manners, but it is an effective interviewing tool. The truly professional protection officer makes every conversation an interview.
- ▶ Be respectful of the input of others. Compliment rather than criticize.
- ▶ Praise others when appropriate. Be genuine in doing so.
- ▶ Stand to greet people entering the room as a sign of respect and consideration, as well as an opportunity to create a personal bond.

Sound Judgement

- ▶ Basic decision-making involves problem solving, using the following steps:
 1. Identify and define the problem.
 2. Determine if a decision is urgent or can wait.
 3. Research various options and available solutions. Professional knowledge of law, technology, and the organizational structure/chain of command is important to generate a solution set from which to choose.
 4. Select an option or course of action.
 5. Implement.
 6. Report your decision. Evaluate the outcome and document.

Ethical Decision Making

- ▶ Once the problem has been identified, the ethical dilemma can be managed by use of the PORT acronym:
 - ▶ P: **Problem**: Define and describe.
 - ▶ O: **Options**: What are they? Be sure to list them.
 - ▶ R: **Responsibility**: To employers, family, the public, the profession.
 - ▶ T: **Time**: Consider the test of time: “How will I feel about my decision in 10 years?”

Unethical Behavior

- ▶ Unfortunately, ethical lapses occur in the protection industry. Some common causes of ethical lapses are:
 - ▶ **Character flaws:** Protection officers—or any other person in a position of trust—must possess good character.
 - ▶ **Taking the “path of least resistance”:** Unfortunately, doing what is easy does not always solve the problem.
 - ▶ **Conflict with full-time and part-time employment.:** The practice of moonlighting, with its inherent division of loyalties between the full-time and part-time employers, can create a breeding ground for unethical conduct.
 - ▶ **Fatigue:** People often make the wrong choices simply because they are tired.
 - ▶ **Resistance to change:** Resistance to change is the action taken by individuals and groups when they perceive that a change is a threat to them. Resistance to change can be viewed as unprofessional or even unethical if it leads to a hostile work environment or retaliatory behaviors

Values and Ethics

- ▶ "**Value**" is the term given to those ideas, behaviors, and actions that are important to us.
- ▶ Our values strongly influence decision-making and help determine where we place our emphasis in our personal and professional lives. Values form the basis for our understanding of ethics.
- ▶ Within society, we have personal values and societal values. Personal values are unique to the individual.
- ▶ Ethical principles are premised on the notion that right is always right and wrong is always wrong.
- ▶ Adherence to high ethical standards is as vital to achieving the overall goal of modern policing or security work as any other tactic, technique, or practice.
- ▶ An ethical culture starts at the top, with ethical leaders.
- ▶ Creating an environment of safe reporting, where officers can come forward with possible derogatory information regarding peers or supervisors, is paramount.
- ▶ Ethics of care means being concerned with the welfare of others: having empathy, understanding the other's feelings, and understanding how they view a situation.
- ▶ As protection officers gain experience and wisdom on the job, handling a variety of situations and people, they will become more sensitive to their ethical obligations.