



CITY OF WEST ST. PAUL
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POLICING IN WEST ST. PAUL: USE OF FORCE AND DUTY TO INTERCEDE

The tragic death of George Floyd has impacted cities across Minnesota, the country and people across the globe. The City of West St. Paul and the West St. Paul Police Department share many of the same emotions that have run through the minds of the public over the last few weeks. The most significant being shock, sadness, and anger. While some of us can't claim to share the same fears or fully understand the struggles that many of our community members go through on a daily basis, what we can do is listen, acknowledge that a gap in experiences and implicit bias exists, and do everything we can to close that gap and strengthen our relationship with the community through conversation, transparency, atmosphere, training, and policy.

Like many law enforcement agencies, we have received hundreds of inquiries from the public to explain our policies and training that would prevent a tragedy like this from occurring in West St. Paul. We can assume that if hundreds have reached out, thousands are wondering. As such, we wanted to answer a few of the most common questions publicly.

Would a West St. Paul officer stand by while a colleague used excessive force?

The West St. Paul Police Department has a *Duty To Intercede* clause in our Use of Force Policy. This clearly states if an officer sees another officer using excessive force, they have a duty to step in and stop the excessive force. This is not the option to step in if they want, they have a duty to do so. Here is our department's *Duty to Intercede* clause.

300.2.1 DUTY TO INTERCEDE

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 use force that exceeds the degree of force permitted by law should promptly report these observations to a supervisor.

Who wrote West St. Paul's Use of Force Policy? Can the public see it?

The West St. Paul's Use of Force Policy is continually tweaked and improved as new best practices come to light by many people including the Police Chief, City Attorney and a third party risk management organization that helps ensure the policy meets all state and federal standards including those of the Department of Justice and MN POST Board. Our policy is available online at www.wspmn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3698/WSPPD_Use_of_Force_Policy

How are West St. Paul officers trained to safely interact with the public and/or suspects?

The West St. Paul Police Department takes pride in being on the forefront of law enforcement training. Every single West St. Paul officer is required to attend the following comprehensive training classes on an annual basis: Implicit Bias, Persuasion and De-escalation, In-person scenario based Use of Force and De-escalation Techniques, Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy, Intro to Mental Health, Mental Health Assessments, Mental Health Intervention, Mental Health Capstone, Serving those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Use of Deadly Force, Use of Force - Legal Issues, Readiness Aspects of Use of Force, Duty to Protect, Policing Protests, Ethics and Professional Conduct

This is by no means a complete list. Many of our officers go far above and beyond these required classes in order to continually become better officers and learn new techniques and best practices.

As we move forward we'll continue to improve our policies and make changes to create an atmosphere of inclusivity, and compassion from the top down. Thank you all for your inquiries and conversations over the last few weeks. These calls and emails help us understand the public's perception of our department and their expectations from our officers. Should you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out. We do our best to answer every question we can in a timely manner.

Respectfully,

Brian Sturgeon
Police Chief

Dave Napier
Mayor

Ryan Schroeder
City Manager