



## The Policing Objectives of the Upper Merion Township Police Department

*The Upper Merion Township Police Department is committed to the following objectives that will allow us to remain a premier law enforcement agency in the region. We will strive to keep crime rates down while continuing to build the public's trust. Ultimately we are committed to keeping our residents and visitors safe while achieving and maintaining a superior quality of life within our community.*

- Problem Solving and Accountability
- Professionalism of Policing
- Building Trust and Legitimacy
- Critical Incident Preparedness
- Community Communications

### Objectives

#### 1. Problem Solving and Accountability

The Upper Merion Township Police Department will employ a problem solving and accountability method to identify and target problems that contribute to crime, disorder and/or other community issues. Our problem solving and accountability policing method will combine aspects of "hot spot" policing with the diverse approaches of community policing that are required for a community like ours.

In this method, we will hold ourselves accountable at all levels of the Police Department. We will strive to keep crime rates low, reduce incidences of disorder, while also solving community issues. We will work to keep crime rates down by:

- Deploying our resources in a manner to prevent crimes from occurring
- Our Patrol Division will provide a swift, coordinated and professional response to crimes in progress in an effort to apprehend criminals involved in illegal activity
- Our Investigations Division will be assigned follow-up investigations utilizing a priority system based on the seriousness of the incident and the solvability factors. Our detectives will conduct follow-up investigations within legal guidelines, utilizing their exceptional investigative skills, additional resources and their network of regional investigative partners.

## 2. Professionalism of Policing

The Upper Merion Township Police Department will strive to be a professional police department in every way possible. History has shown that policy, training, equipment and supervision are the key components to a professional police department.

- **Policy:** The Upper Merion Township Police Department will develop, implement and adhere to policies that are current, legal, appropriate, and in line with the standards set forth in the PCPA Accreditation Program. Our policies will emphasize the sanctity of human life and will hold our officers to a high standard in every aspect of policing.
- **Training:** The content of all Upper Merion Township Police training will reflect the core values, attributes and skills that we expect our officers to exhibit on a daily basis while serving the community. Officers will be trained to use proper tactics and critical decision making skills to resolve incidents with the lowest level of force needed. A portion of our training will involve scenario-based training to help develop the critical decision making skills of our officers. Our officers will be trained to employ de-escalation tactics, when appropriate, when confronting aggressive subjects who are suffering a mental or emotional crisis. Our officers will have a high level of first responder medical training to initiate life-saving measures whenever possible.
- **Equipment:** Upper Merion Township Police officers will be provided with the necessary medical equipment so they can initiate life-saving measures as their training and department policy dictates.  
All officers will have access to appropriate equipment that will allow them to perform their duties in a professional manner. We will provide our officers with equipment that will offer them a wide range of less-lethal and lethal weapons to address critical incidents in accordance with contemporary and professional policing tactics.
- **Supervision:** Upper Merion Township Police supervisors are expected to act as a team leader to promote the department's mission and objectives as specified by the command staff. They should always remain focused on ensuring that the actions of their officers are maintaining a positive relationship with the community we serve. Upper Merion Township Police supervisors will promote positive actions, identify negative behaviors, and take corrective measures when necessary. Supervisors are expected to respond to all critical incidents and direct the actions of their officers when appropriate. At times, this direction will take place via radio before officers even arrive on scene.

### 3. Building Trust and Legitimacy

Research has shown that people are more likely to obey the law when they believe that those who are enforcing it have the legitimate authority to tell them what to do. The public is more likely to see the authority as legitimate if the police follow the rules of Procedural Justice.

- Treating all people with dignity and respect
- Giving individuals an opportunity to have a voice during police/citizen encounters, when tactically sound to do so
- When the police are fair and transparent when they are making decisions
- When the police have and display trustworthy motives

Research shows that if the police follow these four principles, the community they serve will see them as honest, unbiased, compassionate and lawful. The principles of Procedural Justice not only improve the relationship between the police and the community, but also have been found to reduce violent encounters and reduce injuries suffered by the police. If we are going to achieve procedural justice, we must understand and recognize both the explicit and implicit bias that can derail this process. Explicit bias can be controlled through policy and supervision. Implicit bias can be equally as damaging, but can be harder to deal with. Implicit bias must be addressed through collecting and analyzing data about our criminal arrests, use of force, citizen complaints and traffic enforcement activities. We will take corrective action when needed and conduct appropriate training to increase our awareness of the issues.

### 4. Critical Incident Preparedness

The Upper Merion Township Police Department will work to be prepared for any critical incident that may occur. These incidents can include, but are not limited to, natural disasters, catastrophic events, major crimes or terrorist activity. This preparation will include the funding of appropriate training & equipment, as well as planning sessions & table-top exercises that prepare our staff to respond to these critical incidents. We will also hold “after action” reviews for all significant incidents to learn from past mistakes and be better prepared in the future. These reviews will be open and honest discussions where every employee can speak their mind without fear of reprisal. This level of communication and collaboration is absolutely necessary if we are to improve our preparedness. Our critical incident preparedness will also be enhanced by the relationships we cultivate with local, State and Federal response partners.

## 5. Community Communications

The Upper Merion Township Police Department will strive to maintain a high level of communications with the communities we serve. The greatest means to communicate with our residents occurs during our police & community programs such as:

- Cop Camp
- Citizen Police Forums
- Owning Up Programs (Boys & Girls)
- Cops & Kids
- Cops For Students
- UMPD School Walk-Thru Program

Through the use of social media, we will communicate important events, traffic concerns, crime alerts and general departmental news when appropriate. We will also use these mediums as a way to gain information about the concerns of the community. While our preferred method for reporting complaints will continue to be through our Police Dispatch Center, we will address community concerns that are addressed through social media, email, our anonymous tip line or information reported to and forwarded from other township staff.

## **Conclusion**

The Upper Merion Township Police Department will continually reevaluate its programs, policies and procedures in an effort to serve the community with the most appropriate and modern problem solving techniques. The Upper Merion Township Police Department will continue to be on the cutting edge of police technology through training, communication skills and equipment. Our police department will monitor changes that take place in and around Upper Merion Township and will allocate resources appropriately. The command staff and front line supervisors will monitor call for service reports to help identify changing community dynamics that may need a new or innovative approach.