

Leawood PD Responses to the Johnson County NAACP's Call to Action

1. Public Statement regarding the unjust death of George Floyd.

Mayor Dunn and the Chief Rettig have previously submitted this joint statement on the death of George Floyd to the Shawnee Mission Post.

"Like others, we were saddened and deeply disturbed to see the actions of the now former Minneapolis police officer who kept his knee on the neck of George Floyd. We were also disappointed to see the inaction of the other officers who were present in not coming to Mr. Floyd's aid. We stand firmly behind the decision to terminate the involved officers. One life lost is one too many, and we will learn from this and not allow Mr. Floyd's death to be in vain. As difficult a scene as that was to witness, we would ask our residents to try and not view it as being indicative of the actions of the nearly 700,000 men and women in the United States who have taken an oath to protect the citizens they serve. We support those who engage in peaceful protest, but not those who engage in violence.

The City of Leawood and the Leawood Police Department have long prided ourselves as being professional organizations with an emphasis on fairness, service, dedication and transparency to the public and community we are fortunate to serve. We were among the first metro-agencies to issue body cameras to all of our front line officers five years ago. We did this to ensure the actions of our officers were reviewable and available as needed.

Our police department focuses on productive communication first and foremost in any contact, knowing that it is at the heart of any positive interaction we have at a personal or organizational level. Along with our police department, all of our elected officials and professional staff are firmly committed to inclusivity and to justice for one and all.

As we move forward, we invite anyone with questions about our City and police department to please feel free to contact us. It is only by having an open and honest dialogue that we can learn from each other, discuss concerns and move forward to a brighter future."

2. Public Statement addressing how your agency combats police misconduct within your agency and the type of discipline received.

The Leawood Police Department prioritizes ethical and professional policing from the point an applicant submits their interest to our police department through the duration of their career.

Our agency accepts and investigates any and all complaints including anonymous complaints. To assist us in these investigations we have deployed cameras in our vehicles for more than 20 years and have had body cameras for all of our officers for 5 years. Individuals have the ability to initiate a citizen's complaint from our website and basic information on the process is currently available on the website as well.

Our department holds high standards for performance and employees who do not meet this standard face discipline up to and including termination.

3. Joint panel discussion with the community to address any concerns and questions hosted by the JoCo NAACP.

In process – date to be determined.

4. Develop and make public your Use of Force Continuum with clear rules of the escalation steps.

This agency has had a written use of force policy for more than a quarter century. The current model clearly states that this agency “recognizes and respects the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone.” Officers are vested with the authority to use objectively reasonable force and to protect the public welfare, but doing so requires monitoring, evaluation and a careful balancing of all interests.

Just as each member of the public is different, so are each of our officers. In reviewing each use of force incident, we look at the individual officer’s size, age, gender, physical ability and past training because we have different expectations on the objectively reasonable amount of force that should be used for an officer who is a six-foot-three, 260 pound former football player compared to a five-foot-three, 110-pound officer.

*We rely on the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *Graham v. Conner* (490 U.S. 386 – 1989) which set a standard of ‘balancing the nature and quality of the intrusion of the individual’s Fourth Amendment interests.’*

Additionally, our use of force policy includes the duty for other officers to intercede if they see unreasonable force being used and to report these violations to a supervisor.

5. Ban the Use of knee holds and choke holds as unacceptable Use of Force Continuums.

The Leawood Police Department does not include the use of chokeholds or strangleholds in any part of our Use of Force policy nor do we teach these to our officers.

6. Implement a local citizen’s review board for all complaints against law enforcement officers and all complaints are maintained in the officer’s file throughout their career, even if switching agencies.

Our department handles citizen complaints through our Professional Standards Officer. These complaints are typically for rudeness or similar levels of misconduct. Although very rare, allegations of criminal conduct are referred to outside agencies for investigation.

In cases of bias based complaints, the results of our investigations are reported annually to the Kansas Attorney General’s Office. The Attorney General’s Office is also able to be used as the investigating agency if the complainant felt more comfortable with an outside entity being involved and handling the complaint.

Sustained complaints against officers stay in their personnel file for their entire career and the files are archived by the city's Human Resources Department after employment as required by law. Complaints classified as "unfounded", "not sustained" or "exonerated" are maintained by the department, but separate from the employee's personnel file. The feedback on the thoroughness and professionalism of our complaint process has been overwhelmingly positive.

7. Implement a statewide review board against officers that use deadly force.

The Johnson County Officer Involved Shooting Investigation Team, which assigns experienced investigators from outside agencies, provides for an investigation of all lethal force incidents involving our department. Upon completion of the investigation the results of these investigations are sent to the Johnson County District Attorney's Office for review.

8. Require in-person implicit bias training for every employee to be conducted at least once a year.

Leawood adheres to the state law requiring annual Bias Based Policing. The vast majority of officers attend in-person training, but some do use web based learning when in-person sessions have not been available.