



**SANGAMON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
**LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPLORER POST**  
**POLICY HANDBOOK**

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to build enduring relationships within the community and develop future leaders in Sangamon County. We will work alongside youth to enhance interpersonal communication skills, build confidence, and foster shared understanding. We will challenge youth with leadership opportunities, promote personal responsibility, and emphasize the importance of teamwork. Youth participating in this program will walk away more confident, well-rounded, and more mature candidates for a civilian law enforcement career – or any career path they choose.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT CODE OF ETHICS

*"As a law enforcement officer my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all people to liberty, equality and justice.*

*I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageously calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of duty.*

*I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, personal beliefs, aspirations, animosities, or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.*

*I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.*

*I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.*

*I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession... law enforcement."*

## EXPLORER OATH OF OFFICE

*“I \_\_\_\_\_ will faithfully discharge the duties of a Sangamon County  
(State your name)*

*Sheriff Explorer to the best of my ability. I will never betray my integrity, character, or the public trust. I will approach problems with objectivity and treat others with fairness, dignity, and respect. I will never misrepresent myself or the Sangamon County Sheriff’s Office.*

# CHAPTER 1

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Overview

The explorer program is a community outreach initiative aimed at educating and mentoring youth within Sangamon County.

The program utilizes a law enforcement curriculum, and a well-defined organizational structure, as a catalyst to cultivate leadership potential, teach personal responsibility, and promote community involvement.

The program is overseen by Explorer Post Advisors. Advisors are appointed by the Sheriff and charged with mentoring youth participants, curriculum design, and the overall management and administration of the program.

Curriculum will be delivered through classroom instruction, demonstration, and practical exercises. Course instructors are typically sworn law enforcement officers. Most instructors have years of experience and hold certifications in their areas of emphasis.

Explorers are not sworn Merit Deputies and do not possess police power. At no time are explorers authorized to carry a firearm. They will never be asked to perform an enforcement action which legally must be executed by a sworn law enforcement officer.

As part of the explorer experience, they may assist a sworn law enforcement officer during special events or at training functions. This enables the explorer to gain a unique and valuable insight into the law enforcement profession.

Explorers are expected to conduct themselves with the upmost professionalism and abide by discipline and uniform standards defined within the Explorer Post Handbook. Youth participating in this program will walk away more confident, well-rounded, and more mature candidates for a civilian law enforcement career – or any career path they choose.



## 1.2 Program Goals and Objectives

The Explorer Program has three main objectives:

1. Foster shared understanding and cultivate positive and enduring relationships
2. Promote personal growth, leadership, and social development in our youth
3. Build confident, well-rounded, and mature applicants for the future

## CHAPTER 2

### RECRUITMENT AND REQUIREMENTS

#### 2.1 Minimum Requirements

Minimum standards for the explorer program shall be established to ensure prospective applicants meet the quality and caliber demanded by the Sheriff's Office. Additional standards have been emplaced to ensure compliance with the Learning for Life program.

A comprehensive list of minimum standards is detailed below:

1. Be a resident of, or attend school in, Sangamon County
2. Be between 14 and 20 years of age
3. Be enrolled in high school, or college, with a minimum 2.5 GPA
4. Be of good moral character
5. Have a strong interest in law enforcement
6. Demonstrate a willingness to participate and exercise leadership skills
7. Complete the explorer application and submit all required documents
8. Submit to a background investigation and oral interview process

No perspective member shall be disqualified because of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnic background. Membership into the post is competitive and not guaranteed. Only a limited number of spots are available in order to maintain a proportional instructor-student ratio.

#### 2.2 Application Requirements

For a prospective explorer to move forward in the selection process to become a member of the explorer post the following items must be submitted:

1. Completed Application
2. Signed Background Release Form
3. Signed Photo / Video Recording Consent Form
4. Current Copy of Academic Report Card (2.5 GPA required)
5. Copy of Driver's License / Identification Card (if applicable)
6. Letters of Recommendation (suggested)

### 2.3 Explorer Selection Process

Once a completed application has been received, it may take a couple weeks to review and begin the selection process. We will typically follow the steps below:

1. A review of the application and supporting documents will be completed.
2. A background investigation will be conducted by a post advisor.
3. An oral interview will be scheduled with the post advisors and senior post staff.
4. The applicant will be notified of the results and receive follow-on instructions.

Correspondence will primarily be conducted via e-mail. It is incumbent upon the applicant to monitor their account for any updates and follow-on instructions. Failure to do so may disqualify the applicant from the selection process.

If an applicant is disqualified and does not advance to the next step in the selection process, they will also be notified via e-mail.

If there are no vacancies within the explorer post at the time of the application, applicants will be placed on a wait list and contacted once an opening arises. If there are no vacancies within the post, background investigations and interviews will not be conducted until an opening exists.

## CHAPTER 3

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

#### 3.1 Meetings and Functions

The post schedule aligns with traditional fall and spring academic semesters. There are typically no scheduled meetings or events over spring, summer, or winter breaks. Meeting schedules are published in advance for each semester and explorers are expected to attend regularly scheduled events.

Volunteer and other training events may arise throughout the year with less notice. While these events are not mandatory, it is expected of explorers to support these events unless they have a schedule conflict.

#### 3.2 Training Philosophy

Academic materials and hands-on training will be taught utilizing a three-phased process of instruction, demonstration, and practical exercise.

1. **Instruction:** A combination of PowerPoint, videos, handouts, and instructor-led discussion will be utilized to introduce materials and illustrate concepts.
2. **Demonstration:** Instructors will demonstrate the task and answer any questions explorers have prior to practical exercises. Videos may also be utilized to supplement and reinforce teaching points.
3. **Practical Exercise:** Instructors will supervise explorers performing the task and provide feedback for refinement as needed.

This process will allow explorers to understand the materials and concepts being taught, visualize the task, and ask clarifying questions prior to moving into practical exercises.

In addition to this, explorers may be asked to prepare and present brief presentations to the post. Presentation topics may vary but will include subjects such as “Law of the Day” and “Hero of the Day”. The intent behind this initiative is for youth to develop confidence speaking in front of others and practice delivering information with conciseness and clarity.

#### 3.3 Personnel Files

The explorer post will maintain personnel files on all applicants, active members, and past post members. These records will remain private but are releasable with the expressed permission of the explorer.

Preserving these files allow for the quick access to emergency contact information, program transparency, and allow the explorer to establish a defined performance record for a prospective employer to view.

Items within an explorer's personnel file may include, but are not limited to:

1. Original Application
2. Signed Acknowledgement of Explorer Handbook
3. Performance Evaluations
4. Awards and Letters of Commendation
5. Disciplinary Records

### **3.4 Learning for Life Dues, Chartering, Insurance Fees, and Training**

The Sheriff Explorer program is registered through Learning for Life, a subsidiary of the Boy Scouts of America. Prior to participating in their first meeting, explorers must complete a Learning for Life Explorer Application. The annual \$45 youth and adult participant fee is paid for by Sangamon County.

Explorers age 17 and younger must complete the [youth explorer application](#).

Explorers age 18 and older must complete the [adult explorer application](#). In addition to this application, adult explorers are also required to complete [youth protection training](#) and undergo a criminal background investigation.

### **3.5 Communication Platforms**

Post Advisors and Explorer Leadership will endeavor to communicate clearly and concisely with explorers and their parents and guardians. E-mail, GroupMe, and Facebook will be the primary methods of communication within the post. It is imperative explorers monitor their e-mail and respond to messages from Post Advisors and Explorer Leadership when asked for information. Information about upcoming meetings, community service events, and post updates will be delivered utilizing these messaging platforms.

If contact information changes for participants or their parents/guardians, they must notify an advisor as soon as possible so we can update their information.

### **3.6 Post Correspondence**

Official written and e-mail correspondence shall be concise and professional in nature. Initial counselings, memorandums, documentation for disciplinary actions, and any other correspondence shall be completed on official Sheriff Office Explorer letterhead.

### **3.7 Post Funds**

The Explorer Post will maintain a fund to support post activities and acquire uniforms and training equipment. Post Advisors and Sheriff Office Administration will monitor these funds, conducting an independent audit annually.

### **3.8 Ride Along Program**

Conducting a law enforcement ride along is one of the best ways to observe the day-to-day duties, roles, and responsibilities performed by a law enforcement officer.

Explorers are authorized to conduct up to two ride alongs, annually, with the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office. The ride along request form and release of liability form must be completed in full and submitted to the post advisor for review at least 10 business days in advance of the requested date.

Approval for a ride along must be given by an Explorer's parent or guardian (if under 18), the Post Advisor, Captain of Operations, and respective Shift Supervisor. It is the responsibility of the explorer to plan accordingly to make certain there is enough time for their request to be routed for approval prior to the desired ride along date.

Explorers may not wear their explorer uniform during ride alongs. Business casual attire is appropriate. Explorers shall not carry any weapons or engage in any law enforcement functions unless requested by a law enforcement officer during emergency circumstances.

Prior to being eligible to conduct a ride along, explorers must participate in a ride along familiarization class with the Post Advisor. This class will familiarize explorers with in-car equipment, ride along rules, and etiquette.

# CHAPTER 4

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND CHAIN OF COMMAND

### 4.1 Purpose

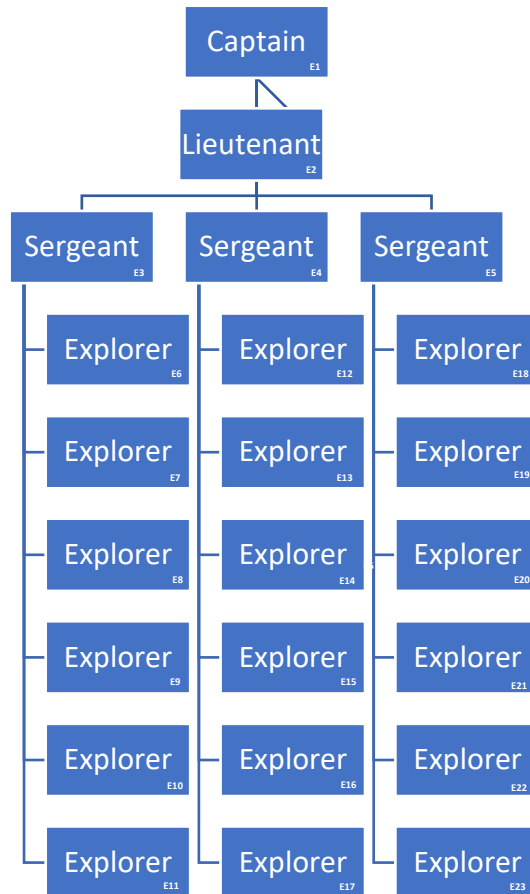
The purpose of a chain of command is to establish a hierarchy, distribute responsibilities, and efficiently convey information throughout the organization in a timely manner.

A well-defined chain of command holds leaders and subordinates accountable, enables opportunities for growth, and allows problems to be resolved efficiently and at the lowest level possible.

The explorer post will use the established chain of command during all activities.

### 4.2 Explorer Chain of Command Structure

The Explorer Post Advisor supervises the Post Captain and is the final authority for all decisions within the post. The explorer chain of command is depicted below.

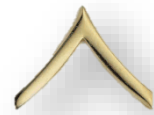


\*E Numbers in the chart above represent callsigns assigned to each explorer.

### 4.3 Description of Duty Positions

**Probationary Explorer:** Probationary Explorers are newly accepted applicants within the program. The probationary period shall last 6 months in order to assess the new explorer's performance, character, and ability to accept roles of increased responsibility. This period may be waived at the discretion of the post advisor. Probation may also be extended, one time, for an additional 6 months as a last chance to assess an explorer's performance and suitability to remain within the program. If a leave of absence is requested, and accepted, during an explorer's probationary period they must return and finish their probationary time. Leave of absence time shall not count towards the 6-month minimum probationary time.

**Explorer:** Upon the successful completion of their probationary period post members will be promoted to the rank of explorer. This is a key developmental position within the post. During this time, explorers should be focused on mastering curriculum, tactics, and refining their communication skills. Typically, explorers should hold this rank for a period of one year prior to being considered for promotion. The rank of explorer is represented by a pair of single gold chevrons worn on the collar of the uniform polo shirt.



**Explorer Corporal:** The rank of Explorer Corporal is a position appointed by the Post Advisor. This position may be filled when there is an obvious need for a supplemental leadership position, but there are no vacancies, or no one is eligible for promotion. This position may also be utilized to assess an explorer's leadership potential prior to being promoted to the rank of Explorer Sergeant. The rank of Explorer Corporal is both a position of trust and authority. Explorer Corporals are expected to be role models for other explorers and uphold post standards. Explorer Corporals should take advantage of every opportunity to mentor junior explorers to increase future leadership potential within the post. The span of control for Explorer Corporals is typically 3-5 explorers. Bi-annual evaluations will be completed for Explorer Corporals to assess knowledge and leadership potential. The rank of Explorer Corporal is represented by a pair of two gold chevrons worn on the collar of the uniform polo shirt.



**Explorer Sergeant:** The rank of Explorer Sergeant is one of the most important positions within the organization. Explorer Sergeants are responsible for all explorers within their squad. This includes, but is not limited to, accountability, information distribution, enforcing uniform and conduct standards without bias, and identifying volunteers for events. Additionally, Explorer Sergeants are responsible for the overall success of explorers within their squad. Promotion to the rank of Explorer Sergeant is competitive and will be done by an established promotional process which typically includes a review of the individual's last three evaluations and an oral interview. If the candidate does not have





three evaluations, they are expected to include a letter of reference for each evaluation they are missing. These reference letters should speak to the individuals' character, leadership qualities, and willingness to take on increased responsibilities. Both Explorers and Explorer Corporals are eligible to apply for Explorer Sergeant. Span of control for an Explorer Sergeant is typically 6-8 explorers. The rank of Explorer Sergeant is represented by a pair of three gold chevrons worn on the collar of the uniform polo shirt.

**Explorer Lieutenant:** The rank of Explorer Lieutenant is a senior rank within the explorer post. The Explorer Lieutenant is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization. Explorer Lieutenants are expected to coordinate and organize events, track and enforce suspensions, and ensure information is distributed throughout the organization in a timely manner. The Explorer Lieutenant is the second-highest rank in the organization, behind the Explorer Captain and will assume command in their absence. The span of control for the Explorer Lieutenant is typically the 4 Explorer Sergeants. Promotion to the rank of Explorer Lieutenant is competitive and will be done by an established promotional process which typically includes a review of the individual's last three evaluations and an oral interview. If the candidate does not have three evaluations, they are expected to include a letter of reference for each evaluation they are missing. These reference letters should speak to the individuals' character, leadership qualities, and willingness to take on increased responsibilities. Both Explorer Sergeants and Explorer Corporals are eligible to board for Explorer Lieutenant. The rank of Explorer Lieutenant is represented by a pair of gold bars worn on the collar of the uniform polo shirt.



**Explorer Captain:** The explorer Captain is the highest-ranking explorer within the organization. They are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the explorer post. The Explorer Captain works as a liaison between the Post Advisors, Explorer Leadership, and other explorers to ensure tasks are being tracked and completed in a timely manner. The Explorer Captain participates in the planning and development of course curriculum and provides input on other decisions as they arise. The Explorer Captain can appoint additional duties to the staff as necessary to improve the daily function of the post. Selection to Explorer Captain is highly competitive and will be done by an established promotion process. The selection process for this rank shall include a complete and thorough records review of all evaluations, awards, and disciplinary records within the applicant's personnel file. Explorer Sergeants and Lieutenants can board for this position.



**Explorer Post Advisor:** The Explorer Post Advisor is appointed by the Sheriff and is entrusted with the consistent and professional operation of the post. The Post Advisor acts as a liaison between the post leadership and the Sheriff’s Office Command Staff. This unique dynamic enables the post leadership to run and shape the direction of the post with oversight from the advisor, while still meeting the intent of the Sheriff’s Office with the program. The Post Advisor directly supervises the Explorer Captain and is responsible for overseeing all aspects within the program. In the absence of Explorer leadership, the most advisor may take on a more direct and active role.

#### 4.4 Evaluation Reports

Program participants in the rank of Explorer Corporal through Explorer Captain will receive semi-annual evaluation reports (one at the conclusion of each academic semester). The purpose of these evaluations is to provide feedback on the Explorer’s performance and identify their potential for greater responsibilities within the organization.

Evaluation reports will be completed on the Sangamon County Sheriff Explorer Evaluation Report Form. Raters will capture the explorer’s overall performance during the rated period and senior raters will gauge the explorer’s potential for increased responsibility. The below rating scheme will be utilized when completing evaluations:

Rated Rank	Rater	Senior Rater
Explorer	Explorer Sergeant	Explorer Lieutenant
Explorer Corporal	Explorer Sergeant	Explorer Lieutenant
Explorer Sergeant	Explorer Lieutenant	Explorer Captain
Explorer Lieutenant	Explorer Captain	Explorer Advisor
Explorer Captain	Explorer Advisor	Explorer Advisor

#### 4.5 Open Door Policy

Regardless of rank or position, all explorers have the right to seek council with the Post Advisor. The Open Door Policy allows explorers to discuss issues directly with the Post Advisor if they do not feel comfortable bringing them up to their explorer chain of command.

#### 4.6 Command Climate Surveys

Each semester an online command climate survey will be utilized to privately poll all members of the post.

The intent of this survey is to allow all members an opportunity to provide feedback on the program’s curriculum, give an unbiased opinion of their leadership, and afford youth the opportunity to share any concerns, anonymously, with the post advisor and Sheriff’s Office Administration.

The intent of this initiative is to ensure everyone is being treated fairly, and with dignity and respect. This tool also gives members an opportunity to provide feedback on changes they would like to see within the organization.

The use of command climate surveys is essential in identifying and correcting issues early on before they manifest into larger problems.

# CHAPTER 5

## APPEARANCE STANDARDS

### 5.1 Overview

Explorers represent the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office and must always maintain a professional image.

### 5.2 Cleanliness

Uniforms shall always be kept neat, clean, and pressed. Stained or damaged uniforms should be reported to the Post Advisor immediately so they can be replaced with serviceable items.

### 5.3 Personal Appearance

Explorers must maintain a neat, clean, and professional image at all times. This includes maintaining good personal hygiene and keeping fingernails clean and neatly trimmed.

Hairstyles, regardless of gender, must be well kempt and neat in appearance. Hairstyles extending past the shoulders shall be worn up or tied back.

Facial hair is authorized but must be well groomed and neat in appearance.

### 5.4 Tattoos and Ornamentation

Having a tattoo may be a disqualifying factor when applying for a law enforcement job. Many agencies have policies prohibiting prospective police officers from having tattoos visible when wearing their uniform. Tattoos depicting offensive messages or images could immediately disqualify an applicant from a law enforcement job. Explorers are strongly cautioned on obtaining a tattoo.

Tattoos depicting gang-related images, racially inappropriate images, sexually suggestive or inappropriate images, or any depiction that undermines the integrity or mission of the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office, in words or images, are not authorized. Tattoos of this nature will disqualify an applicant or be grounds for dismissal if obtained after acceptance into the Post.

Explorers are prohibited from having any item of ornamentation in their ear, nose, eyebrow, tongue, or any other location of their body which is visible when wearing the explorer uniform. These items can be caught on clothing or other objects and cause injury during training.

# CHAPTER 6

## UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

### 6.1 Overview

Safety of explorers is paramount within the organization. To have an explorer appear to be a sworn law enforcement officer can be dangerous to the explorer and confusing to the public.

Explorers must be clearly distinguishable from a sworn law enforcement officer. Explorers have no legal authority to act upon criminal enforcement situations.

If a member of the public mistakes an explorer for a sworn law enforcement officer, the explorer must identify themselves as an explorer and express they have no law enforcement powers. The explorer is then expected to assist the citizen in contacting the proper authorities so appropriate services can respond. If the situation is dangerous, the explorer must remove themselves from the situation.

Any explorer intentionally impersonating a sworn law enforcement officer will be dismissed from the program and may face criminal charges pursuant to 720 ILCS 5/32-5.

### 6.2 Uniform Guidelines

Uniforms issued to explorers are the property of the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office. Explorers shall not modify or deface the uniform. Uniforms may be tailored with the permission of the Post Advisor.

Explorers who have been issued uniforms will wear them to explorer functions only. Wearing the explorer uniform outside of official events is prohibited. When wearing the uniform indoors, hats of any kind are not authorized.

### 6.3 Issued Uniforms and Equipment

Each explorer will be issued the following uniform items and equipment:

1. Explorer uniform t-shirt with logo
2. Explorer uniform polo with embroidered badge
3. Explorer uniform jacket with embroidered badge
4. Explorer uniform tactical pants

Once uniforms and equipment are issued to an explorer, it is their responsibility to maintain the items. Explorers may be charged for any lost or damaged uniform and equipment items issued to them, if found negligent.

In addition to these issued items, explorers are expected to purchase the following items to complete their uniform:

1. Black belt
2. Black boots or shoes

#### **6.4 Equipment Clothing Record and Annual Inspection**

Detailed clothing records shall be maintained for each explorer who is issued any uniform and equipment items.

Issued uniform and equipment will be documented on a clothing record and the responsible Explorer shall verify the form is completed correctly before signing. The Explorer may be held liable for any issued items lost or damaged due to their negligence.

Equipment and clothing records reviews should be completed annually to verify accuracy. Lost, damaged, and stolen equipment must be reported to the Post Advisor immediately.

Explorer uniforms and equipment are controlled items which are closely tracked for accountability purposes. Any report of stolen equipment should be accompanied by a memorandum from the explorer and a police report as supporting documentation.

#### **6.5 Uniform and Equipment Standards**

The Sangamon County Sheriff's Office reserves the right to revoke an explorer's privilege of wearing the explorer uniform at any time.

Explorers are not authorized to wear the uniform when not involved in explorer activities.

If an explorer engages in misconduct or posts unapproved photographs online which reflect negatively upon the department, uniform privileges will be revoked and the explorer will face disciplinary action, up to dismissal from the program.

Explorers are subject to uniform inspection at any time to verify their uniform is being worn in compliance with the Explorer Handbook. Violations will be documented and forwarded to the Post Advisor.

#### **6.6 Unauthorized Equipment**

Explorers are prohibited from carrying weapons of any kind. This includes, but is not limited to firearms, batons, tasers, oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray, and knives with blades longer than 3". Utility-type, folding, pocketknives are permitted but the blade must measure 3" or less.

## 6.7 Class “B” Uniform

The Class “B” Uniform is comprised of the following uniform items:

1. Black explorer uniform polo shirt with embroidered badge on the left breast (issued)
2. Black undershirt (if worn)
3. Coyote tan tactical style pants (issued)
4. Black belt, either leather or nylon
5. All black shoes or boots
6. For Sergeants, Lieutenants, and the Captain, explorer chevrons signifying rank shall be worn on each collar of the uniform. This rank will be issued when an explorer is selected for promotion.
7. The explorer name tape, if issued, will be worn on the right breast of the Class “B” uniform, centered between the bottom button and bottom seam of the polo shirt’s neck opening.
8. Awards may be displayed on the right breast, centered, 1/8” above the name plate. Awards shall be displayed in the order of highest to lowest award, the order they appear in the Explorer Handbook.

## 6.8 Class “C” Uniform

The Class “C” Uniform is comprised of the following uniform items:

1. A black cotton blend t-shirt with the explorer badge on the left breast pocket and “EXPLORER” block lettering on the back. The badge and lettering shall be screen printed (issued).
2. Coyote tan tactical style pants (issued)
3. Black belt, either leather or nylon
4. All black shoes or boots

## 6.9 Explorer Uniform Jacket

The explorer uniform jacket will consist of an approved black softshell jacket with an embroidered badge.

## 6.10 Suggested Personal-Purchase Equipment

The Explorer Post will provide basic items required for training. Explorers may choose to personal purchase their own duty gear for use during training events and scenarios to prevent from having to exchange duty belts and other equipment. Additionally, this will allow Explorers to set up their duty belts specific for them.

Suggested personal purchase items are a nylon duty belt, nylon inner belt, belt keepers, Glock 17 holster, double pistol magazine pouch, handcuff case, handcuffs, handcuff key (zak tool type), and flashlight. All holsters and nylon duty gear should be black in color.

Glock 17 training weapons may be purchased but must be blue, orange, or red in color. Duty belts and other training materials are not authorized to be worn by explorers unless at explorer functions and under the supervision of the Post Advisor.



# CHAPTER 7

## CONDUCT STANDARDS AND DISCIPLINE

### 7.1 Overview

Everyone makes mistakes. The purpose of conduct standards and discipline is to identify and admit those mistakes, accept the corrective action, and learn from the situation to become better.

Each explorer must comply with all applicable post policies, procedures, and guidance set forth in this handbook and expressed by Post Advisors and Sheriff's Office Administration.

### 7.2 Conduct, Attendance, and Tardiness

Explorers are expected to maintain the same high standards of personal and professional conduct required of any member of the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office.

Explorers are expected to be on time and regularly attend post meetings and functions. Only a limited number of spots are available in the program. If explorers are unable to commit to regular post meetings, they will be asked to resign so another candidate can have an opportunity to participate in the program.

Course material is progressive. Missing a meeting may prevent an explorer from fully understanding subsequent topics of instruction. Tardiness and unexcused absences must be prevented.

Explorers participating in seasonal sporting activities, attending basic training, or other events where a prolonged absence will occur must request a leave of absence through the Post Advisor.

### 7.3 Fraternization

Explorers will not fraternize with Advisors or any other members of the Sheriff's Office in an unprofessional manner. Romantic relationships between explorers and advisors are not permitted, regardless of age. Explorers are required to immediately self-report any romantic relationship between themselves and an advisor to the Sheriff's Office Captain of Operations.

### 7.4 Law Enforcement Contact

Explorers must self-report any adverse contact made with a Law Enforcement Officer to the post advisor within 3 calendar days of the contact. Failure to do so shall result in disciplinary action against the explorer for failure to report an adverse law enforcement

contact. Examples of an adverse contact are a traffic stop, curfew violation, interrogation, etc. Even if the contact does not result in a citation or arrest, it must be reported.

The report to the post advisor should clearly and honestly disclose the nature of the contact. At a minimum the explorer should note the name of the agency, the officer's name, the reason for the interaction, and the result of the contact (warning, citation, arrest, etc.).

### **7.5 Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs**

Explorers will not consume alcoholic beverages, narcotics, tobacco products (including vapes), or any other illegal substances at any time. Violation of this directive shall result in suspension or removal from the program and possible criminal charges pursuant to Illinois Law.

### **7.6 Duty to Cooperate**

Explorers suspected of violating any policy or law shall cooperate with investigating law enforcement officers and treat them with respect. Failure to do so will result in suspension or dismissal from the post.

Explorers will answer in full any questions an Advisor, Investigating Officer, or Supervisor may ask regarding the investigation of any complaint, provided the explorer is not the subject of the investigation. If the complaint is of a criminal nature, and the Explorer is the subject of the investigation, they are entitled to the same rights and privileges as any private citizen.

Explorers may be placed on a leave of absence pending the results of an investigation.

### **7.7 Gratuities**

Explorers will not utilize their status to obtain privileges not otherwise available to them. This includes, but is not limited to, any gratuity, loan, gift, merchandise, meal, beverage, or other things of value offered to them due to their official capacity.

### **7.8 Equal Opportunity**

The Explorer Program takes pride in ensuring everyone is treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. All participants will have an equal opportunity within the post regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background. Members will be courteous to each other and members of the public at all times.

### **7.9 Community Service**

Community involvement and service is a cornerstone of the explorer program. Throughout the semester several opportunities for community service will be offered to

Explorers. Explorers are expected to perform a minimum of three hours of community service per semester.

### **7.10 Use of Communication Devices**

Explorers are not authorized to utilize communication devices during post meetings or official functions. Communication devices include cellular phones, smart watches, tablets, computers, ear buds, or other Bluetooth and wireless devices.

These items should be silenced and put away during lessons and practical exercises unless authorized by the Post Advisor.

### **7.11 Use of Department Radios**

Department radios may be issued to Explorers for training or other events. Explorers will be professional in their communication on radios at all times. Radio traffic will be kept concise, free of any profanity, and limited to official business only.

Explorers must remain mindful that other agencies and the public are listening to their radio traffic. Any abuse of department radios will result in disciplinary action.

### **7.12 Social Networking**

Explorers are prohibited from posting any material on a personal, private or public, internet site that might cause a negative public perception, or adversely affect the reputation of the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office.

Explorers shall not place or allow photographs of them dressed in uniform displaying official identification as an explorer on any "social networking site" such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, or similar venue without the permission of the Post Advisor.

Explorers shall not divulge, distribute, or transmit any information regarded as confidential via any social networking site, cellular phone, photography, or by any other means. This includes the dissemination of law enforcement sensitive information, tactics, and any other information which may be detrimental to officer safety, or ongoing investigations.

### **7.13 Public Relations**

Explorers shall treat others as they would like to be treated. They will be courteous to the public, other explorers, and members of the Sheriff's Office.

Explorers shall be completely impartial towards all persons regardless of the individual's gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or social status.

## **7.14 Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment within the Explorer Post will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment degrades the team, creates a toxic social atmosphere, and degrades the learning environment. Sexual harassment includes unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, transmittal of illicit images, and verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

It is the responsibility of every explorer to prevent these types of behaviors. Anyone who observes this type of behavior must report it to the Post Advisor immediately.

Incidents of sexual harassment shall be fully investigated and, if founded, will result in immediate disciplinary action.

## **7.15 Administration of Discipline**

Infractions of the rules, regulations, and standards of conduct will result in disciplinary action. Discipline will be proportional to the offence, progressive, and administered equally based off the severity and number of offenses. All disciplinary actions will be documented in the participant's permanent personnel file.

## **7.16 Investigation of Complaints**

The Post Advisor will investigate any complaints of misconduct of an explorer unless otherwise directed by the Captain of Operations. The results of the investigation will determine if disciplinary action is appropriate.

Depending on the circumstances, an explorer may be placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. Administrative leave means an explorer may not attend any post functions until the investigation is concluded.

## **7.17 Suspensions and Expulsions**

Depending on the severity of the offense, or the number of offenses, explorers may be suspended or expelled from the program. These corrective actions are typically utilized as a last resort, or in response to more serious offenses.

Suspension means explorers are prohibited from participating in explorer functions for a defined amount of time.

Expulsion means explorers are no longer allowed to participate in any explorer functions, permanently.

# CHAPTER 8

## COMMENDATIONS AND AWARDS

### 8.1 Overview

Commendations and awards are utilized to recognize Explorers for their outstanding achievements and hard work. These recognitions are typically presented at the annual explorer awards ceremony.

Letters of commendation and award citations shall be placed in the Explorer's permanent personnel file.

### 8.2 Letters of Commendation

Letters of Commendation may be awarded to recognize exemplary service. Letters of Commendation are typically awarded for acts or achievements that do not meet, or are not covered, by existing explorer awards.

Letters of Commendation shall be presented to the Explorer and a copy of the signed citation will be placed in their personnel file.

### 8.3 Awards

Recognizing Explorer achievements and hard work is an important part of the program. An award ceremony will be held annually to highlight the efforts and achievements of members of the post.

Awards listed in this chapter are authorized for wear on the Explorer Class "B" Uniform shirt. These awards will be worn in the order displayed below. Awards shall not exceed three across in a row and will be displayed on the right breast of the uniform polo, centered across from the explorer badge. The highest awards shall be displayed on the left (if looking at the uniform). Should another row of awards be displayed, the highest award shall be on top.

#### Explorer of the Year



Each year an Explorer will be selected for Explorer of the Year based on their dependability, attitude, attendance, and contributions to the post, department, and community. Explorers of the Year are recognized for their outstanding performance and personal attitude. The recognition is a blue bar with gold "E", No. 04025.

### **Meritorious Service Medal**



The Meritorious Service Medal recognizes an Explorer who distinguishes themselves for outstanding meritorious achievement or service over a sustained period of time. The recognition is a red commendation bar with double-white stripes, No. SPAATZ Ribbon.

### **Explorer Achievement Medal**



The Explorer Achievement Medal is awarded to explorers for outstanding achievement based on sustained performance. This award is intended to recognize performance that would not otherwise rise to the level of a Meritorious Service award. The recognition is a green and blue commendation bar, No. 1544.

### **Exceptional Service Medal**



The Exceptional Service Medal is awarded to Explorers who have distinguished themselves through outstanding service or achievement related to a specific event. The Exceptional Service Medal recognition is a blue and yellow commendation bar, No. 1130.

### **Military Service Recognition Medal**



The Military Service Recognition Medal recognizes Explorers who have satisfactorily completed initial entry training (Basic/Boot Camp) for service in branches of the United States Armed Forces. The recognition is a red, white, and blue accommodation bar, No. CAP0703C.

### **Law Enforcement Training Medal**



The Law Enforcement Training Medal recognizes the accumulation of 60 hours of training in the following areas:

- History of law enforcement (1 hour)
- The contemporary law enforcement role (2 hours)
- The criminal justice system (2 hours)
- Radio procedures (2 hours)
- Basic patrol procedures (3 hours)
- Report writing (4 hours)
- Criminal law (6 Hours)

- Juvenile law (2 hours)
- Traffic law (2 hours)
- Procedures of investigation (6 hours)
- Human relations (4 hours)
- Crime prevention (8 hours)
- Accident investigation (4 hours)
- Crime scene investigation (4 hours)
- Fingerprinting and classification (4 hours)
- Narcotics and dangerous drugs (2 hours)
- Arrest and search (4 hours)

The recognition is a red and blue commendation bar, No. 0032.

**Community Service Medal**



The Community Service Medal is awarded to Explorers who accrue 100 hours of community service. Service must be preapproved and logged by the Advisor. The recognition is a blue and yellow commendation bar, No. 04019.

**Emergency Preparedness Medal**



The Emergency Preparedness Medal is awarded to Explorers who have received training in advanced first aid, CPR, and disaster response integration. Explorers must also participate in at least one community-wide disaster training exercise. This recognition is a red and white commendation bar, No. 04022.

**Tenure Medal**



The Tenure Medal is awarded to Explorers who complete one year of satisfactory service to the Post. The recognition is a red commendation bar; No. 04023.

**Perfect Attendance Medal**



The Perfect Attendance Medal recognizes Explorers who have attended each scheduled Post meeting or activity throughout the year. The recognition is a yellow and white commendation bar, No. 04024.

### **Eagle or Gold Award Recognition**



The Eagle or Gold Award Recognition may be worn by an Explorer who has achieved the Boy Scouts of America or Girl Scouts of the USA highest award and honor (the BSA Eagle or GSUSA Gold). The recognition is a red, white, and blue commendation bar, No. 04036.

### **Physical Fitness ([P.O.W.E.R. Test](#))**



Explorers who satisfactorily meet the requirements for the Peace Officer Wellness Evaluation Report, set forth by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, will be authorized to wear the physical fitness ribbon.

### **Multiple Awards**



Explorers who receive multiple awards are authorized to wear a silver or bronze star, measuring 3/16 of an inch, on the award to denote additional decorations. One bronze star represents one additional award. Silver stars are worn in lieu of five bronze stars. The stars shall be displayed in the center of the award.



## CHAPTER 9

# INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION POLICY

### 9.1 Overview

The Sangamon County Sheriff's Office is committed to the safety of the public, Explorers, volunteers, the and Sheriff's Office Staff.

Anyone who is not feeling well or experiencing symptoms of illness should not attend post functions. Explorers are required to self-report their illness to the explorer post advisor as soon as possible.

### 9.2 Protective Measures

During times of increased positivity rates for infectious diseases, pre-screening may be conducted prior to explorer functions. This screening may include a personal history questionnaire, temporal thermometer reading, and mask mandate to prevent the possible spread of such diseases.

In addition to these measures, high contact surfaces and training aids will be disinfected regularly. Hand sanitizer will also be made available to explorers.

The Explorer Program will follow the suggested prevention guidelines of the Sangamon County Department of Public Health.

### 9.3 Risk Mitigation

To mitigate risk of infectious diseases explorers, volunteers, and advisors will abide by all guidelines prescribed to them by a healthcare professional.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EXPLORER HANDBOOK

I \_\_\_\_\_ certify I have read and understand the  
(Print Full Legal Name)

rules and regulations of the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post outlined in this handbook.

I agree to follow the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook, and understand a violation of the aforementioned policies will result in disciplinary action, to include termination from the Explorer Post.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Explorer Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian Signature if under 18)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

*Return this page, completed in full, to the Post Advisor.*