

JUNE 2020 | VOL. 1, ISSUE 3

THE INSTITUTE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

DR. RICHARD N. HOLDEN, EDITOR

NOTES AND HOPES

As we start to reopen the country, law enforcement is still faced with a daunting task. This is a unique set of competing problems. The virus affects the older generation while the economic crisis affects their children. This pits generations against each other in the most stressful way imaginable. We will get through this, but it will take patience on the part of law enforcement. Frustrations are at a very high level now. What the public needs is calm reassurance.

Links for Law Enforcement

Sources of current information for leaders in law enforcement:

1. Resources for Law Enforcement
www.policefoundation.org/covid-19/
2. IACP Law Enforcement Information on Covid-19
bit.ly/IACPCovid19Resources
3. CDC Fact Sheet
bit.ly/CDCLawEnforcementFactSheet

ILEA Update

Should the country be able to return to a more normal state this summer, we, at ILEA, plan to resume the School for Executive Leadership on August 31. The October Supervision School will convene as usual on September 28.

“TO HANDLE YOURSELF, USE YOUR HEAD; TO HANDLE OTHERS, USE YOUR HEART.”

— *Eleanor Roosevelt*

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR GREGORY SMITH, M.A.



Minneapolis: A View through the Eyes of a Police Ethics Instructor

On Monday, May 25, 2020, in the vicinity of 38th and Chicago South in Minneapolis, a 9-1-1 caller reported a man for attempted forgery and possibly being under the influence. A course of events followed, culminating in the tragic death of George Floyd after he was subdued and arrested by Officer Derek Chauvin of the Minneapolis Police Department. Officer Chauvin can be seen on video with his knee pressing down on the neck of Mr. Floyd for eight minutes while he pleaded for his life. He is heard saying, "I can't breathe" several times and a heartbreaking "...don't kill me." The fact that Chauvin is a white police officer and Mr. Floyd is a black citizen exacerbates the circumstances.

As Director of the Institute for Law Enforcement Administration (ILEA) at The Center for American and International Law, I oversee an organization that has provided continuing education for law enforcement administrators, supervisors, and instructors since 1957. Our focus is on developing competent professionals who are people-oriented and who concentrate on community service and justice. Principled leadership and ethical decision making permeates all levels of our instruction.

Policing is a high stress job being done by everyday people. Most of the time, we are ordinary people who manage out-of-the-ordinary situations effectively. However, that does not always happen and the well-being of all involved is put at risk.

An ethical dilemma is also created for other officers on the scene who are faced with a decision to make: "What do I do if a fellow officer has lost control to the point he is completely unaware of the harm that he is inflicting on another human being...or he is so angry that he does not care?"

Many officers who attend ILEA programs are law enforcement supervisors. In our core courses, the School of Police Supervision and the Texas Sergeant Academy, these and other ethical dilemmas are presented to our students.



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"GREAT LEADERS CREATE MORE LEADERS, NOT FOLLOWERS."

— Roy T. Bennett

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR **GREGORY SMITH, M.A.**

They read about and visualize a dilemma and must decide what to do when a fellow officer has crossed the line. We discuss it, but more importantly we give police officers ethical decision-making models to help guide them when they find themselves in the very situations that have the potential to cause serious harm and incite community unrest.

There is an unwritten code in our profession that you do not interfere with a lead officer or senior officer as they manage a call. You support him. The key is knowing when to break that code or to simply follow a value of "doing what is right."

The **A.C.T.** is a decision-making model for officers when they face such an ethical dilemma.

A = Alternatives | Ask, "What are my alternatives?" One might be to do nothing...let the lead officer handle it. A second may be to actively participate and another is to "intervene or stop him."

C = Consequences | Each alternative has good and bad consequences. Ask, "What are the possible good consequences of doing nothing or actively participating?" and "What are the possible negative consequences?"

T = Tell Your Story or Defend your Action | We advise our students to view their decisions through a positive/negative prism. Ask, "Can my action or inaction be defended in a manner that makes me proud?"

STAKEHOLDERS: Finally, we teach our students when facing an ethical dilemma and when using the A.C.T. Ethical Decision-Making Model to always do a Stakeholder Analysis. Ask, "Who will be affected by what I do or choose not to do?"

So, what does this all mean? I return to my original theme. Police officers are under tremendous pressure and sometimes may succumb to that pressure. It is up to fellow officers to look out for one another – and that means stepping in when needed, going against the informal culture and doing the right thing. The ethical thing. The principled thing. The moral thing.



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I ask officers to support ethics education at all levels. Why? Because it provides an antidote to protect one from anger, frustration, or fatigue. It is another level of armor. It is a stimulus that helps us think. I ask administrators to not ignore education in the areas of ethical decision making and ethical leadership. Given what we do, ethics education can save lives.

— **Gregory Smith, Director, Institute for Law Enforcement Administration**
A Division of The Center for American and International Law

Since 1957, the Institute for Law Enforcement Administration has provided courses, seminars and workshops for police and sheriff's agencies both nationally and internationally. Our Center for Law Enforcement Ethics offers a forum to explore and to discuss ethics-related issues and offers courses that prepare trainers to provide ethics-based programs in their own organizations.

