



SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT
Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania

Policy 5-18

Policy Title: Fraternalization, Nepotism, & Personal Relationships

Date of Issue: December 1, 2022

Rescinds: None

By Authority of:

Chief of Police

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish policy on personal relationships between department employees that give rise to an actual or perceived potential conflict of interest with professional responsibilities and / or which create the potential for an adverse impact on department operations, safety, efficiency, and morale.

II. Policy

- A. It is the policy of the Springfield Township Police Department to strive to provide a work environment that is collegial, respectful, and productive. This policy establishes rules for the conduct of personal relationships between employees, including supervisory personnel, to prevent conflicts and maintain a productive, supportive and welcoming work environment.
- B. Personal relationships that cause unrest, lend themselves to the perception of favoritism, adversely affect morale, or otherwise disrupt the efficient and safe operations of the department are undesirable.
- C. This policy applies to all employees regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age or any other protected class that is recognized by federal and state law.

III. Definitions

Dating: One or more social meetings between employees under circumstances reasonably intended to lead to a romantic relationship.

Fraternalization: Conducting social relations with other Township employees who are unrelated, as if they were family members, personal friends, or romantic partners.

Nepotism: The practice among those with influence, or authority to hire, of favoring relatives or friends.

Romantic Relationship: A relationship characterized by a level of personal affection and familiarity not typically shared by coworkers in the work environment, and involving (but not limited to) dating, physical intimacy, or other similar behavior(s).

Subordinate: An employee who is answerable to another employee based on their rank or job classification.

Supervisor: An employee who has authority, direct or indirect, over another employee by virtue of their rank or job classification.

IV. Procedure

- A. This fraternization / nepotism / personal relationships policy reflects the culture of the organization and that the department is an employee-oriented, forward-thinking workplace, recognizing that employees may develop various types of personal relationships with one another.
- B. Relationships cannot interfere with the department's culture of teamwork, the harmonious work environment, or the productivity of employees. Adverse workplace behavior, or behavior that negatively affects the workplace that arises because of personal relationships, will be addressed by applying progressive discipline, up to, and including, termination of employment with cause.
- C. An employee who has a family relationship with another employee generally may not occupy a position in the same unit, work directly for, or supervise the employee, with whom they are related. This is to avoid any real, imagined, or possible claims of favoritism due to nepotism.
- D. Anyone employed in a managerial or supervisory role needs to be mindful of the fact that romantic relationships with employees who report to them may cause friction in the workplace. Such fraternization may cause real or imagined claims of favoritism, misuse of authority, or potentially, sexual harassment.
- E. The department recognizes that employees may choose to date and develop friendships and relationships with other employees, both inside and outside of the workplace, and as such, if the relationships do not have a negative impact on their work or the work of others, these relationships are not prohibited or restricted except as noted below.
 1. No member of the Springfield Township Police Department may enter into a romantic relationship with an applicant, intern, or police probationary officer trainee. Any member found violating this policy will be subject to discipline, up to, and including, termination.

2. An employee who is involved in a romantic relationship with another employee may not occupy a position in the same unit, work directly for, or supervise, the employee with whom they are involved.

F. Reporting Requirements

1. Should two employees begin a romantic relationship, it is the responsibility and obligation of the employees involved to disclose the relationship, in its entirety, to the Lieutenant, or the Chief of Police.
 2. If disclosed to the Lieutenant, the relationship will be reported to the Chief of Police, who will then decide whether the relationship has an adverse effect on the department, including, but not limited to, the potential for conflict of interest, favoritism, and negative effects on department work product.
 3. If, in the judgment of the Chief of Police, the relationship creates an adverse effect on department operations, then the Township Manager will be consulted. Working jointly, the Chief of Police and the Township Manager shall take appropriate steps to ensure that the respective involved employees' working conditions are modified to eliminate any adverse workplace performance issues.
 4. If, over the course of the personal relationship, the Chief of Police finds any validity to claims of sexual harassment or favoritism, or if the relationship creates dissension in the department, the department shall take whatever action is deemed necessary to address the situation. If the employees engaged in the romantic relationship do not immediately disclose the relationship as required by this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination.
- G. The Township reserves the right to take prompt action if an actual or potential conflict of interest arises concerning individuals who engage in a relationship that may affect terms and conditions of employment.
- H. When a conflict, or the potential for conflict, arises because of a personal relationship between employees, even if there is no line of authority or reporting involved, the employees may be separated by reassignment. If a romantic relationship between employees develops, said employees will be required to sign a Confidentiality / Non-Disclosure Agreement. Such agreement will address whether the involved employees have access to sensitive or confidential information relative to their assignment and define what their responsibilities are to restrict such information to one another. Failure to disclose or sign such Agreement may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination.

V. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all supervisory personnel to ensure that all personnel under their immediate supervision comply with this policy.

