

OREGON DPSST
ETHICS BULLETIN
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The Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (BPSST) has the legislative mandate to establish and enforce minimum standards for all law enforcement officers, fire service professionals, telecommunicators and emergency medical dispatchers in the state. This requirement also defines the procedure for the Department and Board to use when denying or revoking certification of an individual who has fallen below the minimum standards.

The Ethics Bulletin is published to provide insight into the types of misconduct that could result in revocation or denial of certification. The following cases have resulted in consideration of **revocation or denial** of certifications by DPSST in **September, 2015**.

The Department continues to ensure that certified public safety officers and those seeking certification who abuse the public's trust will be held accountable for their actions.

September Statistics

Cases Opened	11	Of the 13 Cases Closed:	
Cases Closed	13	Revoked	0
Cases Pending	119	Denied	1
Reinstated	0	No Action	12

Officer A, while awaiting a decision from the Board regarding a medical waiver so he could begin training, was arrested for DUII. After the Board approved the waiver, Officer A pled guilty to the DUII and resolved the case so he could begin his training. DPSST notified Officer A that his case would be reviewed by the Corrections Policy Committee (CPC) and gave him the opportunity to provide mitigating circumstances, which he did. The CPC found that Officer A's conduct involved Gross Misconduct based on the elements of the crime. The Committee determined that the case was aggravated in part by Officer A's refusal to submit to a breath test, requiring the officers to get a search warrant for a blood draw. This demonstrated disrespect for the profession he was in the process of joining. The CPC determined that Officer A's conduct rose to the level to warrant denial of his application for training, with an initial period of ineligibility of five years before he can reapply. The Board approved the Committee's recommendation. DPSST served Officer A with a Notice of Intent to Deny, he failed to request a hearing, and his Application for Training was denied by default final order.

Officer A's Application for Training is Denied.

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Important Notice

DPSST, in consultation with the Board and the Policy Committees, decertifies nearly 100 public safety professionals a year, with an average of 120 professional standards cases pending at any given time. The current denial and revocation standards for criminal justice certification have been in place for over eight years. Those eight years have seen a myriad of societal, technological and legal changes, some of which directly affect what it means to be a public safety officer in this state.

In recognition of the need to continually review standards to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate, DPSST has received permission from the Telecommunications, Corrections and Police Policy Committees to form a workgroup to review the criminal justice denial/revocation standards and make recommendations for adjustments if needed.

The workgroup will be representative of all interested parties, to include all disciplines, ranks and geographic locations. Questions, comments or concerns can be directed to Professional Standards Division Director Lindsay Hale.

The Whistleblowers Dilemma

The Whistleblowers Dilemma is an example that has been used in business schools to talk about ethical decision-making. The Dilemma outlines the choices that a potential whistleblower faces when they are aware of unethical conduct:

1. Quit
2. Do nothing and continue to enjoy the benefits of your job
3. Complain to the boss
4. Go outside the company

Historically whistleblowers have paid a high price for divulging even the most unethical conduct (for example Frank Serpico and Jeffrey Wigand).

What motivates someone to become a whistleblower? The research is pretty clear on what separates someone who will “blow the whistle” from someone who will not: it comes down to the individual’s priorities when it comes to fairness and loyalty. A person who values fairness more than loyalty is more likely to report misconduct than someone who values loyalty over fairness. This difference seems to be true of both conscious decision-making and non-conscious behavior.

If we are to establish high ethical standards in our professions we must encourage people to report unethical conduct when they become aware of it. Understanding how fairness and loyalty can encourage or discourage reporting of unethical conduct will help us maintain the professionalism of public safety.

Contributed by: *Steve Winegar, PhD., Leadership Training Coordinator, DPSST*

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