



UTAH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF

MICHAEL L. SMITH

Utah County Residents,

The events around the country and world over the past few weeks in relation to the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis have caused many people to question the practices of their own local police departments. I feel that it is important to address a few of the most asked questions that have been sent to our office. Before addressing some specific questions, I would like to address our policing practices in general. The first page of our policy manual contains the Sheriff's Preface that reads in part:

As the most visible symbol of law, Members of the Utah County Sheriff's Office must conduct themselves in a manner that inspires respect for the law. To be worthy of public trust, law enforcement authority must be exercised in a manner consistent with the highest principals of a free society. In a society that holds freedom in the highest regard, the authority to take that freedom away must be treated with integrity and respect. Although conditions may exist to exercise that authority to limit a person's freedom, great care must always be employed to safeguard that same person's dignity.

Our goal or our mission is to work hand in hand with our community to provide public safety as well as to protect and preserve the Constitutional rights of all who reside in or visit our beautiful county.

1. **Policies:** In April of this year, 2020, we adopted a new policy and procedures manual that required the good part of a year to prepare. A team of Utah County Sheriff's Office administrators worked with a nationally renowned company to prepare policies that adhere to the Constitution, federal, state, and local laws. As well as policies that reflect the best practice, procedures, and standards from across the nation. We are confident that our policies give clear direction and guidelines to our deputies as they serve to protect the rights and safety of all people.
2. **Use of Force Review:** The Utah County Sheriff's Office objectively evaluates the use of force by its members to ensure that their authority is used lawfully, appropriately and is consistent with training and policy. All use of force incidents involving a deputy are documented and forwarded to a supervisor for review. A Use of Force Review Board is convened for incidents resulting in serious injury, death, use of a firearm, or any incident the sheriff requests. The board makes a recommendation determining if the employee's actions were within policy and procedure. If they were not, an internal affairs investigation can be ordered, a criminal investigation can be opened, discipline up to and including termination of employment, as well as training can be applied.
3. **Training:** It is the policy of the Department to administer a training program that will provide for the professional growth and continued development of its personnel. By doing so, the Department ensures its personnel possess the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a professional level of service that meets the needs of the community. This training does include the skills involved in de-escalation. These skills are taught in classroom setting as well as in



UTAH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF

MICHAEL L. SMITH

virtual simulators and live scenarios. We certify deputies in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) which focuses on de-escalation skills. Our training and policies prohibit discriminating against, oppressing or providing favoritism to any person because of age, race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, marital status, physical or mental disability, medical condition or other classification protected by law, or intentionally denying or impeding another in the exercise or enjoyment of any right, privilege, power or immunity.

4. **Body Cameras:** The Utah County Sheriff's Office does not currently deploy body cameras. I have always been a supporter of cameras, in-car as well as body cameras. Prior to taking the office of sheriff, I served as a chief of police. I was successful in working with the city over several years to secure funds in our budget to deploy body cameras. Since taking office as sheriff, I have submitted budget requests with the county for body cameras every budget cycle. I will continue to work toward securing funds to deploy body cameras as a method to improve our transparency to the community.
5. **Community Policing & Involvement:** The Sheriff's Office strives to be true partners with our citizens and community in providing public safety. We have multiple programs that include inmate rehabilitation and programs, search and rescue, jeep patrol, mounted horse posse, volunteers in police services, and honorary colonels that comprise hundreds of volunteers. Through these partnerships we are able to foster opportunities of trust, understanding, transparency, and a true team approach to community issues. We also offer multiple programs to our community such as school safety, Teachers Academy, Rape Aggression Defense system (RAD), firearms safety, bike safety, internet safety and neighborhood safety to name a few.

As your sheriff, it is my commitment to you that we will continue to work towards providing public safety in a fair and ethical manner for all people. We will continue to seek out training, equipment, community programs, and policies and procedures that promote transparency, safety, and fairness for all. I would love to be able to tell you we will never have issues of officer misconduct, but I can't make that promise. What I can promise is we will continue to hold our employees accountable for misconduct. We will do everything within our ability to assure we are employing competent deputies who are drawn to this profession for the right reason, to serve. I would encourage anyone who wants to make a difference, who wants to make things better, who wants to see a change, who wants to keep their community safe to get involved. I am always open to constructive thoughts and dialogue on how we can improve our service. I am positive we can get through this and all other community issues as a team!

It is truly and honor to serve you.

Sincerely,



Sheriff Mike Smith