



A Letter to the Skokie Community from Police Chief Scarpelli



I am pleased to share some insights into the measures the Skokie Police Department routinely takes to both protect and respect the rights of each individual while maintaining the peace and safety of the community as a whole. The employees of the Skokie Police Department are sincerely honored to serve and protect the residents and those who visit the Village of Skokie. Again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide some understanding into what the Skokie Police Department is doing to protect the safety of our community while ensuring the well-being of everyone involved. Our initiatives are universal to all races and cultures, and we are honored to serve and protect this community based on these ideologies.

The Skokie Village Code identifies the responsibilities of the Skokie Police Department as the protection of individual rights of all people, the protection of life and property, and the preservation of peace, order and safety. With these values as its mandate, *it is the mission of the Skokie Police Department to proactively and professionally deliver law enforcement services to the people of Skokie in order to enhance the quality of life through the preservation of peace and order.* This mission serves as the fundamental basis for the commitment of the Department and all its members to treat all people with dignity and respect while remaining sensitive to their unique needs. In addition, the Department continually reviews and implements best practices and as such was among the first Departments to adopt the Ten Shared Principles, a Resolution between the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police and the Illinois NAACP.

To achieve its mission and uphold the values upon which it is based, the Skokie Police Department has long-established policies and practices, critically reviewed and approved by both State and national accrediting bodies, which may be relevant to the ongoing national discussion. Police Department recruitment and hiring is done by a civilian, independent Board that reflects our diverse community. We have presented many of these policies below, and welcome conversation with interested community members:

Ongoing Education and Training

The Skokie Police Department is dedicated to the ongoing education, training and professional development of its sworn Officers and civilian staff. Employees regularly attend general law enforcement training courses as well as instruction specific to their area of responsibility. The categories delineated below represent but a few of the training classes Skokie Police employees are required to attend:

- Cultural Diversity and Sensitivity
- Crisis Intervention
- Dealing with the Mentally Ill

- Civil Rights
- Illinois Human Rights Act
- Laws of Arrest, Search and Seizure
- Use of Force Decisions and Application
- De-Escalation of Force and Communication Tactics
- Defensive Tactics
- Procedural Justice

Community Outreach Initiatives

The Police Department's mission and values, practices and policies, and ongoing efforts toward personal and professional development of its staff are put into practice each and every day, not only through quality interactions with individual citizens, but through the Department's many community partnerships. In recognition of the critical importance of the relationship between the Department and the citizens it is sworn to serve, the Police Department maintains many long-standing Community Outreach initiatives designed to enhance and nurture that relationship. Among the most well-known of these programs are the:

- Neighborhood Watch Program
- National Night Out Community Event
- Citizens Police Academy
- Ride-along Program
- Cops with Kids Charity Program
- Many Cultures, One Community: Keeping Skokie Safe Campaign
- Chat with the Chief
- Permanent Beat Officer Program
- Visits at Block Parties

Required De-Escalation Training

De-escalation training is designed to provide Officers with knowledge and practical strategies with which to effectively diminish the potential for conflict or violence. Every Skokie Police Officer receives training in a broad spectrum of de-escalation techniques and topics while at the Recruit Academy, during in-house Expanded Basic Training, and through refresher courses provided throughout an Officer's career. Reality-based training utilizing role-playing and scenarios is also often integrated into quarterly training and involves subject matter ranging from dealing with the mentally ill to de-escalation of force.

All employees, sworn and civilian, supervisors and line staff, were also recently provided training in Procedural Justice, i.e., fairness in the processes utilized to resolve conflict and disputes. Then the Department actually took it a step further and participated in Procedural Justice training with members of the community at large. Through this training, the Department and its members have embraced the four pillars of procedural justice as a basis for interacting with all people: Fairness, Voice, Transparency and Impartiality. Additionally, nearly 45 police officers have been trained and are certified as Crisis Intervention Team officers which has a strong emphasis on de-escalation during tense situations.

Required Response-to-Resistance Training

Skokie Police Officers train regularly on defensive tactics, safe control techniques, responses to resistance and authorized uses of force. During this training, Officers are taught to consider all of the resources they have at their disposal in order to achieve a safe and successful outcome for a given incident or encounter. These resources include their mere presence, de-escalation techniques, verbal commands, less-lethal weapons (pepper spray, electronic control devices) and in rare occasions, deadly force. Further, they are trained to apply or utilize these resources in progression, when circumstances allow, and to utilize the very least amount of force necessary.

Duty to Intervene

Skokie Police Department rules and regulations require any Officer who is present and observing another Officer using force that is clearly beyond what is objectively reasonable under the circumstances to intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force, when in a position to do so. An Officer who observes another employee use force exceeding that permitted by law is mandated to promptly report these observations to a supervisor. A violation of these orders will result in disciplinary action.

Use of Force Reporting

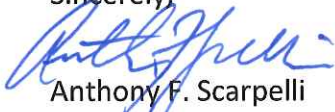
All uses of force taken, or alleged to have been taken, by a Skokie Police Officer, ranging from a simple, physical confrontation to the use of deadly force, are required by policy to be documented in writing and reported to a supervisor without delay. Reporting includes a detailed narrative of the incident circumstances and the actions of each Officer involved. Every alleged use of force is then investigated by supervisory staff, with written findings forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. Based upon the findings, the Chief may impose discipline up to and including termination.

Prohibition of Chokeholds and Strangleholds

Skokie Police Officers are prohibited by Illinois State law and Department policy from using chokeholds or strangleholds as control tactics. This means Officers are not allowed to use these defensive tactics, or any other tactic, that would involve applying direct pressure to the throat with the intent to prevent the intake of air. The only circumstance in which this type of action might be allowed is when the use of deadly force, as defined by both Illinois Compiled Statutes and Department policy, is authorized. In other words, such a tactic would only be authorized when a civilian or police officer faces an imminent threat of great bodily harm or death from another.

The members of the Skokie Police Department are genuinely grateful to serve and protect the residents and those who visit the Village of Skokie.

Sincerely,



Anthony F. Scarpelli
Chief of Police