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Ottawa Police Service Ethics:

Honour Courage Service



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA

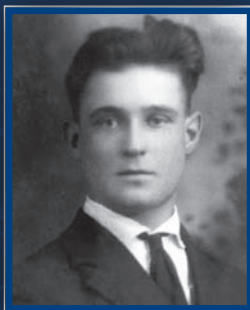
*Working together for a safer community
La sécurité de notre communauté, un travail d'équipe*

Dedication

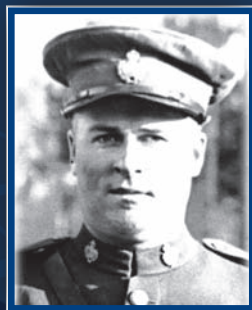
There is no higher reason to adhere to the ideals set out in this book than to honour these officers. They gave their lives in the line of duty. They served the people of the Ottawa community with honour and courage. This book is dedicated to their memory. It is also a tribute to the many men and women who pursue, and have pursued, these ideals throughout their careers at the Ottawa Police Service in its many historical forms. And finally, this book is written for the women and men who will serve the profession and this organization in the future.



HIRAM O'CALLAGHAN
APRIL 8, 1884–
JANUARY 12, 1928



MILES CAMPBELL
JUNE 14, 1899–
JUNE 9, 1929



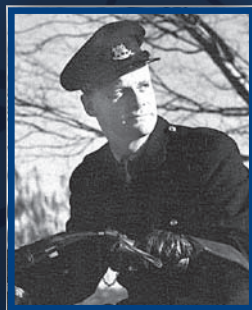
JOHN MONTGOMERY
FEBRUARY 20, 1908–
JULY 31, 1931



HAROLD DENT
MARCH 2, 1903–
JUNE 20, 1940



THOMAS STONEMAN
OCTOBER 18, 1908–
OCTOBER 29, 1945



GEORGE CONSTANTINEAU
AUGUST 14, 1915–
NOVEMBER 17, 1954



JEFFREY ARMSTRONG
JANUARY 11, 1940–
MAY 13, 1963



JOHN ROBERT MAKI
AUGUST 22, 1935–
APRIL 4, 1966



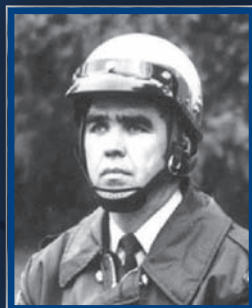
DAVID TUCKEY
MARCH 29, 1933–
JANUARY 21, 1970



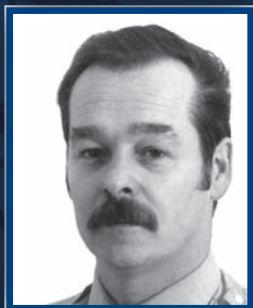
DAVID KIRKWOOD
OCTOBER 26, 1955–
JULY 11, 1977



KENNETH SWETT
MARCH 8, 1951–
JULY 17, 1981



RUSSELL O'CONNOR
APRIL 18, 1942–
SEPTEMBER 7, 1983



DAVID UTMAN
AUGUST 11, 1945–
OCTOBER 14, 1983



ERIC CZAPNIK
MAY 26, 1958–
DECEMBER 29, 2009

Preface



Dear Members of the Ottawa Police Service,

As the Chair of the Ottawa Police Services Board I am honoured to inaugurate the Ethics Program of the Ottawa Police Service. The book you hold in your hand is the heart and soul of this program. It defines some of the fundamental principles of what it means to be a police professional, whether a sworn officer or civilian member. More importantly, it outlines how important it is that members of the service are guided by clear, shared and positive ethics in their daily actions.

Since becoming Chair I have publicly stated my pride in the men and women of our Ottawa Police Service, who often serve this community in adverse conditions. However, I also wish to make it clear that this pride is based on your collective maintenance of the highest ethical standards. Therefore I ask, whether you are a newly hired member of the Police Service or a seasoned veteran, that you adhere to the values and principles set out in these pages. If you do, you will be guaranteed the support of the citizens you serve, who have placed great trust in you to uphold the values of the community.

This book and the Ethics Program are not designed to moralize or dictate your actions, but to explicitly define the values guiding your decisions on a daily basis—values that most of us take for granted and assume are shared among all police professionals. By placing these guiding values front and centre, we will no longer take them for granted; no longer assume that one person’s values match another’s identically. Whether in policing, private sector business, government service, or any number of professions, when guiding values only exist in the background, decisions are inconsistent or made without due consideration of right and wrong. When we have a strong, shared understanding of our core ethical values, I believe that consistently good decisions and actions will be taken.

The values and principles herein are likely the same, or very similar, to those you hold true and led you to this line of work in the first place. This Ethics Program is simply a career-long reminder of those fundamentals to assist you in making the best possible decision—whatever the circumstance. Practice keeps our skills honed and ready for use; making the right ethical decision is certainly a skill worth practicing.

I have no doubt that you will rise to the challenge of staying true to yourself, your police service, your community, your profession and the values laid out in this book.

Please stay safe in your daily duties and know that your dedication to serving your community is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,



Eli El-Chantiry
Chair,
Ottawa Police Services Board

Foreword



To My Fellow Police Professionals,

This book is intended for all of us and for the public we serve. It is the cornerstone of the Ottawa Police Service Ethics Program. It defines the ethos of our profession. It outlines the critical role that a strong and commonly understood set of ethics plays in maintaining that ethos. It identifies the values and principles considered fundamental for all members of the Ottawa Police Service as we pursue the highest ethical standards, both individually and collectively. At its core, this book serves to build a common understanding of ethical expectations across our organization.

As a complement to this book, the Ethics Program will include training modules that provide us all with ethical reasoning models, advanced theory, ethical training standards, workbook scenarios and more. This book is being put in the hands of all OPS members because it sets the groundwork for the program and serves as a physical reminder of the importance that ethics have in our ability to fulfill our duties to the highest standard. Each value and supporting principle applies to every one of us and has been included here after very careful deliberation.

Our core ethical values and principles are powerful and evoke enormously positive images. However, they remain only words on paper until we consistently apply them in our actions. We have all demonstrated them in the past on various occasions, but we are now asking that every police professional in the organization consciously maintain a continuous awareness of them in every endeavour, on and off duty.

The Ottawa Police Service Ethics Program is intended to be a living process within the service. Each member's own personal anecdotes, views and opinions about our core ethical values and principles are crucial to the program. We invite you to share your input with your peers and with the coordinators of the Ethics Program, so we can modify and improve it on an ongoing basis. Several members of the organization and members of the community have already provided valuable input and many of their ideas are found within these pages.

Ottawa Police Service Ethics comes from a shared image of policing—one that is positive, but also requires consistently positive actions to be upheld. We are all capable of those positive actions. We must ensure, as individuals and an organization, that our pursuit of these actions is a lifelong endeavour.

Yours Truly,



Vern White

Chief of Police,
Ottawa Police Service

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Policing

A Profession Built on Trust and Ethics

Policing is a relatively young profession. With the rise of modern democracies, the creation of a profession distinct from the military served to recognize that the power wielded by the military against its own citizens was not always an appropriate way to keep the peace. The very choice of the blue uniform for the London Metropolitan Police, formed in 1829, was to clearly distinguish them from the British army of that era, which traditionally wore red.

Until that time, the British army was the only large-scale resource that could be called on to maintain the peace domestically, but this use of force was unhealthy for the nation. As part of the British Empire at the time, Canada followed closely behind and police forces were established in Toronto, Montreal and Quebec during the 1830s. Locally, the Bytown Police formed in 1847 and Ottawa's force came into existence with the city's incorporation in 1855.

Since this emergence of the policing profession, the community has always entrusted police with special powers, most notably the powers of arrest and the use of force. In Western democracies, where individual rights and freedoms are cherished, these powers are exceptional and require the utmost discretion in their application.

The community trusts that these powers will always be used appropriately. If they are applied unethically, that trust breaks down. This is why ethics form such an essential component of the police profession.

This document defines the ethical legacy the Ottawa Police Service wishes to create, live and pass on to future generations.

“ *The police are the public and the public are the police.* ”

—*Sir Robert Peel, founder of the London Metropolitan Police in 1829*

Ethics and the Profession



As contemporary police professionals you are engaged in a calling that traces its ethical roots to some basic principles established in the early 19th century. Although these principles have evolved with the passage of time, our modern police values still reflect these early tenets. As the profession moves forward, these values will continue to adapt as society changes, but there are three core ethical values that hold true and that we expect each member to live and respect. The Ottawa Police Service chose these values because they define the essence of ethical policing from the origins of the profession. They are also consistent with the values of our local community and national identity—linking the police service to the people it serves. The core ethical values of the Ottawa Police Service are **Honour, Courage, Service**.

Part of an Ethos

H

onour, Courage and Service are fundamental guides for the ethos of the Ottawa Police Service.

An ethos is a culture, spirit or set of characteristics that define a distinguishable group of people.

Nations, sport clubs, professions, religions and many other types of human groupings can each be said to possess an identifiable ethos. In many

cases, groups can reflect combinations of ethos. For example, the members of the Ottawa Police Service can reflect the policing profession's ethos while also possessing a unique ethos based on the organization's specific history, traditions and practices.

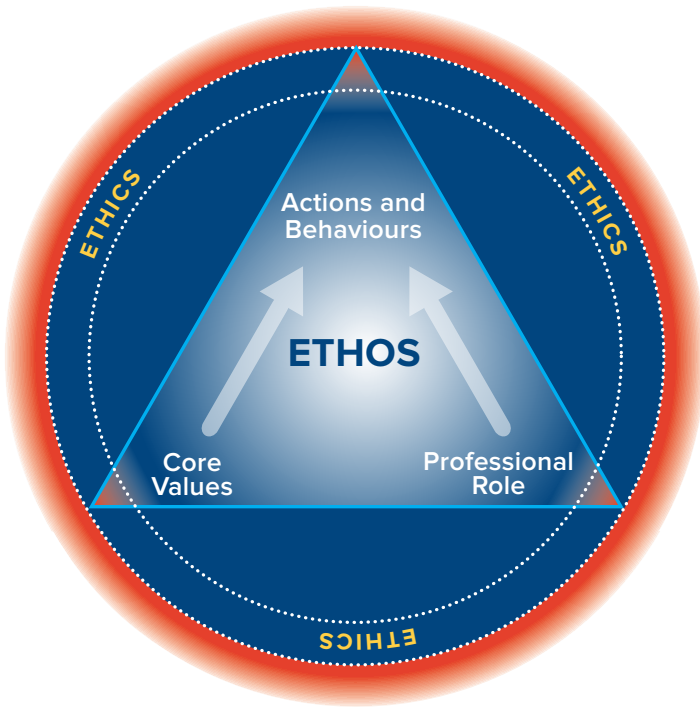
The ethos associated with an organization is formed by numerous elements. For a police service, that ethos is a combination of its professional role in society, its values, and the actions and behaviours of its members and leaders (see Figure 1). These three elements are informed by the heritage of the organization and community. The ethos and all its contributing elements are encircled by an organization's ethics. If the ethics for any point of the ethos triangle should break outside the circle, then

The Police Professional's Role

The role of the Ottawa Police Service police professional is to preserve life, property and peace within the context of Canadian law and at the direction of the people of Ottawa.

the ethos as a whole fails to meet the ethical principles desired by the organization. For many organizations, the “actions and behaviours” point is most at risk of puncturing the ethical standard. It is one thing to pursue noble aims, define positive values and create professional procedures; it is quite another—and far more difficult—task to match actions and words. The Ottawa Police Service Ethics Program is designed to clearly define the police ethos we wish to live up to, set core ethical values that are consistent with this ethos and reinforce these messages throughout the careers of our police professionals.

Figure 1: The Relationship of Ethics, Ethos and Actions



It is important to recognize that there is a very strong relationship between the actions of an identifiable group and the eventual image that comes to identify that group's ethos. An action taken by one Ottawa Police Service member has the potential to affect the way the public defines us all. For this reason it is essential that ethics be central to the decisions made by all members of the Ottawa Police Service. The core ethical values of Honour, Courage and Service are intended to guide Ottawa Police Service members in their decisions and actions, so they will create an organizational ethos that remains true to the profession and to the men and women who have served the people of Ottawa in its many historical forms over the past 150 years.



An Image of the Police Profession's Ethos

The photograph on the next page evokes the ethos of the police profession and the accompanying letter illustrates how one Canadian citizen understands that ethos.

An officer, when faced by those who would victimize others through violence, confronts such behaviour despite the possible risk he or she may face. When the most natural reaction to a threat may be to flee, the police officer's duty is to go in the opposite direction, to a place where the duty to serve others comes before concern for oneself. To do so requires courage, especially in dramatic situations where the risk of injury—or even death—is very real. Courage is also required when making an unequivocally honest account of one's decisions and actions in these conditions—when accepting responsibility for them. However, an honest account is made easier when those decisions and actions have been taken with the core ethical values of the Ottawa Police Service in mind.

While this image is of the frontline police officer, the police ethos applies equally to all of the police professionals who enable this officer and others like him to arrive on the scene of emergencies across Canada. For example, a human resources specialist recognized the officer's values and qualities when hiring him in the first place and the dispatcher ensured he arrived in a timely fashion so he could fulfil his duty. We are all an essential part of the team working to preserve life, property and peace—contributing to the ethos of the police professional as we do so.

The Letter of the Day on the opposite page, from September 25, 2008, is reprinted here with the kind permission of the National Post, letter writer Paul Greatrix, and photographer Roy Antal of the Canwest News Agency and Regina Leader-Post.

From the National Post, September 25, 2008

LETTER OF THE DAY



Students run out of high school in Regina on Tuesday as an officer runs in during a hostage incident.

A picture of real bravery

**Re: Photo illustrating the story,
Principal Overpowers Regina
Hostage-Taker, Sept. 24.**

I was mesmerized by the picture on an inside page of Tuesday's *National Post*. Pictured are three students running for their lives from the hostage-taking incident at a high school in Regina. And going in the opposite direction is a policeman. This is truly a dramatic picture that says a thousand words.

What a missed opportunity for the *Post* to remind us all that police are not just around to annoy us with speeding tickets. When we are scared for our lives, the police are ready to face the danger for us. So why wasn't this picture on the front page instead of yet another picture of Sarah Palin?

Paul Greatrix, Oakville, Ont.

Ethics are About Judgment

The field of ethics, in both definition and application, is simply the study of what is right and wrong. Ethics guide and are linked to morals, conduct and other action-based deeds.

Considering an ethical question does not have to be a long, drawn-out affair. It can, and often does, only require a moment's reflection to ask, and answer, "Is this the right thing to do?" In certain professions practiced under adverse conditions and having dramatic impact on other human lives—such as policing, the military and medicine—failing to ask this question can have dire and tragic consequences.

Determining right and wrong in any given situation is influenced by many things, which means that it can be perceived as a highly subjective domain. However, using this rationale as a reason to dismiss or ignore ethical questions is a critical error. As police professionals we are engaged in a noble pursuit and many assume that simply carrying out our duties with good intent is sufficient—rarely reflecting meaningfully on the ethical consequences of our individual actions and behaviours. The Ottawa Police Service Ethics Program is designed to create a greater awareness for ethics and to make ethical consideration a continual part of our daily operations—a part of our culture.

Ethical choices are rarely black-and-white

"Aristotle understood that ethical choices are rarely black-and-white. ... This is why Aristotle thought that ethics could never be a 'science'—that ethical decisions could never be derived from a set of clear-cut rules and principles. That, he said, is why practical wisdom was needed. ... He had faith that ordinary citizens could learn to judge wisely in practical matters."

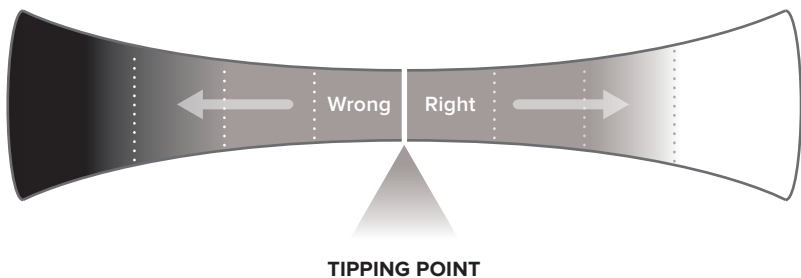
—Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe, *Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing* (Riverhead Books, NY, 2010)

Ethics for All, Not Just Philosophers

The field of ethics is considered part of the broader study of philosophy and its earliest overt examination was penned by some of the world's most well known classical philosophers, such as Aristotle. While ethical philosophy is still found in the halls of higher education, it is not simply a lofty pursuit for academic minds. Neither is it the exclusive domain of leaders and the elite. In civil society, the question of what is right, wrong, good or bad is the responsibility of everyone. This is neither idealistic, nor unrealistic. Whether the question is asked internally under duress—when a quick, tough decision rests on the shoulders of one person—or asked in a group setting before, during, or after an ethical dilemma, such reflection should now be the norm and not the exception, especially understanding that there is an ethos to uphold.

Most ethical decisions we make in life are not between two clearly identified opposites, but occur in the grey area somewhere between the absolutes of black and white. Figure 2 is a simple illustration of the ethical decision-making continuum, where the tipping point reflects the mid-point between what is right and what is wrong. As an Ottawa Police Service member, you are expected to constantly assess your actions with this continuum in mind. The core ethical values are not simply provided as motivational words. Rather, they form the basis of a values- and principles-based model for ethical decision-making. If you adhere to the three core values in the performance of your duties, you will be viewed as remaining on the right side of the continuum.

Figure 2: Continuum for Ethical Decision-making





“ We must never forget the vital role that you play in our communities every day. And those whose lives you have touched directly will forever hold in their hearts the memory of how you answered the call of duty.

I recall a photo that was shown to me during my recent visit to Saskatchewan that illustrates your dedication perfectly.

The photo depicted an emerging situation at a school. Students and teachers were streaming out of the building, but one figure was going against the tide, heading with purpose towards the danger. This man was a police officer.

To you, the idea of service—to people, to the community, and to our country—is second nature.



— His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston
The Governor General of Canada
Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day
September 25, 2011

Our Core Ethical Values



Service to the Community
Ottawa Police - Ottawa



Core Ethical Values of the Ottawa Police Service

Honour

To uphold the Ottawa Police Service's core ethical value of honour, you must act honourably. To be honourable means that you are **worthy of trust and respect**; you are **not deceptive** and, notably, you **adhere to ethical and moral principles**. These are qualities the Ottawa Police Service requires of all of its members. More specifically, this means that OPS members adhere to the laws and societal norms they uphold, while conducting their duties in a manner that earns the trust and respect of the community they serve. By this definition, the core ethical value of honour is related to the following organizational values of the Ottawa Police Service: honesty, ethical behaviour, respect and accountability.

Courage

Courage is a **quality of the spirit** that allows you to **confront danger without showing fear** and a **quality of the mind** that enables you to **meet difficulties with firmness, resolution and valour**. In the context of the Ottawa Police Service this means that its members are expected to show physical courage in the face of danger and moral courage when confronting difficult situations, handling them with professional respect and clarity of purpose. It also means having the strength of character to honestly account for actions taken. This understanding of the word relates to the following OPS organizational values: honesty, professional behaviour, acceptance of responsibility for actions, respect and working cooperatively.

Service

The OPS core ethical value of service is the foundation of the values outlined here, but also the heart of the policing profession. The idea of serving others is fundamental to police duties. Service describes **work that benefits, helps or assists another, a duty performed** as a requirement of a **profession and a profession of respect** or **acknowledgement of duty**. It also describes work by an agency that **performs a public service**. As such, all members of the Ottawa Police Service are expected to approach their work with the mindset that their professional actions are always governed by a sense of respectful service and their fundamental mission is to impartially preserve the life, property and peace of—and for—others. Upholding this value of service requires that each member place the needs of the community and their peers ahead of their own. This meaning of the word is related to, but transcends, the OPS organizational values of professional behaviour, acceptance of responsibility, respect and teamwork. Service is our driving force. Honour and courage stand on its shoulders.



Our Values on the Ground

In December 2005, Ottawa Police received a call indicating that a violent disturbance was occurring in sub-divided house on Crichton Street in the New Edinburgh area. When two patrol Constables arrived on the scene, they quickly learned from frantic neighbours that a young woman, K'Leigh Cundall, had been violently attacked by a man wielding a large knife and that both were inside the woman's residence. The two officers hurriedly approached the main door and discovered it was locked from the inside. Given the urgency of the situation, the officers immediately attempted to force entry, but were only able to break through a small lower panel of the heavy door. Without hesitating, one of the officers entered through the small opening—his pistol drawn. As he crawled through, a man wielding a large, Ka-Bar style combat knife—covered in blood—confronted him immediately. While working to gain full entry into the small foyer, the officer kept the suspect safely at gunpoint. When the second officer entered, the Constables quickly disarmed and restrained the suspect. They then attempted to provide first aid to the stricken young woman. Tragically, the 21-year-old university student could not be saved. For their actions, both patrol Constables were awarded the Medal of Bravery of Canada. Their honourable and courageous actions in the service of another exemplify our core ethical values and their importance in our daily operations.

Our 10 Ethical Principles

In order to cultivate the three core ethical values, the Ottawa Police Service subscribes to and encourages the practice of the following 10 ethical principles. These principles are ideals, values and practices that are found over and over again in a wide-ranging collection of studies on ethics.

1. **Leadership:** Always demonstrate leadership, even when this simply means leading by example in performing your duties to the best of your abilities.
2. **Honesty:** Practice absolute honesty in all interactions and reporting. Even when the truth may appear contrary to your own self-interest, know that honesty is the right approach.
3. **Integrity:** Maintain integrity under all circumstances. Compromising your integrity adversely impacts your own name, as well as those of the service and the profession.
4. **Professionalism:** Continuously practice professionalism. Know that impartial and competent fulfillment of your duties defines you as an individual, but also contributes to the perception of the police service and the profession as a whole.

Our Principles in Action

On January 12, 2010, a devastating earthquake struck Haiti killing as many as 300,000 people and destroying much of the country's infrastructure, particularly in the capital of Port-au-Prince.

At the time of the earthquake, three members of the Ottawa Police Service were deployed in the country as part of a United Nations Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL) mission to the country.

In the moments following the earthquake, and through the aftermath, these officers helped pull people from the ruins and deliver humanitarian aid. These actions were conducted under highly hazardous conditions, including the danger of collapsing buildings, the risk of disease and, as the social order deteriorated, the threat of physical attack. These officers endured physical assaults, were engaged by gunfire and, in one case, subjected to a vicious slashing attack—the extent of which the officer was not even aware until colleagues noticed his ballistic armour had been deeply cut in several places. Under extremely adverse conditions, these officers demonstrated the core ethical values and principles of the Ottawa Police Service to the highest degree. They displayed courage and an enormous sense of service to the many victims of this tragedy, risking injury—and even death—in their duty to preserve life. The fact they were on the streets of Port-au-Prince was, itself, an act of moral courage and leadership. While several foreign contingents refused, or failed, to deploy out of their enclaves, our three officers convinced higher authorities that they should be providing assistance in the city. Acting with compassion, professionalism, honour and respect, these officers upheld the expectations set for them by the Canadian people, the people of Ottawa, the Ottawa Police Service, their profession and their own moral compasses.

5. **Duty:** At all times, remember your duty to your professional obligations, including service to the public and to one another within the profession.
6. **Respect:** Always demonstrate respect toward others, regardless of differences—whether based on culture, religion, or strongly held personal beliefs. Especially maintain respect when you are in an adverse situation and feel that you and your profession are not being shown respect.
7. **Compassion:** Demonstrate compassion toward others, regardless of their actions or behaviour.
8. **Fairness:** Practice fairness by considering all views in all situations, no matter how divergent these may be from your own.
9. **Loyalty:** Display loyalty to the profession, the organization and fellow members without sacrificing adherence to OPS core ethical values and principles.
10. **Responsibility:** Approach everything with the knowledge that you are responsible for your decisions and actions. Act in a manner that will withstand impartial scrutiny.

Ethical Leadership

M

aking leadership the first ethical principle of the Ottawa Police Service is a very deliberate choice. At its core, leadership is the ability to influence the behaviour of others. Like ethics in general, leadership can be used to achieve a shared purpose that falls anywhere on the continuum between right and wrong (see Figure 2 on page 9). Practised and

principled leadership is necessary to ensure that the police ethos remains bounded by ethics that are consistent with policing values (see Figure 1 on page 4).

In a large-scale survey on leadership—conducted over two decades and including approximately 75,000 people from around the world—respondents were asked to rank the attributes of effective leaders. The following four attributes were selected as the top four by more than half of the respondents: honesty, vision, competency and the ability to inspire. Ethics was striking in its absence.

When the Canadian Armed Forces updated its formal definition of leadership in 2005, this missing element was identified and ethics became a pre-requisite for effective leadership.

“Effective CF leadership may be formally defined as directing, motivating, and enabling others to accomplish the mission professionally and ethically, while developing or improving capabilities that contribute to mission success.”

—Canadian Armed Forces
Leadership Institute

Building on this idea, the Ottawa Police Service has developed its own definition of effective leadership.

The Ottawa Police Service firmly believes that the responsibility and special powers entrusted to us by the community means every police professional always acts from a position of leadership. Our basic interactions with each other and the community we serve have the very real potential to influence the outcome of events and future behaviours. As a result of this leadership role, our actions are viewed by the community through the ethical lens of right and wrong. In order for us to be effective leaders, it is critical that all Ottawa Police Service members—regardless of rank and authority—be guided by the service’s core ethical values. To be true and effective, this ethical leadership must be embedded in the policing ethos, in the organizational culture and in our daily actions. It must be a behaviour that is conscientiously practised.

The Ottawa Police Service defines effective leadership as:

Consistently setting a positive, ethical example for others, thereby influencing outcomes and future behaviour that contribute to the success of the police mandate and individual missions

Ethical Leadership through Adversity

During the summer of 2003, Ardeth Wood was reported missing after going for an afternoon ride on her bicycle. The Ottawa Police Service, other local police agencies, volunteers from the community, the Canadian Armed Forces and other groups came together to search for the young woman over several days. Tragically, she was found dead and it was determined that she had been the victim of a homicide. Many different people, both within and outside of the Ottawa Police Service, demonstrated commendable leadership during this incident, however the group of people who most inspired others with their steadfast leadership was the investigative team from the Major Crime Section. This seasoned team persisted in their investigation despite criticism, enormous amounts of data, the need to coordinate large numbers of resources and no clear suspects. In 2005, a suspect was arrested in North Bay, Ontario, after a failed sexual assault. A Belleville investigator and an Ottawa Police Service detective there on an unrelated case correctly linked the male in North Bay police custody to the Ottawa crime based on inter-agency broadcasts of the 2003 crime. In 2008, the Ottawa Police Service investigative team concluded a successful prosecution of this case. The leadership demonstrated by this team of Ottawa Police Service investigators serves as an inspiration to the rest of us for their ability to pursue a seemingly insurmountable case with determination, professionalism and a personal sense of duty to the victim, her family and friends. True to the best leaders amongst us, the official lead investigator refuses any form of credit or praise in relation to his role in this matter, insisting the success belongs to other members of his Major Crime team and everyone else who helped in this case.

Duty of Care

An ethical leader must adhere to the concept of duty of care, whether for others in the police service or members of the public. This is not simply an academic duty, but a legal obligation under common law.

One of the fundamental elements of meeting our duty of care is the act of minimizing, reducing, or preventing harm. In the case of subordinates, we should constantly seek to ensure their welfare and be attuned to their problems, issues and wellbeing. In the case of those people with whom we come into contact through our police duties, we must constantly seek to protect them from harm and reduce any harm they have suffered. In the case of people on whom we need to use force to prevent further or worse harm, we are obliged to do so with the minimum amount of force necessary to stop the immediate threat effectively and then commit to reducing any inflicted harm by seeking medical aid if required. Duty of care is clearly tied to our ethical decision-making. If we have several options, the right one gets the job done and results in the least amount of harm.

Duty of Care in the Field

Late one May evening in 2009, a man in his 30s punched his girlfriend in the face during a violent outburst. The young woman fled and called 911, leaving her six-year-old son in the residence on Marlin Private in the city of Ottawa. When the first patrol officers on the scene approached the house to check the welfare of the child and investigate the assault, the male suspect yelled at the officers that there would be trouble if they tried to enter the residence. Through a window, one of the officers saw the man now armed with a sub-machine gun. The patrol officers immediately called for more resources—a routine call had escalated into a hostage situation. It was later learned that the suspect also had a semi-automatic handgun. The ensuing six hours served as a testimony to the concept of duty of care.

Responding officers and civilian police dispatchers managed the crime scene with extreme care to avoid any harm to the child, his mother, the neighbours, emergency responders and the suspect himself. Police dispatchers and officers contacted neighbours to get them to leave their homes or seek cover in their basements. The Police Victim Crisis Unit assisted the victims of this incident at the scene and has remained involved with them since. Medical attention was sought for the victim of the original assault and remained on standby in case someone else was harmed. The Tactical Unit, patrol officers and other uniformed police officers provided armed containment of the suspect to prevent him from escaping into the community with his firearms. Plain clothes investigators conducted interviews to gain a better understanding of the armed man's background and his mindset, which was crucial information for the incident commander and the hostage negotiators.

The situation was extremely volatile, becoming tense and unstable several times as the suspect consumed alcohol and went through varying states of belligerence. Although a tactical police intervention to rescue the child was always a very real possibility, patience and perseverance led the suspect to surrender peacefully in the early hours of the morning. This incident is an example of clear-headed decision-making that made the preservation of life the foremost consideration. It epitomizes the concept of duty of care.

Committing to Honour, Courage and Service



Our consistent and practised application of Honour, Courage and Service is critical to a policing culture that builds the strongest possible relationship with the public we serve. Adhering to the model of ethics found in this book—including the 10 ethical principles—means that our actions will bolster the trust of the community.

When you close the pages of this book, their guiding values will stay with you. This is only the beginning of being an ethical police professional. You will face—whether in training or real-life—dilemmas that challenge your sense of right and wrong. Now you have the core ethical values of Honour, Courage and Service to help guide your decisions.



In practising ethical leadership, from this moment on you should ask one simple question before making a decision of consequence:

Am I being guided by Honour, Courage and Service?

Take comfort when the answer is yes. When you are unsure, ask for help (if the situation permits). Ethical decisions are not always straightforward. We will all need to seek and provide help on these matters, whether one on one or in a team. Ethical discussions need to become part of what we do.

As Sir Robert Peel said, “the police are the public and the public are the police.” The strength of trust in that relationship is built on ethical policing and appropriate use of the powers entrusted to us.

In this spirit, our careers as police professionals are built on the code of ethics embodied in this book. Whether you are at the start of your career or have been around the block a few times, every police professional with the Ottawa Police Service will commit to upholding this code of ethics in the presence of the Chief and Executive Officers—as will they.

As an organization, we are committed to upholding the core ethical values of Honour, Courage and Service. We must all do this together.

We will be stronger for it.