



Redding Police Department

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Mark O'Donnell
Chief of Police

To the Redding Community,

In light of the events our nation is facing, I thought it might be appropriate to reach out to our community directly. I am personally distraught over the actions and inaction of the four officers involved in the death of George Floyd; it makes me sick to my stomach. The civil unrest is also painful for me to witness. My profession has made mistakes. My profession owns that. The implicit biases and life experiences that we, as human beings, all possess contribute to those mistakes.

By definition, human nature includes the core characteristics (feelings, psychology, and behaviors) shared by all people. But we all have unique experiences in our lives, and this is where the differences begin. I tend to believe that most people are good and that we must try to mitigate the worst of human nature. Unfortunately, we are an imperfect species and policing is an imperfect profession, but there should absolutely be no tolerance for racism and inequality. We are all better than that.

On behalf of the Redding Police Department, I extend our sincere condolences to the Floyd family for their tragic loss. The use of force that killed George Floyd is inexcusable. It is not consistent with the core values of law enforcement or the men and women who serve in the Redding Police Department.

As your Chief of Police, I want to reassure you that the Redding Police Department's continuing mission is to provide the highest level of public service and respect to every member of our community. We strive to be a transparent agency and welcome you to come in to speak to us. We continually try to improve ourselves. We are among the few accredited police agencies in the State and have recently (April 18, 2020) contracted the consulting firm of the Daigle Law Group to review and help improve our policies. Our officers receive continuing education in de-escalation, cultural bias and diversity, crisis intervention and use of force training as well as many more subjects. Additionally, in October of 2018, we partnered with the Center for Police Equity (John Jay College), an organization that provides police and communities with a way to use data to improve public safety and racial equity. Connecticut's police employment standards are also among some of the most vetted in the nation. Our Use of Force, Bias Profiling and Citizen Complaint Policies have been added to our website should you like to learn more about them.

When I became your Police Chief in 2018, I incorporated a quote from Robert Ingersoll, a 19th Century American writer and speaker, into our department's value statement - "We Rise by Lifting Others." This simply means that we believe that it is our innate duty to selflessly put the needs of others before our own and that by doing so, we become better individuals, agencies and communities.

As a police department, we stand behind the right to peacefully protest, and we share the pain of the nation.

Stay safe and well.

Sincerely,
Chief Mark O'Donnell
Chief Mark O'Donnell

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