



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

<b>SUBJECT</b> Use of Discretion		<b>NO. OF PAGES:</b> 2
<b>REFERENCE:</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> Jan. 1, 2009	<b>REVIEW DATE:</b> N/A
<b>General Order 020</b>	<b>SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/SUPERSEDES:</b> N/A	<b>ISSUING AUTH.:</b> CHIEF OF POLICE

**PURPOSE:** To establish policy concerning the use of discretion by officers.

The nature of an officer’s duties regularly involves the use of discretion. Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional policing competence, will do much to preserve good relationships and retain the confidence of the public. Officers of this department shall be aware of and abide by the guidelines set forth in this policy.

A. Definition:

1. Discretion: The latitude afforded officers to determine when to invoke the criminal process.
2. Trust: The University community has entrusted Texas Southern University Department of Public Safety to exercise its authority with **discretion**, good judgment, respect and a commitment to honesty, justice, and diversity. Each member of Texas Southern University Department of Public Safety strives to build upon the trust and confidence of the students, staff, faculty, and neighborhood community.

B. Responsibilities:

1. Officers will be responsible for exercising the discretion vested in his/her position through consideration of Texas Southern University Department of Public Safety policy and procedures, University policy, Criminal Statutes of the State of Texas, and United States Constitution.
2. The principles of reasonableness should guide the officer's actions and the officer should consider mitigating circumstances in determining whether legal or administrative action shall be taken.
3. Every situation will involve a unique set of circumstances. Officers are expected to use his/her training, knowledge, and judgment to reach an appropriate and reasonable conclusion.
4. In exercising discretion, an officer must be able to assess the situation or incident, analyze the facts or information, and then determine a reasonable and appropriate course of action. These factors include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Department policy, procedures, mission statement, values, vision, goals, and objectives.
  - b. Availability of a supervisor or other officers for guidance and/or consultation.
  - c. Facts and circumstances which will subsequently justify the decision.
  - d. Range of available alternatives.
  - e. Seriousness of the incident.
  - f. Officer safety concerns.

- g. Other factors such as staffing availability, impact on the University community, humane considerations, and potential for recurrence.

APPROVED:

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Roger Byars  
Chief of Police

Date

#### Review and Responsibility

Responsibility Party: Texas Southern University Department of Public's Safety's Command Staff

Review: Review will be conducted every even numbered

Retention: Original on file in the Office of the Chief of Police

Approval: Roger D. Byars, Director for Public Safety/Chief of Police

Date of Approval: September 1, 2008