

Bias-Motivated Crimes

319.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Vail Police Department recognizes and places a high priority on the rights of all individuals guaranteed under the Constitution and the laws of this state. When such rights are infringed upon by violence, threats or other harassment, this department will utilize all available resources to see that justice is served under the law. This policy has been developed to meet or exceed the provisions of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and provides members of this department with guidelines for identifying and investigating incidents and crimes that may be motivated by hatred or other bias.

319.1.1 FEDERAL JURISDICTION

Federal law prohibits discrimination-based acts. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) may obtain jurisdiction over crimes of violence where the perpetrator has selected the victim because of the person's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability (18 USC § 245).

319.2 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Bias-motivated crime - A person commits a bias-motivated crime if, with the intent to intimidate or harass another person because of that person's actual or perceived race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or physical or mental disability, he/she (CRS § 18-9-121(2)):

- (a) Knowingly causes bodily injury to another person.
- (b) By words or conduct, knowingly places another person in fear of imminent lawless action directed at that person or that person's property, and such words or conduct are likely to produce bodily injury to that person or damage to that person's property.
- (c) Knowingly causes damage to or destruction of the property of another person.

319.3 PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATING BIAS-MOTIVATED CRIMES

Whenever any member of this department receives a report of a suspected bias-motivated crime or other activity that reasonably appears to involve a potential bias-motivated crime, the following should occur:

- (a) Officers will be promptly assigned to contact the victim, witness or reporting party to investigate the matter further as circumstances may dictate.
- (b) A supervisor should be notified of the circumstances as soon as practicable.
- (c) Once "in progress" aspects of any such situation have been stabilized (e.g., treatment of victims or apprehension of present suspects), the assigned officers will take all reasonable steps to preserve available evidence that may tend to establish that a bias-motivated crime was involved.

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- (d) The assigned officers will interview available witnesses, victims and others to determine what circumstances, if any, indicate that the situation may involve a bias-motivated crime.
- (e) Depending on the situation, the assigned officers or supervisor may request additional assistance from investigators or other resources to further the investigation.
- (f) The assigned officers will include all available evidence indicating the likelihood of a bias-motivated crime in the relevant reports. All related reports will be clearly marked as "Bias-Motivated Crimes" and, absent prior approval of a supervisor, will be completed and submitted by the assigned officers before the end of the shift.
- (g) The assigned officers should also make reasonable efforts to assist the victim by providing available information on local assistance programs and organizations as required by the Victim and Witness Assistance Policy.
- (h) The assigned officers and supervisor should take reasonable steps to ensure that any such situation does not escalate further and should provide information to the victim regarding legal aid, e.g., a possible Temporary Restraining Order through the courts or District Attorney or Town Attorney.

319.4 INVESTIGATION SECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

If a case is assigned to the Investigation Section, the assigned investigator will be responsible for following up on the reported bias-motivated crime by:

- (a) Coordinating further investigation with the District Attorney and other appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- (b) Maintaining contact with the victim and other involved individuals, as needed.
- (c) Maintaining statistical data and tracking of suspected bias-motivated crimes as indicated or required by state law.

319.4.1 STATE BIAS-MOTIVATED CRIME REPORTING

This department shall report bias-motivated crime offenses in the form and manner and at regular intervals as prescribed by rules adopted by the Department of Public Safety. This shall be conducted by the Records Manager or assigned to the Investigation Section.

319.4.2 FEDERAL BIAS-MOTIVATED CRIME REPORTING

The Records Manager should include bias crime data reporting within the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and Summary Reporting System (SRS) reports pursuant to Records Section procedures and in compliance with (28 USC § 534(a)).

319.5 TRAINING

All officers of this department shall receive training on bias-motivated crime recognition and investigation and shall attend training which incorporates a bias-motivated crime training component.

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