



# East Whiteland Township Police Department



G. CHRISTIAN YEAGER  
Chief of Police

JOHN KOPACZ  
Lieutenant

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209 CONESTOGA ROAD ♦ FRAZER, PENNSYLVANIA 19355 ♦ TELEPHONE: 610-647-2100

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Letter from Chief Yeager  
June 23, 2020

Since the indefensible death of George Floyd, I have received several phone calls, letters and requests by citizens and groups regarding our police policies and protocols. These questions are legitimate, as the citizens and groups need to have confidence that events like those in Minneapolis will not occur here. We strive to live up to our mission statement:

### Police Mission Statement

We believe:

Our ability to listen and to understand your problems is our most important skill.

We are people committed to helping people solve problems.

Our mission is to do all we can to earn your support, one contact at a time,  
in the mutual effort to make our community safe.

While we are confident in the professionalism of our police force in East Whiteland, within the last year or so we have undertaken two significant enhancements to improve police processes and functioning. First, we have added both car and body cameras for our officers. These were budgeted for 2020 and are now in operation. Second, the East Whiteland Police Department is well underway in pursuing a full accreditation through Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (PLEAC). Achieving this level of professionalism begins with the hiring process.

EWPD officers have rigorous standards for hiring which begins with a comprehensive application and testing through the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association. The testing includes written tests, oral interview boards, comprehensive background checks, physical agility tests and psychological and polygraph exams. The final test is a drug screen. All officers hired must have completed training at the Pennsylvania Police Academy and be Act 120 Certified.

All the above tests and certifications examine moral, ethical, bias and anti-discrimination segments as well as use of force, law of arrest classes, etc.

East Whiteland Township has an extensive policy manual to guide officers in carrying out law enforcement actions through each tour of duty. Many of the policies pertain to actions of police officers during criminal incidents. However, some pertain to the specific requests I have received, as follows:

**Chokeholds and neck restraints.** East Whiteland's use of force policy states *"The use or practice of chokeholds and similar type neck restraints shall be prohibited as non-lethal force."*

**Exhausting all other alternatives, including non-force techniques, is stressed through training and by the use-of-force continuum.** This concept encourages officers to use officer presence, verbal direction, gentle hand control, defensive hand control, intermediate force, baton, and taser. Deadly force

is only a last resort. All the above options are based on the need for public safety as well as the safety of the officers and the person initiating the necessary use of force and escalation.

Training includes other available forms of de-escalation including communication techniques, how to interact with subjects who have emotional problems or distress, and the use of the mental health agencies to determine the need for intervention by medical or social service professionals

These and other related training courses are offered through annual mandatory training by the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission (MPOETC) and through private organizations with post tests for proficiency.

**Require officers to intervene and stop the use of excessive force by other officers.** Officers face disciplinary action if they fail to stop the use of excessive force. Any unnecessary use of force can be charged as a crime to be investigated by Internal Affairs. We are currently reviewing all policies for progressive language to assure equal protection and treatment for all civilian contacts.

**Require officers to report each time they use force or threat of force against civilians.** All officers are required to report uses of force whether the force results in injury to the officer or the civilian. This requirement is included in the incident report and must be approved by the Supervisor and reviewed by the Lieutenant and Chief of Police.

**Ban shooting at moving vehicles.** This is an excerpt from the East Whiteland Police Department vehicle pursuit policy:

*“Use of Firearms during Pursuits*

*a. Officers shall not discharge a firearm at or from a moving vehicle except as the ultimate measure of self-defense or the defense of another when the suspect is employing deadly force by means other than the vehicle. Departmental policy regarding deadly force shall be strictly followed.”*

Firing strictly to disable a vehicle is also prohibited. Even in the most extreme case, officers must consider the location of vehicular, pedestrian traffic and the potential hazard to innocent persons.

**Require officers to give a verbal warning before shooting.** There is currently no specific policy requiring a verbal warning before firing a weapon, but this will be investigated so best practices can be implemented.

The above policies should give comfort that East Whiteland Township Police Department officers are trained and practice behavior in conforming to these policies. They are part of the professionalism displayed in their interactions with citizens.

As Chief of Police I am dedicated to community policing and I encourage communication as a means of problem solving and discussion. I am available to meet with members of the community to discuss any issues or concerns they may have. I can be reached at [cyeager@eastwhitelandpd.org](mailto:cyeager@eastwhitelandpd.org).

Respectfully,



Christian Yeager  
Chief of Police  
East Whiteland Township