

Important Message for the Highland Park Police Department

Highland Park Police Department Procedures for Reporting Alleged Bias Incidents/Crimes (Revised 4-15-19)

The Highland Park Police Department is committed to the investigation and prosecution of crimes with a component of intimidation based on race, color, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, or ethnicity, which can jeopardize the active and open pursuit of freedom and opportunity.

We take these incidents seriously. We are committed to bring the investigative and enforcement elements of our agency into quick action following all suspected or confirmed bias incidents and investigate them in a timely fashion using all appropriate resources to rapidly determine the facts and circumstances surrounding each incident. We will work diligently to identify the motive and cause of the incident as well as the identity of all suspects. We will conduct a thorough and complete investigation of all suspected or confirmed bias incidents, and cooperate with prosecutors in the prompt and appropriate prosecution of these matters.

DEFINITION OF BIAS INCIDENT: This is any suspected or confirmed violation of the N.J. Criminal Statute, N.J.S.A. 2C:16-1(a)(1) or (2).

As Chief of Police, my agency is committed to the following:

- Encouraging the public to contact the police when a bias incident occurs;
 - Ensuring that all agency personnel are properly trained;
 - Ensuring that we will respond to all such complaints in a timely manner and conduct a thorough initial as well as follow-up investigation to its logical conclusion;
 - Taking appropriate actions to provide extra security, as needed and appropriate;
 - Approaching victims in a sensitive and supportive manner;
 - Enlisting the assistance of the community and community groups in an effort to moderate the impact of the incident and to reduce the risk of counter-violence;
 - Maintaining contact with appropriate community leaders concerning the incident as long as the information to be shared will not jeopardize or compromise the investigation and/or is confidential in nature;
 - Issuing timely press releases, as appropriate;
 - Ensuring that the victims, and as appropriate, other concerned parties, are informed of the final disposition of the investigation;
 - Applying the N.J. Attorney General's Revised Bias Incident Investigation Standards (dated 4/5/2019): in a manner which reflects the individual needs of our agency and the community we serve;
- to confirm whether a suspected bias incident is actually motivated by bias; reporting all such incidents and sharing information with, cooperating with and submitting reports to other State government agencies
- Ensuring that all investigative information is shared with the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office within a reasonable time;
 - Ensuring that referrals to victim's services are made in a timely manner, as appropriate;

- Having agency personnel to meet with the victim, as appropriate;
- Ensure that victims and other concerned parties are afforded all rights and protections provided for under the N.J. Constitutional Amendment for Victim Rights and the Crime Victims Bill of Rights.

Finally, I am committed to providing leadership and direction for my agency and to take an active role in promoting peace and harmony among the diverse groups living and working in the State and to protect all citizens from bias incidents.

Any citizen who wishes to report an alleged bias incident occurring in the Borough of Highland Park should contact the Highland Park Police Department at 732-572-3800 or in an Emergency Dial 9-1-1.

Very truly yours,

Rick Abrams
Chief of Police