



Policy Requiring the Norwich Police Department to Publish Standard Operating Procedures and Key Department Directives

Effective Date: September 1, 2020

Purpose: To make information available online and easily accessible to the public in order to educate Norwich residents about law enforcement operating procedures and directives, and to increase awareness and community trust.

Authority: Vermont Public Records Act; 1 VSA §316-317; *Doyle v. Burlington Police Department*

Policy: Norwich Police Department will post on their websites all standard operating procedures, and key department directives, that would otherwise be available to the public through a Vermont Public Records Act request.

Background:

- 1) Law enforcement agencies have numerous sets of regulations, including, but not limited to, educational materials, manuals, practices, policies and procedures, that guide employees in their duties. State law and agencies establish law enforcement standards and training and require the Norwich Police Department to adopt policies and procedures.
- 2) The Vermont Public Records Act generally requires state and local law enforcement agencies to make its public records available for inspection by a member of the public, unless the public record is specifically exempted from disclosure. State statute governing exemptions are attached to this policy as an appendix.
- 3) The Vermont Supreme Court (2019) decision in *Doyle v. Burlington Police Department* states clearly that the law does not allow charging for inspection of documents. Making regulations of law enforcement agencies easily accessible to the public potentially saves labor associated with responding to individual requests for this information.
- 4) Currently, in Vermont and the country, many local law enforcement agencies conspicuously post their standards, policies and procedures, to their websites.

Town of Norwich, Vermont
Policy Requiring the Norwich Police Department to
Publish Standard Operating Procedures and Key Department Directives
Effective: September 1, 2020

Procedure:

Commencing on the effective date, Norwich Police Department shall conspicuously post on their websites all current standard operating procedures, and key department directives, that would otherwise be available to the public if a request was made pursuant to the Vermont Public Records Act.

Adopted by the Norwich Selectboard on July 22, 2020.

Claudette Brochu, Chair

John Langhus

Roger Arnold, Vice-Chair

Mary Layton

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