



ABILENE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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TO: Abilene Community
FROM: Stan Standridge, Chief of Police
DATE: June 1, 2020
SUBJECT: Abilene United

Police Chief Stan Standridge – “Devastation struck the Floyd family with the passing of George Floyd in Minnesota on Monday, May 25, 2020. It was done unlawfully at the hands of those wearing a police uniform. Mr. Floyd leaves behind two daughters, ages 6 and 20. I hate this for the Floyd family, and I hate this for my chosen profession. These officers do not define professional policing in America. Yet, police must acknowledge that these incidents are occurring in too many communities. I apologize for my chosen profession. We can do better; we must do better.

From a chief's perspective, agencies across America must closely examine their hiring process, their pre-service education, in-service education, and culture. These incidents do not happen in a vacuum. Evidence will likely prove that there are systemic issues that give rise to people issues, and when combined they lead to unlawful force and tragically, death. Agencies like Abilene cannot lower their standards despite a shallow applicant pool. Our citizens demand excellence; we cannot blame these issues on the lack of recruiting. We must also evaluate our police academies. If we are still conducting military-style academies, we must adopt adult learning styles that encourage police cadets to thrive in a culture of service that fosters compassion. Culture is often described as "the way things get done around here". For Abilene, that culture is best defined as *We Serve Those We Protect*. Service must underpin our culture, from hiring to retirement. That culture must be reinforced by robust policies and procedures that are well vetted. Abilene is a Recognized police agency, meaning we have proven compliance with 168 best practices that are promulgated to reduce risk and liability. Additionally, agencies must examine their uses of force after each incident. Abilene has an Event Review Board that reviews uses of force, pursuits, injuries and crashes. We must inspect what we expect. If we are serious about preventing unlawful force by the police, then we must look beyond the incident and fully scrub the agency and its culture.

Willful assault and destruction of property do not honor the Floyd family. Today, I join the Floyd family in calling for an end to such destruction, and I express my sincere thanks for their bravery in speaking out against such harm to our communities. When people purposely destroy properties and assault citizens, they become criminals who deserve prosecution. The same holds true for police officers; they must treat those they serve with dignity, respect, and compassion or face prosecution.

It is my prayer and petition for Abilene and this nation that we would seek unity, for there we can cherish commanded blessings. Your "peace officers" are part of this community; we are community.”