Building and maintaining community trust is the cornerstone of successful policing and law enforcement. The building and maintenance of trust takes a great deal of continuous effort. Unfortunately, the ethical work of thousands of law enforcement officers across the nation is easily undone by the actions of one unethical officer. Often, the indictment of one seems like an indictment of all. Once misconduct occurs, the professional standards internal affairs function of the law enforcement agency becomes the primary method of reassuring the community the police can and will aggressively address and resolve unethical behavior. In short, the integrity of the police will always dictate the level of community trust.

The primary function of the Professional Standards Office is to conduct internal or administrative investigations involving professional non-compliance or serious allegations of employee misconduct. The professional standards sergeant conducts investigations at the direction of the chief of police. Complaints of a criminal nature are first investigated by the detective division or an outside agency. The majority of complaints received are of a lesser nature and are investigated by first line supervisors. The Professional Standards Office maintains records of all complaints and investigations.

The Professional Standards Office maintains the early warning system for the department. The early warning system is a tracking system designed to identify patterns of behavior by members which might indicate intervention is necessary. It allows the department to identify needed training and take corrective actions as needed. The office also reviews all uses of force and reports those monthly and annually to the chief of police and Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The office is responsible for police recruiting. Throughout each year the recruiting team visits colleges, universities and various career fairs to solicit police recruits. The professional standards sergeant conducts thorough background investigations on all police candidates in an effort to hire only the best qualified candidates to serve the community. The department’s hiring process usually occurs during the spring and fall of each calendar year.

The Professional Standards Office strives to ensure we as a department are conducting ourselves appropriately and within the established policies of the city of St. Joseph and the department. It is our goal to maintain the public trust, working with our community to provide the best service possible to the citizens of St. Joseph. If you have comments, concerns or positive feedback, reach out at 271-4780 or email gmurphy@stjoemo.org.