

_____ Police Department

Bias Incident Reporting

Bias Incidents.

Members of the public may call upon law enforcement to respond to a broad range of hate crimes and bias-motivated conduct that may collectively be viewed as “**Bias Incidents.**” This protocol seeks to enhance communication between this Department and other law enforcement authorities regarding reports of Bias Incidents.

For the purposes of this protocol, Bias Incidents comprise:

- 1. Hate Crimes:** Actual or attempted crimes maliciously motivated by the victim’s actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity or service in the armed forces.
- 2. Civil Harassment Offenses:** Conduct, whether a crime or not, that violates state or federal civil laws prohibiting harassment or discrimination in daily life, such as employment, housing, or public accommodations.
- 3. Biased but Protected Speech:** Speech or expressive conduct that while biased and deeply offensive to members of the community, may nonetheless be constitutionally protected under the Vermont and federal constitutions.

Bias Incident notifications to either the Attorney General’s Office or the Department of State’s Attorney’s and Sheriffs’ Bias Incident Coordinator

In addition to responding to complaints of Bias Incidents, conducting criminal investigations, and the Department’s standard operating procedure of presenting criminal cases to the _____ County State’s Attorney, this Department will promptly notify either the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) or the designated Bias Incident Coordinator at the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs.

Notifications should be provided even if the complaint or report of a Bias Incident does not appear to constitute a crime.

Notice to the AGO may be provided by phone at **(802) 828-3657** or by email to ago.civilrights@vermont.gov. The AGO may provide direct assistance and/or refer the incident to other criminal or civil enforcement authorities, such as the U.S. Attorney’s Office or the Vermont Human Rights Commission. The AGO may also assist in non-enforcement responses, such as community outreach, in cases of Biased but Protected Speech.

Notice to the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs may be provided to the designated **Bias Incident Coordinator** by phone at **(802) 828-2891** or by email to BiasIncidentCoordinatorSAS@vermont.gov. The Bias Incident Coordinator will further share all reported incidents with the AGO.

The Bias Incident Coordinator or AGO will communicate with this Department regarding Bias Incidents falling within this Department’s authority.