

**INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

ISSUE DATE:	09 May 2025	EFFECTIVE DATE:	
RESCINDS:	24 June 2016 Version of S02-01-01		
INDEX CATEGORY:	02 - Human Rights and Community Partnerships		
CALEA:			

**I. PURPOSE**

This directive:

- A. outlines Department policy for interacting and providing services to persons with one or more disabilities.
- B. defines the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 along with terminology related to persons with disabilities.
- C. lists guidelines for interactions with and providing modifications for persons with disabilities.
- D. provides de-escalation technique examples for interacting with persons with disabilities .
- E. describes Department procedures for processing persons with disabilities under Department control during investigatory stops and custodial arrests.
- F. identifies disability parking placards, privileges, and exemptions authorized by the Illinois Secretary of State's office, including one-meter exempt placards and three-meter paying placards for disability parking.
- G. describes the duties of the Chicago Police Department's Americans with Disabilities Act compliance officer.
- H. outlines relevant statutes that pertain to victims with disabilities.
- I. identifies resources available to persons with disabilities.
- J. continues the use of the Traffic Communications Guide ([CPD-11.980](#)).

**II. POLICY**

- A. It is the policy of the Chicago Police Department to afford all persons, including those with disabilities, equal access to police services, and programs provided by or through the Department.
- B. The Chicago Police Department is committed to:
  - 1. observing, upholding, and enforcing all laws relating to individual rights. Department members will respect and protect each person's human rights and comply with all laws relating to human rights consistent with the Department directive titled "[Protection of Human Rights](#)."
  - 2. treating all persons with courtesy, dignity, respect, and having the foremost regard for the preservation of human life and the safety of all persons involved.
  - 3. ensuring that a consistently high level of police service is provided to all members of the community, including persons with disabilities.
  - 4. making reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability.

5. providing persons with disabilities reasonable modifications and meaningful access to its facilities and Department programs and services.
  6. working with the communities of the City to serve and protect; to safeguard lives and property; to guarantee all persons fair and equal treatment under the law; and to ensure that all persons may enjoy their fundamental rights as human beings consistent with the Department directive titled "[Vision, Mission Statement, and Core Values](#)."
  7. complying with all federal, state, and municipal disability laws, regulations, and codes, including, but not limited to, Title II and all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act, and the Illinois Accessibility Code.
  8. training Department members in recognizing and identifying signs of persons with physical and non-visible disabilities and persons who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing.
  9. treating information regarding an individual's disability as confidential and with the utmost privacy. Disclosure of such information will only occur as needed to assist Department members in carrying out their official law enforcement duties or with the explicit consent of the individual.
- C. Department members will refer to the Department directives titled "Interactions with Persons with Physical Disabilities," "Interactions with Persons with Non-Visible Disabilities" and "Interactions with Persons who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing" when interacting, providing services, and satisfying legal requirements for persons who have physical, non-visible disabilities and persons who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing.
- D. It is not the intent of this policy to provide Department members with detailed medical information regarding every disability nor can this policy address Department member's response to a person with a disability in every situation.
- E. Consistent with the procedures outlined in the Department directive titled "[Complaint and Disciplinary System](#)":
1. Department members have a duty to report allegations of misconduct and will immediately report any observed violations of the policies and procedures established in this directive, including any discrimination, racial profiling, or other bias-based policing, to a Department supervisor consistent with the procedures outlined in the Department directive titled "[Complaint Initiation and Log Number Investigation Assignment](#)."
  2. any allegations of misconduct or violations of this policy will be reported, initiated, and investigated. Department members are reminded that discipline, up to and including separation from the Department, may be administered for any misconduct or violation of policy.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990** — a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

- B. **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** — a developmental disability that affects social interaction, communication, and decision-making skills. It is a genetic neurological condition that affects functioning of the brain and is considered a developmental disability because symptoms generally appear in early childhood. Autism is often referred to as a "spectrum" because there is wide variation in the severity of symptoms people experience and their level of functioning.
- C. **Deaf Person** — a person who is unable to hear or process linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.
- D. **DeafBlind Individual** — an individual who has combined hearing and vision loss, thus limiting access to both auditory and visual information.
- E. **Hard of Hearing Person** — a person who cannot readily understand oral communications and may require amplification to be able to hear and communicate effectively.
- F. **Dementia** — a general term for loss of memory, language, problem-solving, and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia.
- G. **Developmental Disabilities (DD)** — are long-term disabilities attributable to a physical, mental, or a combination of impairments that result in functional limitations in major life activities, such as understanding and expressing language, learning, moving, self-direction, self-care, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.
- H. **Disability** — a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a person's ability to perform major life activities.
- I. **Intellectual Disabilities (ID)** — are a subset of developmental disabilities characterized by limited or diminished intellectual functioning and difficulty with adaptive behaviors such as managing money, schedules and routines, or social interactions.
- J. **Non-visible Disability** — a physical, mental, or neurological condition that is not visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, or activities. Includes developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- K. **Qualified Individual With a Disability** — an individual who, with or without reasonable modifications as listed below, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity: 1) modifications to rules, policies, or practices; 2) the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers; or (3) the provision of auxiliary aids and services.
- L. **Physical Disability** — the long-term loss or impairment of part of a person's body function, resulting in a limitation of physical functioning, mobility, dexterity, or stamina.
- M. **Program Access** — an obligation under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requiring a public entity to operate a service, program, or activity so it is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities where a public entity's existing facility is otherwise inaccessible to or unusable by people with disabilities.
- N. **Reasonable Modification** — Title II of the ADA requires the Department to make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures when the modifications are necessary to make the Department's programs, services, or activities accessible for a person with a disability.
- O. **Service Animal** — A dog or miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical and sensory disabilities as well as psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

#### IV. INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- A. **Department members should expect to come into contact with members of the public, including juveniles, who have a disability. In all contacts and interactions with the public, including interactions with persons with disabilities, Department members will:**

1. interact with all members of the public in an unbiased, fair, and respectful manner.
  2. treat all persons with the courtesy and dignity that is inherently due every person as a human being.
  3. act, speak, and conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner, recognizing their obligation to safeguard life and property and maintain a courteous, professional attitude.
  4. not exhibit a condescending attitude or direct any derogatory terms toward any person in any manner and will not use language or take action intended to taunt or denigrate an individual, including using racist or derogatory language.
  5. when requested, correctly identify themselves by providing their rank, name, and star number (or employee number for civilian members) to any member of the public.
  6. provide police services to all members of the public without bias and treat all persons with courtesy, dignity, and respect regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, homeless status, national origin, immigration status, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, age, disability, incarceration status, or criminal history.
  7. utilize their training and experience to assist in recognizing behaviors that are potentially indicative of a disability. Department members will also refer to the following Department directives:
    - a. "Interactions With Persons Who Are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing";
    - b. "Interactions With Persons With Nonvisible Disabilities"; and
    - c. "Interactions With Persons With Physical Disabilities."
  8. take reasonable steps necessary to assist persons with disabilities in accessing the full range of services provided by the Department while maintaining the safety of all Department members and the public.
- B. Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in State and local governments services, programs, and employment. Law enforcement agencies are covered because they are programs of State or local governments, regardless of whether they receive federal grants or other federal funds. The ADA affects virtually everything Department members do, such as the following:
1. receiving citizen complaints;
  2. interviewing witnesses;
  3. arresting, booking, and holding suspects;
  4. operating telephone (911) emergency centers;
  5. providing emergency medical services;
  6. enforcing laws;
  7. community policing efforts; and
  8. other duties.
- C. When interacting with a person that may have a disability, Department members will not:
1. make assumptions about the perceived disability. Persons with disabilities make up a diverse community and experience their disabilities in different ways. The level of assistance provided to a person with a disability must be based on facts about that person and not on a generalization about what persons with that type of disability can or cannot do.

2. make unnecessary inquiries into the nature of an individual's disability, including regarding their diagnosis.

D. Department members are reminded that persons with disabilities may:

1. have multiple disabilities and such disabilities may not be readily apparent in a range of situations, including interviews of persons with disabilities as victims and witnesses of crimes.
2. not recognize or be able to appropriately respond to verbal direction. The failure to respond to verbal direction may be erroneously perceived as uncooperative.
3. have a staggering gait or slurred speech related to their disability or the medications they take. These characteristics, which can be associated with both visible and non-visible disabilities, may be misperceived as intoxication or failure to cooperate.
4. require the use of an ambulatory device for transportation, such as a wheelchair, cane, scooter, crutches, walker, or braces.
5. have special communication needs, such as limited reading and comprehension skills or limited verbal skills.
6. be blind or have low vision.
7. require the assistance of a service animal.
8. have medical identification tag information on wrists, necks, shoes, key rings, belts, or cellphones.

E. Department members are reminded that various law enforcement encounters may be potentially volatile and emotionally charged. Department members will remain alert to the possibility of communication problems when interacting with people with disabilities. Department members should consider all information reasonably available to them when determining how to interact with a person with disabilities. Such factors include:

1. the extent to which the disability is obvious or otherwise made known to the involved Department member;
2. the nature of the disability; and
3. the nature of the law enforcement contact.

F. Department members responding to an incident involving persons with limited English proficiency will follow the procedures outlined in the Department directive titled ["Interactions With Persons With Limited English Proficiency."](#)

G. Department members will promote the safe and dignified treatment of persons experiencing a mental health crisis by employing crisis de-escalation techniques and safely and effectively responding to individuals in crisis as outlined in the Department directive titled ["Recognizing and Responding to Individuals In Crisis."](#)

H. Department members will refer to the Department directives titled ["Interactions with Youth and Children"](#) and ["Minors in Need of Medical Care"](#) for guidance when interacting with youth.

**V. ACCESS TO FACILITIES**

- A. The facilities of the Chicago Police Department are to be accessible to all persons with disabilities as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- B. Individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, shall be provided with program access and not excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities of a public entity.
- C. The Chicago Police Department will ensure that any external location used by the Department to conduct any departmental program, activity, or service is also accessible to persons with disabilities.



- D. Department members who plan, schedule, conduct, or promote programs or activities on behalf of the Department, that are open to the public are required to ensure that locations of the activity are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- E. Department members will:
1. make reasonable modifications in procedures to accommodate people with disabilities when a Department facility is not accessible due to physical barriers (steps, doorways, etc).
  2. utilize an alternative method to provide the requested service (e.g., speaking with the person outside the Department facility).
  3. permit entrance through an alternate area of the facility and provide the requested service.
- F. District station supervisors will conduct daily informal inspections of station facilities ensuring the station facility (e.g., accessible doors) are kept in good order, as outlined in the Department directive titled "[District Station Supervisor](#)."

## VI. ACCOMMODATING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- A. Department members will provide accommodations to persons with a disabilities even if the Department member does not know the exact nature of the disability or the particular diagnosis needs of a person with a disability.
- B. Public Accommodations and Commercial Facilities
1. Under Title III, people with disabilities are entitled to the full and equal employment of the goods and services at any place of public accommodation. Title III of the ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the activities of places of public accommodations (businesses that are generally open to the public such as restaurants, movie theaters, schools, day care facilities, recreation facilities, and doctors' offices) and requires newly constructed or altered places of public accommodation—as well as commercial facilities (privately owned, nonresidential facilities such as factories, warehouses, or office buildings)—to comply with the ADA Standards.
  2. Exemptions of Title III of the ADA include:
    - a. **Private clubs:** Private clubs — not open to the public and have selective membership criteria — are exempt from Title III.
    - b. **Historic buildings:** Though not entirely exempt from ADA guidelines, historic buildings may have more lenient accessibility requirements to preserve their architectural integrity.
- C. Service Animals
1. The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities by places of public accommodation, such as retail stores, restaurants, and hotels, as well as transportation, public facilities, and governmental offices. These businesses and other locations must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals onto the premises and into all areas where the public is generally allowed.
  2. In Illinois, service animals are governed by the Service Animal Access Act ([720 ILCS 5/48-8](#)) and White Cane Law ([775 ILCS 30/4](#)). **A person with a disability is guaranteed the right to be accompanied by a service animal in public, places of public accommodation, transportation, public facilities, and governmental offices.**

3. Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog or miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental health condition to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability. The ADA does not restrict the type of dog breeds that can be service animals.

**NOTE:** Service animals are working animals, not pets. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

4. A service animal must be under a person's control. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual's disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of tasks. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
5. The ADA does not require service animals to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness. Department members should rely on the word of the individual unless exceptional circumstances exist.
6. **People with disabilities who utilize a service animal are not required to prove or show documentation that the animal is a credentialed service animal.** Businesses may not demand identification cards or make unnecessary inquiries about an individual's disability under any circumstances, including when a person is accompanied by a service animal.
7. If it is unclear whether someone's dog is a service dog, only limited inquiries are allowed. Department members may ask two questions of persons utilizing a service animal:
- a. is the animal required because of a disability; and
  - b. what work or task has the animal been trained to perform?
8. Department members cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog or miniature horse, or ask that the service animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task. Department members should rely on the word of the individual utilizing a service animal unless exceptional circumstances exist.
9. When an arrestee with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog/service animal (a dog or miniature horse trained to perform a task directly related to the person's disability), the service animal will not be separated from the arrestee and will be allowed to remain with the person under arrest throughout the arrest process
- D. When there is no designated "Accessible Parking" provided, a person with disabilities will be permitted to park:
- a. in close proximity to the Department facility, or
  - b. in parking areas designated "Department Vehicles Only."
- E. Sign language interpreters are available for all Department-sponsored events that are open to the public (e.g., workshops, seminars, community meetings) and must be provided when such services are required. To request sign language interpreters for Department-sponsored events, Department members will:
- a. contact the ADA Compliance Officer if the request is for an advance engagement.

- b. The ADA Compliance Officer can be reached Monday through Friday between 0800-1600 hours via email: [ADACoordinator@Chicagopolice.org](mailto:ADACoordinator@Chicagopolice.org) or via phone: (312) 745-5841.
- c. contact CPIC if the request is urgent, after 1600 hours on weekdays, or on weekends.

**NOTE:** Department members requesting sign language interpreters for Department-sponsored events must make the request at least 48 hours prior to the engagement.

- F. Department members will utilize Department publications such as the Traffic Communications Guide (CPD-11.980).
- G. Department publications are available in taped text, braille, and large-print formats, and contain a statement affirming the Department's policy to observe the laws that guarantee the rights of people with disabilities to equal access.

## **VII. DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES**

- A. Department members are required to use de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force, unless doing so would place a person or a Department member in immediate risk of harm or de-escalation techniques would be clearly ineffective under the circumstances at the time, as outlined in the Department directive titled "De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force."
- B. When interacting with persons with disabilities, some examples of de-escalation techniques include:
  - 1. using time as a tactic;
  - 2. speaking calmly;
  - 3. repeating short, direct phrases in a calm voice;
  - 4. using soft gestures and avoid abrupt movements or actions;
  - 5. maintaining a safe distance, providing the person and Department member with a zone of safety; and
  - 6. limiting, when feasible, external stimuli that may agitate the person with disabilities (e.g., turning off sirens and flashing lights).

## **VIII. INVESTIGATORY STOPS AND CUSTODIAL ARRESTS**

- A. To ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are protected, Department members will provide reasonable modifications and assistance with effective communication during Investigatory Stops and custodial arrests unless providing a modification presents a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated by another modification or results in a fundamental alteration of the stop or arrest. Such modifications may include:
  - 1. reading relevant information to persons who are visually impaired;
  - 2. utilizing writing or other effective means to provide relevant information; and
  - 3. assisting people with disabilities with mobility needs.
  - 4. assisting people with disabilities with in-custody communications.
- B. Department members response during investigatory stops and custodial arrest of persons with disabilities will be based, in great part, on the Department member's knowledge of the characteristics of the disability. Department members conducting an investigatory stop or custodial arrest of a person with a disability may require enhanced interaction and response. For additional procedures of investigatory stops and custodial arrests of persons with disabilities, Department members will refer to the following Department directives:



1. "Interactions With Persons Who Are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing";
  2. "Interactions With Persons With Nonvisible Disabilities"; and
  3. "Interactions With Persons With Physical Disabilities".
- C. Department members will exercise care and facilitate safe transportation when transporting an arrestee who requires the assistance of an ambulatory device (e.g., crutch, cane, walker, wheelchair).
- D. Department members requiring the transportation of a person in a wheelchair will follow the procedures outlined in the Department directive titled "[Transportation of Arrestees Requiring Wheelchairs](#)."

## **IX. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT COMPLIANCE OFFICER**

The Chicago Police Department has designated an ADA Compliance Officer who will coordinate Department efforts to comply with the ADA and:

- A. in conjunction with the Intergovernmental Affairs Section, Legal Affairs Division, and Risk Management Section will review, at a minimum, every two years the effectiveness and efficiency of Department policies and training as they relate to individuals with disabilities and report to the Superintendent, or his or her designee, any recommended revisions, if necessary;
- B. serve as a resource to assist Department members in providing meaningful access to police services for individuals with disabilities;
- C. provide technical assistance and support to ensure appropriate disability modifications are provided within Department facilities and through Department programs and services;
- D. attend quarterly meetings of the Department Crisis Intervention Team advisory committee and respond to inquiries and concerns from members of the public concerning accessibility;
- E. act as a liaison between the Department and individuals with disabilities including holding regular community meetings to gain community input and help assess Department need and progress with ADA Title II compliance; and
- F. is assigned to the Special Activities Section (Unit 441) and can be reached at (312) 745 5841, PAX (0304) or via email at [ADACoordinator@chicagopolice.org](mailto:ADACoordinator@chicagopolice.org).

## **X. TRAINING OF DEPARTMENT MEMBERS**

The Deputy Chief, Training and Support Group, will ensure that a training bulletin is developed that provides Department members guidance on interactions with persons with disabilities, including:

- A. recognizing and responding to conduct or behavior that is related to an individual's disability, including but not limited to qualifying medical conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and diabetes;
- B. providing effective communication and minimizing barriers to communication, including by incorporating sign language and other modes of communication used by people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have a speech impairment during police-community interactions;
- C. attending to the specific needs of individuals with disabilities, such as mobility devices, prosthetics, and service animals; and
- D. recognizing and responding to identified abuse, neglect, or exploitation of individuals with disabilities, including making any notifications required by Department policy or the law.

## **XI. DISABILITY PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

- A. The Illinois Secretary of State's Office issues disability parking placards to people with disabilities or to not-for-profit organizations' vehicles that transport people with disabilities. The Secretary of State's office issues four types of parking placards:
1. **Meter-Exempt Permanent Placards** (yellow and gray striped):

- a. are issued to persons with permanent disabilities who have significant impairments that cause difficulty in accessing a parking meter.
- b. allows the authorized holder to park in spaces reserved for persons with disabilities, such as at a mall, grocery, retail store, etc.
- c. **exempts** the authorized holder from the payment of parking meter fees and time limitations, except at meters or signs with time limitations of 30 minutes or less.

**NOTE:** All vehicles, including those with persons with disabilities or disabled veteran license plates, must also display the meter-exempt placard to qualify.

2. **Non-Meter-Exempt Permanent Placards** (blue and white):

- a. are issued to persons with permanent disabilities and allow authorized holders to park in spaces for persons with disabilities, such as a mall, grocery, retail store, etc.
- b. **do not exempt** authorized holders from payment of parking meter fees and time limitations at parking meters.

3. **Temporary Placards** (red):

- a. are issued to persons with a temporary disability and are valid for the length of time indicated by the certifying physician, not to exceed six months if issued by the Secretary of State or up to 90 days if issued by a local municipality.
- b. **DO NOT exempt** authorized holders from the payment of parking meter fees and time limitations at parking meters.

4. **Organization Placards** (green):

- a. are issued to organizations that transport persons with disabilities free of charge and allow the authorized agent to park in spaces reserved for persons with disabilities when transporting such persons.
- b. **DO NOT exempt** authorized agents from the payment of parking meter fees and time limitations at parking meters but do allow the authorized agent for the organization to park in spaces reserved for persons with disabilities when transporting persons with disabilities.

- B. Disability parking placards are issued to persons with disabilities and not to vehicles. The authorized holder must be present and must enter and exit the vehicle at the time the parking privileges are being used.
- C. Disability parking placards must be properly displayed in clear view, hanging from a rear-view mirror or on the dashboard so it is visible through the front windshield.
- D. Disability parking placards do not allow vehicles to park in restricted areas, such as "No Stopping" or "No Standing" zones, or in front of fire hydrants, bus stops, and loading zones.
- E. Disability parking placards are NOT transferable and it is illegal to copy or duplicate a placard.
- F. The State of Illinois no longer exempts meter payment for disability placards issued by another state. However, disability placards issued by other states will be valid to allow parking in designated disability parking spaces in public or private parking areas.

## G. Examples



## H. Key Disability Parking Ordinances

1. MCC Chapter 9-64-050(j), Park in a Disabled Parking Zone on street, public lot or private lot.
2. MCC Chapter 9-64-190(a), Unlawful to park in a metered zone, non-central business district, without paying the designated amount.
3. MCC Chapter 9-64-190(b), Unlawful to park in a metered zone, central business district, without paying the designated amount.
4. 625 ILCS 5/11-1301.1, disabled parking privileges/exemptions.

### EXCEPTION:

Such vehicle will be subject to the laws that prohibit parking in "no stopping" and "no standing" zones in front of or near fire hydrants, driveways, public building entrances and exits, bus stops and loading areas, and is prohibited from parking where the motor vehicle constitutes a traffic hazard, whereby such motor vehicle will be moved at the instruction and request of a law enforcement officer to a location designated by the officer.

## XII. RELEVANT STATUTES

The corresponding Bureau of Detectives Area based on the district of arrest will retain the responsibility for the follow-up investigation and charging for anyone arrested for violating the following sections of the Illinois Compiled Statutes. These statutes have provisions applicable to the victim of an offense who is a person with a disability.

- A. Aggravated Assault, 720 ILCS 5/12-2(b)(1)
- B. Aggravated Battery, 720 ILCS 5/12-3.05
- C. Aggravated Criminal Sexual Assault, 720 ILCS 5/11-1.30
- D. Criminal Sexual Abuse, 720 ILCS 5/11-1.50
- E. Aggravated Criminal Sexual Abuse, 720 ILCS 5/11-1.60
- F. Financial exploitation of an Elderly or Disabled Person, 720 ILCS 5/17-56
- G. Criminal Neglect of an Elderly or Disabled Person, 720 ILCS 5/12-21.

## XIII. RESOURCES

- A. [The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities](#) (MOPD) promotes total access, full participation, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities of all ages in all aspects of life. The office promotes an understanding of the issues of concern to people with disabilities and assists both individuals and organizations in working to comply with a variety of laws and regulations relating to disability, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. [The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities](#) staff are available Monday through Friday from 0830 until 1630 hours at 312-744-7050 or 312-744-4964 (TTY) , or evenings and weekends through non-emergency 311, twenty-four hours, seven days a week. The MOPD services and programs include:
1. Accessibility Compliance — ensures that the City of Chicago is accessible to people with all types of disabilities to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local disability rights, laws, and regulations.
  2. Career Center — strives to prepare individuals with disabilities for successful and meaningful career opportunities.
  3. Disability Resources — provides assistance with identifying and accessing community resources that may help increase the independence of people with disabilities.
  4. Emergency Preparedness — provides information on emergency preparedness resources for people with disabilities and their caregivers.
  5. HomeMod Program — provides home accessibility modifications that will allow people with disabilities to make their living environment accessible.
  6. Substance Use Prevention Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing — provides youth with the ability to make well-informed and positive choices in their lives that support a healthy lifestyle.
  7. Transportation and Parking — promotes an understanding of the issues of concern to people with disabilities, including accessible public transportation.
  8. Training Services — provides training on approaches and strategies for interacting with individuals with all types of disabilities in professional, social, and recreational settings.
- B. [Illinois Disability Rights Bureau](#) enforces state and federal laws that protects the rights of people with disabilities to equal access to buildings, housing, and services. They can be reached at 312-814-5684 or the 7-1-1 relay service, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.
- C. [Easy Access Chicago](#) provides a listing of local resources (e.g., National Center for Latinos with Disabilities, Family Resource Center on Disabilities) available for people with disabilities and their families. They can be reached at 773-388-8839.
- D. Persons alleging a violation of the ADA or state law as it applies to persons with disabilities will be directed to the following:
1. Department of Human Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice;
  2. Disability Rights Bureau at the Illinois Office of the Attorney General, or;
  3. Cook County State's Attorney for White Cane Law or the Service Animal Access Act.

**NOTE:** Department members encountering a situation where a person alleges a violation of the ADA or state law pertaining to disabilities will notify a supervisor and document the alleged violation in a CASE incident. Department members are reminded to refer to the Incident Reporting Guide for specific reporting requirements, including using IUCR 5000 for Other Criminal Incidents involving persons or IUCR 5080 for other non-criminal incidents involving person when a specific primary classification is not specifically listed.

(Items indicated by italics/double underline were revised or added.)

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**INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS WITH NON-VISIBLE DISABILITIES**

ISSUE DATE:	09 May 2025	EFFECTIVE DATE:	
RESCINDS:			
INDEX CATEGORY:	02 - Human Rights and Community Partnerships		
CALEA:			

**I. PURPOSE**

This directive:

- A. establishes Department policy for interacting and providing service to persons who have non-visible disabilities which are physical, mental, or neurological conditions that are not physically visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, activities, or ability to understand.
- B. outlines:
  - 1. commonly encountered non-visible disabilities;
  - 2. general guidelines when interacting with persons with non-visible disabilities;
  - 3. accommodations for persons who have non-visible disabilities;
  - 4. de-escalation techniques; and
  - 5. Investigatory Stops and custodial arrests; and
  - 6. the confidentiality of an individual's disability.

**II. POLICY**

- A. It is the policy of the Chicago Police Department to ensure that a consistently high level of service is provided to all community members, including those who have non-visible disabilities.
- B. No single policy or procedure can address the Chicago Police Department's response to all people with non-visible disabilities. It is the intent of this special order to guide Department members in responding to and assisting those people with non-visible disabilities with whom they will have the most contact within the performance of their duties and responsibilities, including those who are complainants, victims, witnesses, arrestees, and members of the community.
- C. Department members will comply with federal, state, and municipal laws, and their implementing regulations, that govern police interactions with people with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Article 5 of the Illinois Human Rights Act, and the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act
- D. The Chicago Police Department is committed to:
  - 1. observing, upholding, and enforcing all laws relating to individual rights. Department members will respect and protect each person's human rights and comply with all laws relating to human rights consistent with the Department directive titled "Protection of Human Rights."
  - 2. providing persons with non-visible disabilities reasonable modifications and meaningful access to its facilities and Department programs and services.

3. working with the communities of the City to serve and protect; to safeguard lives and property; to guarantee all persons fair and equal treatment under the law; and to ensure that all persons may enjoy their fundamental rights as human beings consistent with the Department directive titled "[Vision, Mission Statement, and Core Values](#)."
  4. to providing successful communication and meaningful access to Department programs, services, and activities for persons who have non-visible disabilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
  5. the concepts of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy. Department members will, by being aware of their training in trauma-informed techniques, continue the practice of employing the four central principles of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in all interactions with members of the community including persons who have non-visible disabilities.
  6. treating persons with non-visible disabilities with dignity and respect.
  7. utilizing de-escalation protocols when appropriate, and seek alternatives to physical custody whenever possible.
- E. In addition, to respect for those human rights prescribed by law, in all contacts and interactions with the public, Department members, both sworn and civilian, will:
1. interact with all members of the public in an unbiased, fair, and respectful manner.
  2. treat all persons with the courtesy and dignity that is inherently due every person as a human being.
  3. act, communicate, and conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner, recognizing their obligation to safeguard life and property and maintain a courteous, professional attitude.
  4. not exhibit a condescending attitude or direct any derogatory terms toward any person in any manner and will not use language or take action intended to taunt or denigrate an individual, including using racist or derogatory language.
  5. when requested, correctly identify themselves by providing their rank, name, and star number (or employee number for civilian members) to any member of the public.
- F. Department members responding to an incident involving an individual in crisis will follow procedures consistent with the Department directive titled "[Recognizing and Responding to Individuals In Crisis](#)."
- G. Department members will not unreasonably endanger themselves or another to conform to the procedures in this directive.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Non-Visible Disabilities** — are physical, mental, or neurological conditions that are not physically visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, activities or ability to understand. Non-visible disabilities include developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- B. **Developmental Disabilities (DD)** — are long-term disabilities attributable to a physical, mental, or a combination of impairments that result in functional limitations in major life activities, such as understanding and expressing language, learning, moving, self-direction, self-care, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.
- C. **Intellectual Disabilities (ID)** — are characterized by limited or diminished intellectual functioning and difficulty with adaptive behaviors such as managing money, schedules and routines, or social interactions.

### IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES WHEN INTERACTING WITH PERSONS WITH NON-VISIBLE DISABILITIES

- A. Department members may encounter situations where they respond to incidents and interact with persons with non-visible disabilities. While Department members are not in a position to diagnose persons with disabilities, they will utilize the general guidelines provided in this directive to assist when interacting with persons with non-visible disabilities.
- B. Department members are reminded that involuntary behaviors associated with some invisible disabilities may resemble behavior characteristically exhibited by intoxicated, or less frequently, combative individuals.
- C. Some persons with non-visible disabilities may medical identification tags on their wrists, neck, shoes, belts, or elsewhere on their person to assist Department members. Department members should ask if such identification tags are present during interactions with persons with non-visible disabilities.
- D. Recognizing that law enforcement encounters may be potentially volatile or emotionally charged, Department members should be alert to the potential for miscommunication with persons who have non-visible disabilities. Persons who have non-visible disabilities may not recognize or be able to appropriately respond to verbal direction. The failure to respond to verbal direction may be erroneously perceived as uncooperative.
- E. When available, consultation with a family member or other support person familiar with the individual's disability may be helpful in order to provide suggestions in order to effectively communicate with the individual with non-visible disabilities.
- F. Failure to recognize characteristics associated with certain non-visible disabilities may hinder optimal outcomes during interactions with persons with non-visible disabilities. Department member's patience and understanding of the characteristics commonly associated with non-visible disabilities will help lead to successful outcomes.
- G. Department members should exercise special care in the use of all gestures and verbal and written communication to minimize initial confusion or misunderstanding when dealing with any person with an non-visible disability (e.g., maintaining an open and relaxed stance, using respectful and non-threatening language, offering alternative ways to communicate may help people who are uncomfortable with oral speech).
- H. Department members should be sensitive to the fact that some people with disabilities may be targeted as crime victims as a direct result of their disability.

## **V. COMMONLY ENCOUNTERED NON-VISIBLE DISABILITIES**

Non-visible disabilities is an umbrella term that encompasses intellectual disability such as autism spectrum disorder and dementia.

- A. **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**
  - 1. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is developmental disability that affects social interaction, communication, and decision-making skills. It is a genetic neurological condition that affects functioning of the brain and is considered a developmental disability because symptoms generally appear in early childhood. Autism is often referred to as a "spectrum" because there is wide variation in the severity of symptoms people experience and their level of functioning. In recent years, the incidence of autism has risen at a staggering rate – from 1 in 2,500 births in the late 1990s to 1 in 36 births today.
  - 2. **Identifying Autism**

While a Department cannot be expected to diagnose autism, understanding the common characteristics of autism may help when responding to an incident involving a person with Autism. While each person with Autism is different, common characteristics include, but not limited to the following:

    - a. vary in speaking ability, while some persons with Autism may have limited or no ability to speak others may have rich vocabularies;
    - b. reduced ability to process and sensitivity towards incoming sensory information;

- c. limited or inconsistent eye contact;
- d. prefer routine and sameness;
- e. special interests in unusual or specific objects or topics;
- f. self-stimulating behavior including hand flapping, body rocking, or attachment to objects;
- g. emotional reaction does not always match the situation;
- h. reduced ability to recognize and respond to danger;
- i. over- or under-sensitivity to pain;
- j. tantrums or escalated behavior typically when attempting to communicate with others; and
- k. seeks alone when feeling overstimulated or overwhelmed.

B. Dementia

1. Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning — thinking, remembering, and reasoning — to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. Alzheimer's Disease is a type of dementia that affects memory, thinking, and behavior.
2. Identifying dementia  
Common symptoms of dementia include:
  - a. memory problems, particularly remembering recent events;
  - b. increasing confusion;
  - c. personality or behaviour changes; and
  - d. loss of ability to do everyday tasks.

## VI. INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS WITH NON-VISIBLE DISABILITIES

Department members may encounter people with non-visible disabilities in a variety of situations. Many encounters will relate to nuisance calls or situations, odd behavior, persons acting suspiciously or suspected of being affected by mental health condition, in crisis, or under the influence of drugs, or situations in which a crime has been presumed to have been committed even though the person with I/DD is not aware of any wrongdoing. Common encounters might include the following:

- A. **Wandering** — Some people with non-visible disabilities, and especially persons with autism spectrum disorder, might wander without telling family, support persons, or others where they are going or when they plan to return. When adults or children do wander, they might run aimlessly or may be spotted walking down the middle of a street or through neighborhood yards, inappropriately clothed for the weather conditions, entering unlocked homes or cars, or wandering into stores or places of business, causing suspicion. People with autism spectrum disorder often have a high attraction to water. Because of this, Department members should immediately check all nearby bodies of water when a person or child with autism spectrum disorder is missing.
- B. **Seizure-like symptoms** — Department members may encounter people with non-visible disabilities during calls for medical assistance, as in the case of someone having a seizure. Research indicates that between 20 and 30 percent of children with autism spectrum disorder develop epilepsy by the time they reach adulthood.

- C. **Domestic disputes and disturbance calls** — Most contacts with people with non-visible disabilities involve non-criminal activity. Most people with non-visible disabilities live in the community with varying levels of support. They often have careers and go about their daily lives just like everyone else. But, due to their disability, they might react to a situation, event, noise, or other incident differently than those without a disability. The initial call for assistance to law enforcement can therefore appear to deal with a domestic dispute or some kind of public disturbance. In these and most other situations, the Department member's greatest source of information concerning the individual's condition, support needs, and the most appropriate way to communicate and work with the person comes from that individual. This knowledge can be supplemented by those who also know the person well—a support person, parent, peer, or friend.
- D. **Atypical, offensive, or suspicious behavior** — Persons with non-visible disabilities might not understand social conventions and appropriate social behavior. This can trigger suspicion on the part of those who witness atypical, offensive, or suspicious actions in public and who subsequently call for assistance. Some examples include:
1. engaging in repetitive motions;
  2. a person with autism-spectrum disorder engaging in rearranging items or objects as to place those items in some sequence that other individuals might not notice;
  3. engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior or touch others inappropriately, sometimes out of curiosity rather than for sexual stimulation or pleasure.
  4. be attracted to or infatuated with someone and attempt to speak with or follow that person. People with non-visible disabilities can have a difficult time reading the emotions of others. Therefore, facial gestures, body language, subtle remarks, or attempts to extricate oneself might not be understood by those with non-visible disabilities.

## VII. ACCOMMODATING PERSONS WHO HAVE NON-VISIBLE DISABILITIES

### A. General guidelines

1. Department members will provide accommodations to persons with disabilities even if the Department member does not know the exact nature of the disability or the particular diagnosis needs of a person with a disability consistent with the Department directive titled "Interactions with Persons with Disabilities."
2. Department members should expect to come into contact with people who have non-visible disabilities. When encountering a person with an non-visible disability, Department members should be aware of potential behaviors they may exhibit (this list is not all inclusive):
  - a. difficulty moving;
  - b. struggling with eye contact;
  - c. trouble following directions;
  - d. wearing headphones;
  - e. social awkwardness and inability to engage in small talk;
  - f. frequent need to use the toilet;
  - g. not shaking hands;
  - h. desire to leave suddenly without explanation;
  - i. erratic behavior;
  - j. reluctance to disclose information about their disability; and
  - k. intoxicated behavior (e.g., complications of diabetes or hypoglycemia could affect vision, cognition, and peripheral neural function).



3. Because the nature of any law enforcement contact may vary substantially from one situation to the next, Department members will consider all information reasonably available to them when determining how to communicate with a person with a non-visible disability. These factors include:
  - a. the extent to which an non-visible disability is obvious or otherwise made known to the member;
  - b. the nature of the disability;
  - c. the person's usual method of communication;
  - d. the nature of the contact (emergency vs. non-emergency, custodial vs. consensual);
  - e. the nature, importance, and duration of the communication required; and
  - f. the availability of additional resources, including crisis intervention trained officers and social services.

**B. Effective Communication**

1. Department members should be aware of the potential for miscommunication with persons who have non-visible disabilities and exercise care to minimize misunderstandings or confusion.
2. To serve each person effectively, the primary consideration shall be providing the type of communication aid or service requested by the person with disabilities. Determine the person's primary mode of communication and provide necessary accommodations, interpreter services, etc.
3. Effective communication with a person with a non-visible disability – whether a victim, witness, suspect, or person under arrest – is essential to ascertain what actually occurred, the urgency of the matter, and the type of situation.
4. Department members should not interpret lack of eye contact or seemingly strange actions or responses as indications of lack of cooperation or evasiveness.
5. Individuals who have non-visible disabilities may be reluctant to acknowledge a communication barrier and may even feign a complete understanding of a communication despite actual confusion.
6. To ensure compassionate treatment of persons with disabilities, techniques Department members may employ to achieve effective communication include:
  - a. using a quiet, non-threatening voice;
  - b. avoid touching, if possible
  - c. turning off lights and sirens, if possible
  - d. listening to any support people or family members nearby who are familiar with the person and may be able to provide tips on how to calm the person down and establish good rapport;
  - e. allowing the person to self-stimulate as needed, as it often helps people process anxiety;
  - f. ask what the person needs to help with effective communication;
  - g. asking simple, straightforward questions and being patient when waiting for answers;
  - h. not suggesting answers, attempting to complete thoughts of persons slow to respond, or posing hypothetical conclusions;

- i. using visual aids, such as printed information and large-print-formatted information;
  - j. reading aloud any documents for persons who are blind or have low vision; and
  - k. utilizing Department resources such as the "Traffic Communications Guide" (CPD-11.980).
7. Barriers to effective communication may also be due to limited English proficiency or other language barriers. To ensure effective communication, Department members will provide the proper services consistent with the Department directive titled "[Interactions with Persons with Limited English Proficiency](#)".
8. Department members interacting with persons who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing will refer to the Department directive titled "Interactions with Persons Who Are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing".

## **VIII. DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES**

- A. Some people with non-visible disabilities might become easily upset and can engage in self-harming behaviors or act in aggressive ways. Fear, including fear of law enforcement, frustration, and changes in their daily routines and surroundings can trigger such behavior. The mere presence of an officer can also be a source of stress. People with non-visible disabilities often have impairments that make it difficult for them to process incoming sensory information.
- B. Department members are required to use de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force, unless doing so would place a person or a Department member in immediate risk of harm or de-escalation techniques would be clearly ineffective under the circumstances at the time, as outlined in the Department directive titled "[De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force](#)".
- C. When interacting with persons with non-visible disabilities, some examples of de-escalation techniques include:
  1. using time as a tactic;
  2. listen and speak in a calm and controlled tone of voice in order to gather the individual's concerns while helping to defuse fear, anxiety, or insecurity;
  3. allow the individual time to process and confirm what is being said;
  4. employing calming and reassuring language;
  5. repeating short, direct phrases in a calm voice;
  6. using soft gestures and avoiding abrupt movements or actions;
  7. maintaining a safe distance, providing the person and Department member with a zone of safety; and
  8. limiting, when feasible, external stimuli that may agitate the person with disabilities (e.g., turning off sirens and flashing lights).
- D. A family member or friend is of great value in calming an individual exhibiting unusual behavior as a result of a non-visible disability.

## **IX. INVESTIGATORY STOPS AND CUSTODIAL ARRESTS**

- A. Consideration and reasonable modifications may be given to the needs of people with disabilities during investigatory stops and custodial arrests. Response in these situations requires discretion and will be based, in great part, on the Department member's knowledge of the characteristics and severity of the disability, the level of resistance exhibited by the suspect, and the immediacy of the situation.

- B. To ensure that the rights of all persons who have non-visible disabilities are protected, Department members will provide necessary communication assistance during Investigatory Stops and custodial arrests.
- C. Some persons with non-visible disabilities may require physical aids (i.e., canes, wheelchairs, leg braces) to maintain their mobility.
- D. Prescribed medication may be required at regular intervals for persons with non-visible disabilities who are under arrest.
- E. Department members are required to use de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force, unless doing so would place a person or a Department member in immediate risk of harm or de-escalation techniques would be clearly ineffective under the circumstances at the time, as outlined in the Department directive titled "[De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force.](#)"
- F. Department members who conduct an Investigatory Stop must be able to clearly articulate and document the specific police or public safety purpose of any traffic or Investigatory Stop, consistent with the Department directive titled "[Investigatory Stop System.](#)"
- G. Department members will process persons taken into custody based on probable cause and document arrests on an Arrest Report, consistent with the Department directive titled "[Processing Persons Under Department Control.](#)"
- H. Department members conducting an investigation for driving under the influence of a motorist who has a non-visible disability should be cognizant that certain component(s) of the Standardized Field Sobriety Tests (SFST) may not be feasible.

**NOTE:** Department members are reminded that the full procedures for DUI investigations are outlined in the Department directive titled "[Driving While Under the Influence \(DUI\) and Zero Tolerance](#)".

- I. Department members will issue a [Field Pretrial Release Conditions form \(CPD-21.255\)](#) and [District Pretrial Release Conditions form \(CPD-21-256\)](#) in lieu of custodial arrest for those qualifying arrestees accused of Class B or C criminal misdemeanor offenses and petty offenses, if proper identification, qualifying criteria, and lack of disqualifying factors are present, consistent with the Department directive titled "[Pretrial Fairness Act Arrest Processing Procedures.](#)"
- J. When a person with a non-visible disability is arrested, the arresting officer(s) will take steps to communicate Miranda rights afforded by the United States Supreme Court and as outlined in the Department directive titled "[Custodial Interrogations.](#)"
- K. Persons in custody will be provided access to a telephone and be able to make three telephone calls, at minimum, free of charge to communicate with their attorney, family, or friends as soon as possible but no later than three hours after arrival at their first and any subsequent place of custody as outlined in the Department directive titled "[Arrestee and In-Custody Communications.](#)"
- L. Lockup personnel will ensure that prior to fingerprinting, photographing, and processing arrestees under Department control, who are blind or who have low vision, will verbally describe the process to the arrestee.
- M. When an arrestee with a non-visible disability is accompanied by a service animal (a dog or miniature horse trained to perform a task directly related to the person's disability), the service animal will not be separated from the arrestee and will be allowed to remain with the arrestee throughout the arrest process.

## **X. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information regarding an individual's disability is considered confidential and will be treated with the utmost privacy. Disclosure of such information will only occur as needed to assist Department members in carrying out their official law enforcement duties or with the explicit consent of the individual.

Authenticated by MWK

T19-086 EW

Larry Snelling  
Superintendent of Police

DRAFT

**INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

ISSUE DATE:	09 May 2025	EFFECTIVE DATE:	
RESCINDS:			
INDEX CATEGORY:	02 - Human Rights and Community Partnerships		
CALEA:			

**I. PURPOSE**

This directive:

- A. sets forth Department policy for interacting and communicating with persons with physical disabilities.
- B. outlines:
  - 1. commonly encountered physical disabilities;
  - 2. general guidelines for identifying and interacting with persons with physical disabilities;
  - 3. accommodations for persons who have physical disabilities;
  - 4. de-escalation techniques;
  - 5. investigatory stops and custodial arrests; and
  - 6. the confidentiality of an individual's disability.

**II. POLICY**

- A. It is the policy of the Chicago Police Department to ensure that a consistently high level of service is provided to all community members, including those who have physical disabilities.
- B. No single policy or procedure can address the Chicago Police Department's response to all people with physical disabilities. It is the intent of this special order to guide Department members in responding to and assisting those people with physical disabilities with whom they will have the most contact within the performance of their duties and responsibilities, including those who are complainants, victims, witnesses, arrestees, and members of the community.
- C. Department members shall comply with federal, state, and municipal laws, and their implementing regulations, that govern police interactions with people with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Article 5 of the Illinois Human Rights Act, and the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act.
- D. The Chicago Police Department is committed to:
  - 1. observing, upholding, and enforcing all laws relating to individual rights. Department members will respect and protect each person's human rights and comply with all laws relating to human rights consistent with the Department directive titled "Protection of Human Rights."
  - 2. ensuring that all police services are made available to individuals with disabilities.
  - 3. providing persons with disabilities reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures responsive to their needs and ensuring the Department's services, programs, and activities are accessible.



4. working with the communities of the City to serve and protect; to safeguard lives and property; to guarantee all persons fair and equal treatment under the law; and to ensure that all persons may enjoy their fundamental rights as human beings consistent with the Department directive titled "Vision, Mission Statement, and Core Values."
  5. communication and meaningful access to Department programs, services, and activities for persons who have physical disabilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
  6. the concepts of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy. Department members will, by being aware of their training in trauma-informed techniques, continue the practice of employing the four central principles of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in all interactions with members of the community, including persons who have physical disabilities.
  7. treating persons with physical disabilities with dignity and respect.
  8. utilizing de-escalation protocols when appropriate, and seek alternatives to physical custody whenever possible.
- E. In addition, in respect for those human rights prescribed by law and in all contacts and interactions with the public, Department members, both sworn and civilian, will:
1. interact with all members of the public in an unbiased, fair, and respectful manner.
  2. treat all persons with the courtesy and dignity that is inherently due every person as a human being.
  3. act, communicate, and conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner, recognizing their obligation to safeguard life and property and maintain a courteous, professional attitude.
  4. not exhibit a condescending attitude or direct any derogatory terms toward any person in any manner and not use language or take action intended to taunt or denigrate an individual, including using racist or derogatory language.
  5. when requested, correctly identify themselves by providing their rank, name, and star number (or employee number for civilian members) to any member of the public.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Developmental Disabilities (DD)** — are long-term disabilities attributable to a physical, mental, or a combination of impairments that result in functional limitations in major life activities, such as understanding and expressing language, learning, moving, self-direction, self-care, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.
- B. **Disability** — a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a person's ability to perform major life activities.
- C. **Intellectual Disabilities (ID)** — are characterized by limited or diminished intellectual functioning and difficulty with adaptive behaviors such as managing money, schedules and routines, or social interactions.
- D. **Physical Disability** — the long-term loss or impairment of part of a person's body function, resulting in a limitation of physical functioning, mobility, dexterity, or stamina.
- E. **Prosthesis** — an artificial device used to replace a defective or missing part of the body.

### IV. INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS WHO HAVE PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

- A. The Chicago Police Department is committed to providing successful communication and meaningful access to Department programs, services, and activities for persons who have physical disabilities, in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#).

- B. Persons with physical disabilities may come into contact with an officer in a variety of ways. The person may be a witness communicating with an officer during an investigation, stopped for a routine police traffic stop, a suspect who experiences an emergency during the course of an arrest or later during detention, or the police may respond to a 911 call involving a medical emergency not corresponding to any criminal activity.
- C. Interactions with persons who have physical disabilities will be conducted in a manner that is professional, respectful, and courteous. Persons who have physical disabilities are entitled to a level of service equivalent to that provided to other persons.
- D. Successful communication with a person who has a physical disability whether a victim, witness, suspect, or arrestee is essential to ascertain what actually occurred, the urgency of the matter, and the type of situation.
- E. Department members should exercise special care in the use of all gestures and verbal and written communication to minimize initial confusion or misunderstanding when dealing with any person with a physical disability (e.g., if safe, maintaining an open and relaxed stance, using respectful and non-threatening language, offering alternative ways to communicate such as phone, text, email, etc.).
- F. Department members are reminded that persons who have physical disabilities may feel stigmatized and have a fear of discrimination. Use "people-first language": refer to "a person with a disability" rather than referring to "the disabled person" or "the disabled."
- G. Recognizing that law enforcement encounters may be potentially volatile or emotionally charged, Department members should be alert to the potential for miscommunication with persons who have physical disabilities. Persons who have physical disabilities may not recognize or be able to appropriately respond to verbal direction. The failure to respond to verbal direction may be erroneously perceived as uncooperative.
- H. Because the nature of any law enforcement contact may vary substantially from one situation to the next, Department members should consider the following factors in determining what reasonable modifications to include when interacting with a person with a physical disability:
1. the extent to which a physical disability is obvious or otherwise made known to the member;
  2. the nature of the disability;
  3. the person's usual method of communication;
  4. the nature of the contact (emergency vs. non-emergency, custodial vs. consensual);
  5. the nature, importance, and duration of the communication required, and
  6. the availability of additional resources, including persons accompanying the individual, family members, caretakers, etc.
- I. To serve each person effectively, the primary consideration should be providing the type of communication aid or service requested by the person with disabilities. To ensure compassionate treatment of persons with disabilities, techniques Department members may employ to achieve effective communication include:
- a. facing an individual and speaking slowly and clearly;
  - b. using hand gestures or written communication;
  - c. using visual aids, such as printed information and large-print-formatted information;
  - d. reading aloud any documents for persons who are blind or have low vision; and
  - e. utilizing Department resources such as the "Traffic Communications Guide" ([CPD-11.980](#)).

- J. Department members should be aware of the potential for miscommunication with persons who have physical disabilities and exercise care to minimize misunderstandings or confusion.
- K. Individuals who have physical disabilities may be reluctant to acknowledge a communication barrier and may even feign a complete understanding of a communication despite actual confusion.
- L. Barriers to effective communication may also be due to limited English proficiency or other language barriers. To achieve effective communication in such situations, Department members will provide the proper services consistent with the Department directive titled "[Interactions with Persons with Limited English Proficiency](#)."

## **V. IDENTIFYING PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

Signs that may suggest a physical disability include, but are not limited to:

- A. amputations and loss of limbs;
- B. inability to walk or use arms, hands, and fingers;
- C. use of wheelchairs, crutches, or canes;
- D. requires assistance with personal care activities;
- E. fine motor function impairment; and
- F. reliance on specialized transportation.

## **VI. ACCOMMODATING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

- A. Department members will provide accommodations to persons with disabilities even if the department member does not know the exact nature of the disability or the particular diagnosis needs of a person with a disability consistent with the Department directive titled "Interactions with Persons with Disabilities."
- B. Mobility Impairments
  - 1. Mobility impairments are the most visible physical disabilities. People with mobility-related impairments include those who have difficulty walking, who use a wheelchair or other mobility aid, and those who are immobile.
  - 2. Department members are reminded that persons with physical disabilities may utilize a mobility device to enter or exit a motor vehicle. Department members shall allow individuals the additional time necessary to retrieve any mobility devices. Department members may also ask the person with a disability whether the person needs assistance entering or exiting the vehicle.
  - 3. Department members will use care and caution when assisting transport of a mobility-impaired person.
  - 4. Department members will not ask a person with disabilities utilizing a mobility device about the nature and extent of that person's disability.
  - 5. Department members may ask persons with disabilities utilizing a mobility device whether they can be safely transported in a Department vehicle or whether the person requires assistance or alternative transportation.
  - 6. Department members are reminded that transportation of individuals who require a wheelchair for mobility purposes will follow procedures outlined in the Department directive titled, "[Transportation of Arrestees Requiring Wheelchairs](#)."

**NOTE:** The Department is committed to ensuring that arrestees requiring wheelchairs are transported in a safe manner.

7. Department members will not lift or remove a person from a wheelchair unless that person has requested assistance. Department members will not lift an occupied wheelchair, except in exigent circumstances.
8. Department members will exercise care when transporting an arrestee who requires the assistance of a mobility device (crutch, cane, walker, wheelchair, etc.) as well as handle any mobility device with care.

C. Prosthetics

1. Persons who utilize prosthetics due to a disability do not only include someone with a missing limb, but may include a wide variety of prosthetics such as hearing aids, communication devices, canes, or braces.
2. Department members should be cognizant that persons who have a prosthetic may see them as extensions of themselves or their personal space. Department members will treat touching a prosthetic with the same care and manner they would take when touching a person's body.

D. People Who Are Blind or Who Have Low Vision

1. One of the most difficult issues facing people who are blind or who have low vision in times of need is that of identifying police officers.
2. When interacting with people who are blind or who have low vision, Department members may offer detailed information to identify themselves as members of the Chicago Police Department.
3. Persons who are blind or have low vision may request information in large print. When it is reasonable under the circumstances, such as when the request is made in a district station or police facility, members will use a copier to enlarge a document or print the document using a larger font. If using a computer, members may use an increased font.
4. Individuals who are blind or have low vision may request that documents be read aloud. Upon request, members will read aloud the information written on a Department form, notice, or other document provided to the person. Before asking such individuals to sign a completed form, officers will read aloud the transcribed statements to ensure accuracy.
5. Department members may ask persons who are blind or have low vision if assistance to orient themselves would be helpful.
6. Department publications are available in taped text, Braille, and large-print formats.

E. Diabetes

1. Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. This affects a person's blood glucose (blood sugar) levels. Insulin is needed by the body to convert food into the energy needed to sustain life. Without insulin, high blood glucose (hyperglycemia) and toxins increase in the blood—which can be deadly. On the other hand, too much insulin, a delayed meal, increased activity, or other medications can cause low blood glucose (hypoglycemia), which can also be deadly since the brain and other organs cannot function.
2. Identifying diabetes  
Department members should recognize both low (hypoglycemia) and high (hyperglycemia) blood glucose levels. Symptoms of both conditions can appear similar to intoxication, intentional uncooperativeness, or belligerence. In the case of both conditions, if medical attention is not provided, the person with diabetes can die within hours or days.
  - a. Hypoglycemia symptoms include: lightheadedness, sweating, irritability, confusion, lack of coordination, drowsiness, unconsciousness.

- b. Hyperglycemia symptoms include: dehydration, headache, nausea, fatigue, blurry vision, frequent urination, and fruity smelling breath, which is often mistaken for the odor of alcohol.

## **VII. DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES**

- A. Department members are required to use de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force, unless doing so would place a person or a Department member in immediate risk of harm or de-escalation techniques would be clearly ineffective under the circumstances at the time, as outlined in the Department directive titled "[De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force](#)."
- B. When interacting with persons with disabilities, some examples of de-escalation techniques include:
  - 1. using time as a tactic;
  - 2. listen and speak in a calm and controlled tone of voice in order to gather the individual's concerns while helping to defuse fear, anxiety, or insecurity.
  - 3. allow the individual time to process and confirm what is being said.
  - 4. using soft gestures and avoiding abrupt movements or actions;
  - 5. maintaining a safe distance, providing the person and Department member with a zone of safety; and
  - 6. limiting, when feasible, external stimuli that may agitate the person with disabilities (e.g., turning off sirens and flashing lights).

## **VIII. INVESTIGATORY STOPS AND CUSTODIAL ARRESTS**

- A. Consideration should be given to the needs of people with disabilities in an arrest situation. Response in these situations requires discretion and will be based, in great part, on the Department member's knowledge of the characteristics and severity of the disability, the level of resistance exhibited by the suspect, and the immediacy of the situation
- B. To ensure that the rights of all persons who have physical disabilities are protected, Department members will provide necessary communication assistance during investigatory stops and custodial arrests.
- C. Department members will ensure that while under Department control, persons with disabilities are afforded the benefits and access of the services, programs, activities, and amenities of the Department facility. In the event Department facilities are inaccessible, such services, programs, activities, or amenities will be relocated to an accessible space or use alternative methods to provide the service, program, activity, or amenity to the person with a disability.
- D. Department members are required to use de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force, unless doing so would place a person or a Department member in immediate risk of harm or de-escalation techniques would be clearly ineffective under the circumstances at the time, as outlined in the Department directive titled "[De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force](#)."
- E. Department members who conduct an Investigatory Stop must be able to clearly articulate and document the specific police or public safety purpose of any traffic or investigatory stop, consistent with the Department directives titled "[Investigatory Stop System](#)."
- F. Department members will process persons taken into custody based on probable cause and document arrests on an Arrest Report, consistent with the Department directive titled "[Processing Persons Under Department Control](#)."
- G. Department members conducting an investigation for driving under the influence of a motorist who has a physical disability should be cognizant that certain component(s) of the Standardized Field Sobriety Tests (SFST) may not be feasible.



**NOTE:** Department members are reminded that the full procedures for DUI investigations are outlined in the Department directive titled "[Driving While Under the Influence \(DUI\) and Zero Tolerance](#)".

- H. Department members will issue a [Field Pretrial Release Conditions form \(CPD-21.255\)](#) and [District Pretrial Release Conditions form \(CPD-21-256\)](#) in lieu of custodial arrest for those qualifying arrestees accused of Class B or C criminal misdemeanor offenses and petty offenses, if proper identification, qualifying criteria, and lack of disqualifying factors are present, consistent with the Department directive titled "[Pretrial Fairness Act Arrest Processing Procedures](#)."
- I. When a person with a physical disability is arrested, the arresting officer(s) will take steps to communicate Miranda rights afforded by the United States Supreme Court and as outlined in the Department directive titled "[Custodial Interrogations](#)."
- J. Department members are reminded that transportation of arrestees who require a wheelchair for mobility purposes will follow procedures outlined in the Department directive titled "[Transportation of Arrestees Requiring Wheelchairs](#)."
- K. Persons in custody will be provided access to a telephone and be able to make three telephone calls, at minimum, free of charge to communicate with their attorney, family, or friends as soon as possible but no later than three hours after arrival at their first and any subsequent place of custody as outlined in the Department directive titled "[Arrestee and In-Custody Communications](#)."
- L. Department members will ensure that persons in custody with a physical disability have equal access to restroom facilities.
- M. Lockup personnel will ensure that prior to fingerprinting, photographing, and processing arrestees under Department control, who are blind or who have low vision, will verbally describe the process to the arrestee.
- N. When an arrestee with a physical disability is accompanied by a guide dog/service animal (a dog or miniature horse trained to perform a task directly related to the person's disability), the service animal will not be separated from the arrestee and will be allowed to remain with the arrestee throughout the arrest process.

#### **IX. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information regarding an individual's disability is considered confidential and will be treated with the utmost privacy. Disclosure of such information will only occur as needed to assist Department members in carrying out their official law enforcement duties or with the explicit consent of the individual.

Authenticated by MWK

Larry Snelling  
Superintendent of Police

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