

Bias-Motivated Crimes

319.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Beloit Police Department recognizes and places a high priority on the rights of all individuals guaranteed under the Constitution and the laws of this state. When such rights are infringed upon by violence, threats or other harassment, this department will utilize all available resources to see that justice is served under the law. This policy has been developed to meet or exceed the provisions of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and provides members of this department with guidelines for identifying and investigating incidents and crimes that may be motivated by hatred or other bias.

319.2 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Bias-motivated crime - A crime motivated by prejudice based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or disability of the victim.

319.3 CRIMINAL STATUTES

- (a) Wis. Stat. § 943.012 - Whoever intentionally causes damage to, intentionally marks, draws or writes with ink or another substance on or intentionally etches into any physical property of another, without the person's consent and with knowledge of the character of the property, is guilty of a Class I felony if the property consists of one or more of the following:
1. Any church, synagogue or other building, structure or place primarily used for religious worship or another religious purpose.
 2. Any cemetery, mortuary or other facility used for burial or memorializing the dead.
 3. Any school, educational facility or community center publicly identified as associated with a group of persons of a particular race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry or by an institution of any such group.
 4. Any personal property contained in any of the properties in items 1, 2, or 3 above if the personal property has particular significance or value to any group of persons of a particular race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry and the actor knows the personal property has particular significance or value to that group.
- (b) Wis. Stat. § 939.645 - Enhances the penalty for offenses where the victim is selected because of the offender's belief or perception regarding the race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry of that person or the owner or occupant of that property, whether or not the actor's belief or perception was correct.

Beloit Police Department

WI LE Policy Manual

Bias-Motivated Crimes

- (c) 18 USC § 245 - Federal law also prohibits discrimination-based acts and may be considered in addition to or in lieu of state law depending on circumstances.

319.4 PREVENTING AND PREPARING FOR LIKELY BIAS-MOTIVATED CRIMES

While it is recognized that not all crime can be prevented, this department is committed to taking a proactive approach to preventing and preparing for likely bias-motivated crimes by among other things:

- (a) Making an affirmative effort to establish contact with persons and groups within the community who are likely targets of bias-motivated crimes to form, and cooperate with, prevention and response networks.
- (b) Providing victim assistance and follow-up as outlined below, including community follow-up.
- (c) Educating community and civic groups about bias-motivated crime laws.

319.5 PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATING BIAS-MOTIVATED CRIMES

Whenever any member of this department receives a report of a suspected bias-motivated crime or other activity that reasonably appears to involve a potential bias-motivated crime, the following should occur:

- (a) Officers will be promptly assigned to contact the victim, witness or reporting party to investigate the matter further as circumstances may dictate.
- (b) A supervisor should be notified of the circumstances as soon as practicable.
- (c) Once "in progress" aspects of any such situation have been stabilized (e.g., treatment of victims or apprehension of present suspects), the assigned officers will take all reasonable steps to preserve available evidence that may tend to establish that a bias-motivated crime was involved.
- (d) The assigned officers will interview available witnesses, victims and others to determine what circumstances, if any, indicate that the situation may involve a bias-motivated crime.
- (e) Depending on the situation, the assigned officers or supervisor may request additional assistance from investigators or other resources to further the investigation.
- (f) The assigned officers will include all available evidence indicating the likelihood of a bias-motivated crime in the relevant reports. Bias-Motivated Crime reports will be coded with correct bias code.
- (g) The assigned officers should also make reasonable efforts to assist the victim by providing available information on local assistance programs and organizations as required by the Victim and Witness Assistance Policy.
- (h) The assigned officers and supervisor should take reasonable steps to ensure that any such situation does not escalate further.

Beloit Police Department

WI LE Policy Manual

Bias-Motivated Crimes

319.6 SPECIAL OPERATIONS DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

If a case is assigned to the Special Operations Division Detective Bureau, the assigned investigator will be responsible for following up on the reported bias-motivated crime by:

- (a) Coordinating further investigation with the District Attorney and other appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- (b) Maintaining contact with the victim and other involved individuals, as needed.

319.7 SUPPORT SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES

The Support Services Division will be responsible to collect, analyze, maintain and submit bias-motivated crime information to State and Federal reporting agencies as indicated or required by state law.

319.7.1 STATE BIAS-MOTIVATED CRIME REPORTING

This department shall submit bias-motivated crime information and offenses through Wisconsin's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program at regular intervals as prescribed by rules adopted by the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance (OJA). This department will only report a bias-motivated crime when an investigation reveals sufficient evidence that an offender's actions were motivated, in whole or in part, by his/her bias. This shall be conducted by the Director of Support Services.

319.7.2 FEDERAL BIAS-MOTIVATED CRIME REPORTING

The Director of Support Services shall include bias crime data reporting within the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) pursuant to Records Unit procedures and in compliance with (28 USC § 534(a)).

319.8 TRAINING

All officers of this department shall receive training on bias-motivated crime recognition and investigation and should attend annual training which incorporates a bias-motivated crime training component.