



POLICE

LAWRENCE

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Lawrence Kansas Police Department
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Statement from Chief Lockhart Regarding No-Knock Warrants and Chokeholds

“I have been police Chief in Lawrence for 2 months and have met with several community members and groups with varying levels of input and concerns related to our police department. National news coverage of tragic events has brought many questions and comments surrounding the department’s approach to chokeholds and no-knock warrants. As we seek to reimagine policing in Lawrence, including being responsive to our community, I am banning no-knock search warrants and chokeholds.

No-knock warrants became a popular tactic during the 1990’s when officers were serving warrants on drug houses occupied by heavily armed individuals with fortified doors and windows. The idea was to surprise the occupants with an overwhelming show of force and take control of the situation in a very dynamic fashion. This tactic is one that should not be part of any law enforcement tactical strategy. Surprising residents with a dynamic entry, as recent incidents have demonstrated, is not safe for officers or residents.

No-knock search warrants do not place the value of human life as a priority and are dangerous to all involved. They have no place in a modern police agency and your Lawrence Police Department will not endanger its community with this tactic. No-knock warrants are now specifically banned in our policy.

When meeting with our local NAACP Political Action Committee, they asked the department to place a greater emphasis on de-escalation in our Use of Force Policy. The new policy has moved de-escalation to a more prominent location in the policy. We also added a policy statement which emphasizes the department holding in high regard the value of human life and the dignity of all persons.

Even though chokeholds and no-knock warrants were not a practice of the Lawrence Police Department, these tactics are now banned. Our policy manual will be updated to reflect these changes. These changes are part of what reimaging policing in Lawrence looks like and how our community envisions policing in Lawrence.”

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