

DAYTON POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDER  
**PRESERVATION OF DAYTON  
POLICE HISTORY**



RICHARD S. BIEHL – DIRECTOR AND CHIEF OF POLICE

Rev. 11/18

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The history of law enforcement in Dayton, Ohio reaches as far back as the beginning of its settlement with the appointment of its first town constable in 1797. Throughout the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, law and order was maintained by constables and town marshals as well as by appointed watchmen on foot patrol who were aided by the citizenry when called upon. Soon after the Civil War on **April 16, 1867**, the “Dayton Metropolitan Police Force” was officially formed through enacted state legislation – Ohio’s third organized police department – providing a pool of 22 patrolmen to protect the life and property of the local community. After years of fluctuating state regulation, lasting legal authorization by the Ohio General Assembly came on **May 19, 1873**. What is today the Dayton Police Department has remained in continual operation ever since.

It is the policy of the Dayton Police Department to preserve its proud and accomplished history and the legacy of the police officers that served this community. Artifacts, documents, photographs and other materials having *historical value* will be maintained in cooperation with organizations that are in the practice of collecting and safeguarding such items. Police employees are to be mindful of the importance of our local police history. Appropriate measures are to be taken when receiving public inquiries and in protecting items of a historical nature.

**I. HISTORICAL RECORDS: LAWFUL VALUE AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Historical records are at the highest legal retention priority among all public records. Consequently, Section 149.30 of the Ohio Revised Code has placed the archive authority over all public records under the direction of the Ohio Historical Society. The OHS acts as the archives administrator for the state and its political subdivisions (i.e. cities) as provided in sections 149.31 to 149.42 of the Revised Code.
- B. The Ohio Public Records Act defines a record as having HISTORICAL VALUE if it documents an agency’s organization, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or activities, or if it contains significant information about *people, places or events*. Historical records are required by law to be retained permanently.
- C. The State Attorney General of Ohio advises all public agencies to guard against disposing of records that have a *potential historical significance*. Public agencies are urged to seek assistance from the Ohio Historical Society prior to the disposal of any records with historical significance or value.

**II. PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL HISTORICAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- A. Given the requirements of law, the Dayton Police Department has developed a cooperative relationship with several local historical organizations in safeguarding against the disposing of historical records as well as other items (e.g. photos and artifacts) that have “potential historical significance”. They are:
  - 1. **Dayton Police History Foundation, Inc.**, a state-chartered, non-profit 501(C)(3) organization;
  - 2. **Dayton History at Carillon Historical Park**, the historical society for Montgomery County;
  - 3. **Dayton History-NCR Archive & Research Center** located downtown at 224 N. St. Clair Street.
- B. There are other established historical organizations that may be called upon for advice and counsel or for preserving police artifacts and historical records. They include but are not limited Wright State University Paul Laurence Dunbar Library Archives and the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus.
- C. The Police Department’s partnership with Dayton History and DPH Foundation, Inc. has been mutually beneficial in recent years. Several examples include the 2008 exhibit, *Patrolling the Streets of Dayton*, the Safety Building first floor display, the Dayton Police Awards Ceremony held at Carillon Historical Park as well as the narrative contribution provided for the publication of the 2010 Dayton Police Yearbook.

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### III. DEPARTMENT LIAISON TO LOCAL HISTORICAL ORGANIZATIONS

- A. The liaison between DPD personnel and the named historical organizations rests with two supervisors:
- The Policy and Research Supervisor at 937-333-1090
  - The Property Room Supervisor at 937-333-1010.
- B. Both supervisors can directly contact the Director of Collections at the Dayton History-NCR Archive Center and the manager of DPH Foundation, Inc. for needed referrals or to have questions answered.
- C. **Employee Responsibility:** In the event that a police employee is contacted by a member of the public regarding a donation of materials to Dayton police archives or receives a bona fide inquiry about a historical event that cannot be easily answered, the person should be directed to these two supervisors.

### IV. PRESERVATION OF DAYTON POLICE DEPARTMENT ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

- A. Police agencies, charged with law enforcement duties as its principal priority, commonly lack the resources, continuity of assignment and the means to suitably care for items of genuine historical value.
1. Police Departments have no long-term infrastructure or trained experience in preserving, effectively securing and identifying genuine historical artifacts.
  2. Police employees, focused on their duties, may not be readily attentive to items of a historical nature.
- B. **Employee Responsibility:** Members of the Department are urged to be ever mindful that records and documents in their care could have genuine historical value and, therefore, cannot be discarded by law.
1. Police employees having questions regarding artifacts, documents, photographs and other materials under their control should retain the items and obtain guidance;
  2. Contact either the Policy-Research Supervisor or Property Room Supervisor.
  3. These two supervisors are authorized by the Department to arrange for the Dayton History-NCR Archive Center or DPH Foundation, Inc. to assess and inventory the items in question. The Training Bureau Commander has the same authorization for display items maintained at the Police Academy.
- C. The Dayton Police Department will transfer documents, books, recordings, film, etc. to the Dayton History-NCR Archive Center if it is clear these public records have potential historical value and have no practical use, particularly records that easily deteriorate with time due to light sensitivity or if not maintained in an acid-free environment.
- D. It will be the practice of the Dayton Police Department to relocate property of historical value to Dayton History-NCR Archive Center when items are no longer of practical use, have little or no true market value or cannot be held in a setting where there is an assurance of uncompromised security.
- E. When called upon, Dayton History will assess the historical value of artifacts, documents, photographs and other materials and DPH Foundation, Inc. will assist in the inventory of on-site or relocated items.
1. File copies of said inventories will be maintained at the Department's Policy-Research Unit office.
  2. File copies of said inventories will be provided to the Dayton Police Academy Commander for artifacts and other historical materials on display at the training facility.
- F. The Dayton Police Department, the Dayton History-NCR Archive Center and DPH Foundation, Inc. will continue its wide range of cooperative projects (e.g. presentations, preservation efforts, displays, etc.)
1. Whenever exhibits or displays are arranged, these historical organizations will work closely with the Dayton Police Academy Commander.

2. This will be the case for rotating exhibits at the Dayton Police Academy as well as temporary historical displays at other police facilities open to the general public.
3. Artifacts, documents, photographs and other materials that have been relocated to the Archive Center for permanent safekeeping will be made available for rotating or temporary exhibits of this nature.