

Message from Santa Barbara Police Chief Lori Luhnnow Regarding the Death of George Floyd

May 28, 2020

Certain events in policing, whether involving police action or inaction, evoke such a depth of emotion that I feel a moral imperative to address them. I believe this to be the responsibility of all police leaders, whether the message is to defend unpopular actions of police officers, or, as in the case of George Floyd, bring attention to harmful and hurtful actions by officers whose poor decisions tarnish the profession. I am deeply disturbed by Mr. Floyd's death. It was preventable and should not have happened.

As such, we must not shy away from having courageous conversations and dialogue. It is through dialogue that we hear other people's stories and perspectives and learn to empathize with each other. Historically, law enforcement has contributed to the marginalization of many disadvantaged groups, including African Americans. It is the responsibility of current law enforcement leaders to take measures to *prevent* those actions from occurring.

The Santa Barbara Police Department partners with community groups and leaders to ensure that we continue to be a learning organization. It is our culture. We value and depend upon our community's engagement with our department. These partnerships have allowed us to have meaningful dialogues with groups who have experienced difficult relationships with law enforcement in the past. They have also enhanced our ability to provide training for our officers on important topics such as principled policing and implicit bias, and to engage local community members to participate in that training.

Police officers have a duty to uphold the law. I expect our officers, myself included, to apply the law in a way that prioritizes and respects the sanctity of life. That includes a duty to intervene when officers are acting outside of the law or policy. It is our policy and our moral obligation.

I am proud of the officers of the Santa Barbara Police Department. I am exposed every day to the high moral standards, respect, and empathy they demonstrate. We, as sworn officers, are granted the authority to protect our community. We understand that we must do so with a blend of humanity, empathy, and fairness to maintain our public's trust.



Lori Luhnnow
Chief of Police
Santa Barbara Police Department