The University of Rochester Department of Public Safety (DPS) is a unit of the University, wholly independent from the Rochester Police Department (RPD). The University does not contract with RPD for any law enforcement services or hire RPD personnel to staff campus events.

DPS officers are members of the University of Rochester community. What distinguishes us from a traditional law enforcement agency is that our officers clearly understand our institution and culture. DPS peace officers are employees of the University and subject to its supervision and policies. We serve and work to support the individuals who are here to learn, teach, heal and work. Our officers are committed to making sure that happens in a safe environment.

Responses

The majority of University of Rochester campuses are located within the City of Rochester and, therefore, fall under the geographical jurisdiction of the Rochester Police Department. DPS is required to maintain, pursuant to NYS Criminal Procedure Law, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that defines areas of authority and the primary responsibility and lead agency status for identified offenses or events occurring on University properties.

The University of Rochester Department of Public Safety handles all calls for service on River Campus, Eastman School of Music, South Campus, the Medical Center campus, and the Memorial Art Gallery, as well as the immediately adjacent areas that border these main campuses. Immediately adjacent means that DPS only responds to University affiliated or unaffiliated incidents or calls occurring on the sidewalks and roadways that are defined as adjacent to University owned or leased property, for example, the sidewalk outside the doors of the Eastman School of Music, and the sidewalks and roadways that border Riverview Apartments and Brooks Crossing. Outside of this New York State authorized jurisdiction, DPS does not handle any calls for service, nor patrol (foot or vehicle), nor become involved in any response activities in the neighborhoods and communities near the University’s campuses.

Training

In 2013, DPS transformed from a security department staffed with NYS licensed security officers to a public safety department with arrest authority upon achieving peace officer status by virtue of New York State law. A licensed security officer needs to receive only 16 hours of initial training, a peace officer needs 595 hours of NYS mandated training, a University of Rochester peace officer because of yet higher standards receives 620 hours plus 480 hours supervised field observation training.
DPS officers regularly train on de-escalation techniques for all in-person responses, prioritizing that conflicts be prevented or resolved first through communication, understanding, and other non-physical means. Officers train on maintaining distance, requesting assistance, verbal control, maintaining professionalism, and identifying solutions.

Officers additionally receive many hundreds of hours of specialized training on such topics as:

- **Crisis Intervention**: A significant portion of DPS officers have received the 40-hour Crisis Intervention Team training. All newly hired officers will receive it in the basic Peace Officer Academy; veteran officers continue to receive the training until all officers in the department have been trained. This CIT training gives officers the skills to assess persons in mental health crisis, to make the proper decisions in providing care for these persons, and to deliver the most humane approach in dealing with people suffering from mental illness. Additionally, DPS officers work closely with the University Counseling Center (UCC). UCC counselors are available 24/7 for officers to consult in real time on any mental health crisis.

- **Bystander Intervention**: This training empowers officers to intervene if another officer acts in a manner that deviates from their training or authority. It is the responsibility of all University Public Safety employees to intervene when an individual’s safety, freedoms, or rights are being infringed upon. Regardless of how rare the circumstance may be, this may take the form of protecting persons from actions of personnel from within the organization’s own ranks.

- **Fair and Impartial Policing**: This national course has three modules: Understanding Human Biases; Impact of Biased Policing; and Skills for Fair and Impartial Policing—and covers the differences in biases—explicit and implicit—along with stereotypes. Officers will realize that they, along with the citizens they interact with, have inherent biases. It provides officers with tools to assist them in recognizing and changing their negative biases. It stresses that each and every time officers interact with community members, it should be done with fairness, respect and dignity.

- **Racial Diversity Training for Campus Police & Public Safety Officers**: This training reviews a number of prominent cases in which young black men died during confrontations with police throughout the U.S. Topics covered include:
  - Racial Diversity on College Campuses
  - Mass Media and the Perpetuation of Negative Stereotypes in our Society
  - The Seven-Step “RECOVER” Method of Communication Recovery
All of this training and the policies and procedures that underlie it prioritize the safety of the University community. Above all, DPS officers are trained to treat every individual with respect, dignity and care, and understand that often-times they are dealing with individuals who are experiencing what could be one of the worst days of their lives. DPS focuses on building relationships with our community members. Establishing and maintaining those relationships is of utmost importance as we work together to provide for the safety of our community.

Bias Reporting

If any member of the University of Rochester community needs to raise a bias concern or complaint with regard to DPS, there are a number of established ways to do this:

- Online through the DPS website
- Office of University Counsel
- University Intercessors Office
- Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- The Paul Burgett Intercultural Center
- The Office of Senior Vice President Holly Crawford.

When DPS receives a bias related complaint against an officer, the complaint is immediately referred to the Office of Counsel for a Policy 106 violation investigation. These investigations are not conducted by DPS.

Public Safety Review Board (PSRB)

The Public Safety Review Board (PSRB) was established in October 2016. The board is chaired by University Trustee Francis L. Price ’74, ’75S (MBA). The PSRB is comprised of a representative from both the A&SE and ESM student associations, as well as faculty, staff and administrators from across the University who meet quarterly or on an as-needed basis to provide regular assessments of DPS policies and procedures, and to review any significant incidents involving DPS actions. In the summer of 2020, President Sarah Mangelsdorf appointed Mercedes Ramírez Fernandez, Richard Feldman Vice President for Equity and Inclusion & Chief Diversity Officer, to the PSRB. DPS Chief Mark Fischer is not a member of the PSRB, nor are any DPS officers or staff.

PSRB Charge and Membership

The Review Board periodically reviews officer selection, training, cultural sensitivity practices, de-escalation procedures, community engagement, and gun safety measures. It also provides an independent review of any instances of use of a weapon, pepper gel or baton by a DPS officer, as well as reviews each instance of a complaint of racial bias in the Department consistent with existing University policies and procedures. The Review Board reports to the University President.  https://www.rochester.edu/public-safety-review-board/