



## CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING CONCERNING POLICE-YOUTH RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS AND JUNIOR POLICE ACADEMIES

Most law enforcement agencies have faced challenges in their recruitment efforts.<sup>1</sup> Many strategies and programs are being utilized or developed by police leaders to help fill their ranks, such as police explorer programs, junior police academies, and engaging young people in both middle and high schools, which has seen a resurgence in some communities.<sup>2</sup>

As law enforcement leaders implement such recruitment strategies involving youth, they must have a policy governing the safe treatment and protection of minors and ensure that every employee, officer, and volunteer has completed the appropriate training. Policies governing juvenile arrest, search, and seizure are insufficient to ensure that officers have the proper policy guidance when interacting with youth during non-enforcement settings such as explorer and junior police academy programs.

There can be significant consequences when agencies lack the appropriate policy and training programs when interacting with youth.

The Chief of Police should:

1. Read: [In This Police Youth Program, a Trail of Sexual Abuse Across the U.S.](#)
2. Read: [We Want to Hear from You](#). (May 2024; A media organization is requesting that those victimized by law enforcement officers contact them. Chiefs of Police should ensure they have the appropriate policy and reporting mechanisms in place).
3. Ensure the agency has a policy governing minors' safe treatment and protection. If the agency has an existing policy addressing the safe protection and treatment of minors, review it to determine if there are any necessary revisions. If you do not have a policy, the [MEL Safety Institute Model Template Policy Protection and Safe Treatment of Minors](#).
4. Re-issue the policy if it's been some time since employees have reviewed it and have been tested on its contents.
5. Review the agency's Field Training Officer Program to ensure it addresses the safe protection and treatment of minors, as detailed in the agency policy.
6. Ensure that all employees and volunteers have watched the [MEL Safety Institute Safe Protection of Minors Training Video](#). If viewed through the [MSI Learning Management System](#) it will be automatically recorded in the officer's training history.

If you have any questions, please contact your Law Enforcement Risk Control Consultant.

<sup>1</sup>Police Executive Research Forum. (2023). *Responding to the Staffing Crisis: Innovations in Recruitment and Retention*. Washington D.C.: PERF.

<sup>2</sup>Wiseman, J. (2023). *Recruiting for Diversity in Law Enforcement: Selected Research Incident Insights*. Institute for Excellence in Government.