Police Officers and Gratuities

Name

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According to law enforcement ethics, a gratuity is a gift in the form of an item or service, given to another person solely depending on their occupation. Workers usually offer gratuities to their officers, especially in the service industry. This is very common in the police department (Lamboo, Lasthuizen & Huberts, 2017). Although some officers have drawn the line when it comes to this topic, others still find it hard to control the habit. Acceptance of gratuities by police has been a prominent issue over the years. All law enforcement officials are expected to maintain ethical conduct, integrity, and honor in all government agencies. Police officers, being in this category, are therefore expected to guard themselves against activities that may make them go against the law enforcement policies (Lamboo, Lasthuizen & Huberts, 2017). This essay generally discusses the concept of acceptance of gratuities by the police, and what is expected of them during such situations.

Gratuities for police officers may include a variety of items or services such as fully-priced restaurant meals, thanksgiving turkeys, among others. Those who receive such gifts are always expected to provide favors in return in the future. This is seen as a way of giving insurance policies to the people, should anything arise in the future (Ross, 2011). The primary objective of individuals gifting such items to police officers is to ensure that they have their security in case something happens. Therefore, officers who accept are always expected to provide extra services to the people when required.

Gratuities are often seen as a form of corruption. Police personnel who accept them are usually seen as corrupt since they fail to abide by the government's law enforcement policies. Accepting them is often condemned by most law enforcement agencies. Gratuities are not generally unethical since it is always good to appreciate people (Coleman, 2014). However, it is their cumulative effects that make them unethical. The more a police officer accepts, the more favors and extra services he or she will be expected to offer in return. The cumulative effects of this habit result in situations that are difficult for the police officer to stop.

In some cases, gratuities are usually seen as bribes. For instance, the acceptance of free coffee by a police officer is commonly assumed to be the same as receiving a five-thousand-dollar bribe from the person. Giving out either gratuities or bribes is not considered ethical regardless of the items’ value or financial worth. However, it is important to understand the intent of the officers before jumping into conclusions about the gratuities they receive. Some have the intention of fostering community relations and cohesion, which is a good thing (Coleman, 2014). Such cases should always be considered. However, if the intent is unethical and financially oriented, then the appropriate procedures should be taken against the officer.

In conclusion, gratuities can be used appropriately or misused. They can be considered as a way of enhancing community relations and cohesion. They can also be used as bribes to solicit for favors from police officers in future. However, the police should be allowed to decide on the appropriateness of various gifts. They should be allowed to determine if it is ethical to receive a particular offer or not. In this way, there will be a balanced and just view of gratuities accepted by police officers.

References

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