



National Association of Field Training Officers Indiana Chapter

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Ethics

As Field Training Officers we often do a great job in teaching new recruits the “nuts and bolts” of the job, but we often fail miserably at teaching one of the core components of law enforcement; Ethics. Usually the FTO trusts the department to screen out individuals who do not meet ethical standards, but this is not always the case. Others believe that ethics is a topic best learned at home or in church. No matter what your personal beliefs of ethics, there are several important elements that must be discussed with the new officer. These elements are best described as honesty and fairness.

The necessity of honesty and fairness is enforced by *Brady v. Maryland* (1963). *Brady v. Maryland* establishes that a prosecutor has a duty to disclose material exculpatory information to a defendant in order to protect the fairness of a verdict at trial, and guard against the risk that an innocent person might be found guilty because the government withheld evidence. This seemingly benign law has a dramatic effect on the new officer just starting their career.

What it means is that in every criminal case the prosecution must ask the following questions of the department and officer;

1. Do you have any information that the officer has been untruthful in any matter?
2. Do you have any records of bias?
3. Has the officer been charged or convicted of any crimes?

It's important that the new officer understand that any mistakes in ethics or character in the early part of their employment could have a dramatic effect on every criminal case for the rest of their career.

-Steven Kellams