



ACTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT MANUAL; P&P: Administration		
POLICY & PROCEDURE # 4.02	DATE OF ISSUE: 2/14/2024	EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/21/2024
SUBJECT: ORGANIZATION	ISSUING AUTHORITY: Chief James Cogan	
REFERENCE(S): Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission # 11.1.0; 11.1.1; 11.1.2; 11.2.1; 11.3.1; 11.3.2; 11.4.4; 12.1.1; 12.1.2; 12.1.3; 16.2.1; 21.2.2	<input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AMENDS <input type="checkbox"/> RESCINDS	

I. PURPOSE

This agency is structured into a series of organizational components that represent functional groupings of employees performing like activities. The organizational structure of the department provides management with a means for assigning responsibility for the performance of a group of functions to a single supervisor or manager, as well as letting employees know to whom they are accountable.

The ranks of the Acton Police Department reflect the paramilitary nature of the organization. The executive head of the department is the Chief of Police. The subsequent ranks provide a structure for the various levels of authority and responsibilities throughout the organization.

Commensurate with these responsibilities, all employees are given the authority to make decisions and use the available resources that are necessary for the successful completion of their assigned duties. In the acceptance of this delegated authority, each employee also accepts the accompanying accountability for his/her actions (or lack of actions) and obligations. Employees confronted by an exceptional situation, for which there are no guidelines or policies, are expected to consult with their immediate supervisor, on whom the ultimate accountability falls. If this consultation is impossible, it is expected that each employee will exercise his/her best judgment in taking the necessary action while keeping in mind the goals and philosophies of the department. **[11.3.1]**

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Acton Police Department to be structured and organized to:

- A. Efficiently accomplish the missions of the agency; and
- B. Effectively allocate and use personnel resources.

III. MISSION STATEMENT AND VALUES **[11.1.0]**

The mission of the Acton Police Department is to enhance the quality of life in Acton by working in partnership with the community to enforce the law, preserve peace, maintain order, and provide social services to all members of the community. The Department is committed to accomplishing its mission of protecting the lives and property of all people, by treating every person with compassion, courtesy, professionalism, and respect, while efficiently rendering police services fairly and impartially.

The values of the Acton Police Department are:

- Integrity - We are committed to the enforcement of laws and the preservation of order and property. We are honest, truthful, and consistent in our words and actions, and therefore worthy of the public's trust. We exercise discretion in a manner that is beyond reproach.
- Professionalism - We treat the public and our colleagues with courtesy and respect. We understand that our appearance, words, and demeanor contribute to the public's confidence in us. We are responsive to the community and deliver services promptly and efficiently.
- Fairness and Impartiality - We act with fairness, restraint, and impartiality in carrying out our duties. We work with the community to continually understand and overcome cultural influences and unconscious biases. We understand that our actions, combined with the way we treat members of the community, contribute to our "legitimacy" in the eyes of the public.
- Teamwork – We work together as one organization in carrying out the mission of the department; our respective units do not act as distinct "silos" from one another. As individual members of the department, we are respectful to each other and work collectively to solve problems and serve the community.
- Efficiency - We keep abreast of standard procedures, legal issues, and innovative topics in modern policing through regular training. We exercise rigor in thinking strategically about identifying trends, exploring alternative solutions, and solving problems.
- Advocacy and Empathy - We have compassion for victims of crime. As members of the community, we have respect for and promote the diversity of the community. We advocate for social and other supportive services for all.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Rank and Structure

1. **CHIEF OF POLICE [12.1.1]:** The Chief of Police is the Chief Executive Officer of the Department, and is the final authority in all matters of policy, operations, and discipline within the Department, subject to the approval of the Town Manager. Official authority for the Chief of Police is derived from the Town of Acton Bylaws which read as follows:

Section B5: The Town Manager shall appoint a Chief of Police and shall have the general supervision over the Police Department.

Section B6: The Chief of Police shall be head of the Police Department. Subject to the supervision and direction of the Town Manager, the Chief of Police shall have control of the Department, its officers and members, and special police officers when in service of the Department.

Section B7: The Police Department shall be governed by the rules and regulations and perform such duties as are prescribed by the Town Manager or by the bylaws of the Town.

Section B8: The Police Department shall be subject to all the rules and regulations and perform all duties which are now or hereafter prescribed by law, by the bylaws of the Town, by the Town Manager, or rules and regulation of the Police Department. Any member of the department may be removed or suspended or otherwise disciplined by the Town Manager, as provided by law.

2. **DEPUTY CHIEF:** The Deputy Chief's rank is appointed by the Town Manager. The Deputy Chief is superseded in rank by the Chief. A Deputy Chief reports to the Chief of Police and assumes those duties in the Chief's absence.
3. **LIEUTENANT:** Lieutenant's rank is achieved by the promotion process, and is superseded in rank by the Deputy Chief. A Lieutenant is generally assigned as Patrol Division Commander or Special Services Division Commander.
4. **SERGEANT:** Sergeant's rank is achieved by the promotion process, and is superseded in rank by Lieutenant. A Sergeant is generally assigned as a Patrol Shift Supervisor or a Special Services Division Sergeant.
5. **OFFICER:** A Police Officer's rank is achieved by the town hiring process, and is superseded in rank by Sergeant. A police officer is generally assigned as a patrol officer, a detective (Prosecutor, School Resource Officer, Family Services Unit, Criminal Investigations, Accreditation Team), and other assignments at the direction of the Chief of Police.

B. Organization

1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS: The department structure has been organized to carry out the mission of the department with the available personnel. Each division or unit shall be under the direct command of a single supervisor. **[11.1.1] [11.2.1]**
2. ADMINISTRATION: The Chief of Police oversees the operation of the Police Department and provides for the following:
 - a. Ensure compliance with all laws which the Department or its officers have the authority to enforce;
 - b. Organize, direct, and control all resources of the Department to preserve the peace, protect persons and property, and enforce the law;
 - c. Planning, development management, and control of those administrative functions necessary to support both patrol and investigative operations;
 - d. Promulgate all general and special orders of the Department and issue, on his own authority, orders (written or oral) not consistent with his powers, duties, and responsibilities.
 - e. Providing internal security, audit, and investigative oversight to other components of the department.

3. PATROL DIVISION

- a. The Patrol Division shall consist of uniformed officers assigned to staff the patrol precincts of the town, including officers assigned to foot, bicycle, and vehicle patrol. The Patrol Division also consists of a traffic unit.
- b. **Traffic Unit:** Members of the Traffic Unit have the primary responsibility for traffic and parking enforcement and accident reconstruction. This includes (but is not limited to) the direction, control, planning, and analysis of traffic and parking-related issues. The intent is to ensure the safe and efficient flow of vehicles and pedestrians in the community.
A designee of the Chief of Police, within the Traffic Unit, will be responsible for fleet management, fleet equipment, and documentation.
- c. This Division consists of three shifts each day commanded by a Division Commander (Lieutenant) and a Patrol Shift Supervisor (Sergeant or higher rank).

- d. Special Police Officers (Part-time sworn personnel) and Traffic Attendants are assigned to details only and are commanded by the Patrol Shift Supervisor at that time of their detail.

4. SPECIAL SERVICES DIVISION **[16.2.1]**

- a. **Criminal Detectives**: Criminal Detectives are responsible for identifying criminal activity, investigating criminal behavior, and pursuing and apprehending criminal offenders.
- b. **School Resource Officers**: School Resource Officers (SRO) support and facilitate the educational process within the Acton Boxborough School System by providing a safe and secure environment through building and establishing meaningful relationships with students and staff and proactively interacting with the school community to ensure the enforcement of Town and state laws, preservation of public order, protection of life and the prevention, detection, or investigation of crime. The SROs will work effectively with students, parents, school personnel, and community agencies to support teaching and learning in the schools. The School Resource Officer will patrol district property to protect students, staff, and visitors from physical harm and prevent loss of district property resulting from criminal activity.
- c. **Prosecutor**: The primary responsibilities of the Prosecutor in the department are reviewing incoming arrests and criminal complaints, and preparing and presenting criminal cases to the District Attorney's Offices and Clerks Office of the District and Juvenile Courts. The Prosecutor also conducts show-cause hearings on criminal matters, amends criminal complaints based on new and pertinent information, presents testimony at motor vehicle citation appeals, and provides training and explanation of court procedures to the department.
- d. **Family Services Unit**: The Family Services Unit actively engages with parents and families to locate resources that offer assistance with food and housing, and to help those families develop a plan for continued success. Members will be a dedicated contact to the community in regards to Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Civil Rights, and Elder concerns and issues. Officers assigned to the Family Services Unit will be the primary contact with community support agencies.
- e. **Accreditation Unit**: The primary responsibility of the Accreditation Unit is to assist the Chief of Police in creating and modifying existing policies and procedures to adhere to the standards of the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC). Members of the Accreditation Unit are also tasked with assisting the Accreditation Manager (The Special Services Division Commander) with obtaining any compliance documentation required by MPAC.

- f. Clinical Staff Responder: The primary responsibility of the Clinical Staff Responder is to work in the office and out in the field with the officers on calls to provide on-scene clinical evaluation and determine appropriate action for services, arrests, diversion from arrests, diversion from unnecessary emergency department visits, or a combination of criminal justice and behavioral health treatment involved. The clinician will also perform training for police officers and off-site related training. They will keep diligent and organized records and tracking while working with not only the Acton Police but with the Family Services, Council on Aging, Veterans Agent, Community Resources Coordinator, Acton Nursing Services, Domestic Violence Services Network, Department of Mental Health, and others.
- g. The Special Services Division is commanded by a Lieutenant. Two sergeants are responsible for oversight of the units contained in the Special Services Division. One Sergeant is responsible for direct supervision over the Criminal Detectives, and Court Prosecutor. The second Sergeant is responsible for the direct supervision of the School Resource Officers, Family Services Unit, and Accreditation Unit.

5. COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

- a. The Communications Division consists of civilian public safety dispatchers who dispatch from the communications center located at the police department.
- b. This division is responsible for sending and receiving radio and telephone communications, dispatching appropriate police, fire, and EMS personnel, and recording all incidents of crime, police, and fire activities in the appropriate logs.
- c. The Communications Division is commanded by the Deputy Chief with the assistance of the Special Services Commander and direct supervision provided by the Dispatch Supervisor and Patrol Shift Supervisor. The Dispatch operations are covered by a minimum of two civilian public safety dispatchers per shift.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

- a. The Secretary to the Chief of Police shall be responsible for all administrative duties assigned by the Chief of Police.
- b. The Record Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining all Department records, and the timely dissemination of information to requesting agencies and individuals.

7. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART **[12.1.2(D)]**

- a. The Acton Police Department Organizational Chart is posted in the Dispatch Center, roll call room, and Appendix A of this manual. The Organization Chart is accessible to all department personnel. The Organization Chart is also accessible to the public upon request. The Organization chart shall be maintained by the Accreditation Manager. **[11.1.2]**

C. Succession of Command Protocol

1. A plan is in place to ensure the continuity of command in the absence of the Chief, due to a planned or unplanned event where the Chief is not available. The plan will ensure that executive-level leadership is always available. **[12.1.2(A)]**
 - a. During day-to-day operations where the Chief is absent, The Deputy Chief shall address executive command-level issues. The Deputy Chief may deal with issues that clearly fall under the existing policies and procedures of this agency. Issues that are beyond the scope of existing policies and procedures should be deferred until the Chief returns or is conferred with. Issues that, in the judgment of the Deputy Chief require immediate action may be addressed. A report of the issues and actions shall be prepared for presentation to the Chief upon his/her return.
 - b. In the event of a sudden, unplanned absence or incapacitation, the succession of command is as follows: Deputy Chief, Superior Officer by rank and seniority.

D. Unity Of Command

1. Each member of the department shall be accountable to one supervisor at any given time, according to his/her particular duty assignment at that time. If another supervisory officer needs to assign an officer not directly under his/her supervision, that supervisor shall consult with the officer's supervisor prior to such assignment whenever possible. **[11.2.1]**

2. Generally, when engaged in a police function, the senior officer will be in charge.
 - a. When personnel of the same function are engaged in a single operation, seniority shall be determined by rank, followed by time in rank, followed by time in service.
 - b. In situations where personnel of the same rank, but different functions engage in a single operation, the senior officer of the function under which the operation falls shall be in charge. **[12.1.2(C)]**
 - c. In times of emergency, seniority shall be determined by rank, followed by time in rank, followed by time in service, regardless of function. **[12.1.2(B)]**
 - d. An employee of lower seniority may be placed in command of an operation by a senior officer if the employee possesses a high degree of specialization or expertise for that operation. **[12.1.2(B)]**
 - e. The Chief or his/her designee may place an employee in the position of command outside of the normal command structure.

E. Span of Control

1. The term “span of control” refers to the number of persons reporting to any one supervisor.
2. The assignment of supervisors in the Acton Police Department will be done in a manner that will ensure a manageable span of control whenever possible.
3. In an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, or whenever the needs of the department require it, commanding officers may require sufficient supervisors to work overtime in order to reduce the span of control to a reasonable number until their presence is no longer needed.

F. Accountability

1. Supervisors are responsible for directing the efforts of their employees and ensuring that they are performing satisfactorily. Supervisors shall be accountable for the activities of employees under their immediate control. **[11.3.2]**
2. It is the responsibility of all supervisors to notify the Chief on their Department-issued phone of any incidents where there may be a question as to the agency’s liability or which may result in heightened community

interest. Supervisory discretion must be used in judging the severity of the incident in determining whether the notification must be made immediately or if the notification may wait for the Chief's next scheduled duty day.

[11.4.4]

G. Obedience to Orders

1. Employees are expected to be familiar with and comply with all lawful orders, rules and regulations, and policies and procedures issued by the department.
2. Employees are required to obey any lawful order of a superior, including any orders relayed from a superior by an employee of the same or lesser rank.
[12.1.3]
3. Conflicting or Unlawful Orders: In the event that an employee receives an order from a superior that is in conflict with any previous order, departmental order, rule, regulation, policy, or procedure, the officer to whom such order is given will call attention to the conflict to the superior giving the order. **[12.1.3]**

H. Delegation of Authority

1. Each commander, supervisor, or employee to whom responsibilities are delegated shall have commensurate authority to make decisions necessary for the effective execution of their responsibilities. **[11.3.1]**
2. The delegation of authority by a superior rank to a lower rank shall not relieve the higher rank of responsibility for that which has been delegated. **[11.3.1]**
3. The delegation of authority shall be consistent with the agency's organizational values and mission statement.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

History: **Manual I, Section II & III.**
Policy 4.02 Organization