



# ACTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT MANUAL; P&P: Administration			
POLICY & PROCEDURE # 4.04	DATE OF ISSUE: 1/30/2024	EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/12/2024	
SUBJECT: WRITTEN DIRECTIVE SYSTEM	ISSUING AUTHORITY: Chief James Cogan		
REFERENCE(S): Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission # 11.4.3; 12.2.1; 12.2.2; 33.5.3; 33.5.4	<input type="checkbox"/> NEW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AMENDS	<input type="checkbox"/> RESCINDS

## I. PURPOSE

A well-designed and properly implemented written directive system provides employees with the guidance and information required to successfully perform the duties and functions of their positions and assignments. This written directive is intended to provide employees of the Acton Police Department with:

- A. A glossary of terms relative to the written directive system.
- B. A reference for the proper format to be used in this Manual, to ensure consistency of style and organization.
- C. Procedures for the development, review, revision, purging, implementation and distribution of directives contained in this Manual.

## II. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Manual*: The Operations Manual for the Town of Acton Police Department includes a Mission Statement, General Orders, Special Orders, Personnel Orders, and Job Descriptions. **[12.2.1(4)]** **[21.1.1(4)]**
- B. *General Orders*: Also referred to as Policy and Procedure, are written directives that provide guidelines and parameters for carrying out department activities. A procedure may be made mandatory using the words “shall” or “must”, rather than through the use of words “should” or “may”. Procedures may allow some latitude or discretion in carrying out an activity. **[12.2.1(6)]**
- C. *Special Orders*: Written directives issued by the Chief of Police, Deputy Chief of Police, or a Division Commander. These directives shall be for the purpose of providing special instructions to personnel governing a particular activity or situation. These orders are automatically canceled when their objectives are achieved. **[12.2.1(6)]**
- D. *Personnel Orders*: Assignment or reassignment of personnel to or within the Department is accomplished by Department Personnel Orders which are generally issued by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. **[12.2.1(6)]**

- E. *Written Orders*: A written order is a command or request reduced to writing and given by a superior officer, or relayed from a superior officer by an employee of the same or lesser rank as the person who is receiving the order. A written order shall not be considered a written directive for the purposes of this Chapter and shall have no specific formatting requirements. **[12.2.1(6)]**
- F. *Department*: The Town of Acton Police Department.
- G. *Sworn Employee*: A duly appointed full or part-time employee of the Department, with full police powers and full power of arrest.
- H. *Civilian Employee*: Any non-sworn employee of the Department with no police powers or power of arrest.
- I. *Employee*: Any sworn or non-sworn employee of the Department.
- J. *Superior Officer*: A sworn employee holding the rank of Sergeant or higher rank as well as those assigned to acting supervisory positions.
- K. *Administrative Officer*: The Chief of Police, Deputy Chief, or an employee serving in the capacity of a Division Commander.
- L. *Accreditation Manager*: An employee designated by the Chief of Police to oversee and manage the Department's accreditation process. The employee shall be responsible for the general development, maintenance indexing, and administration of the written directive system. The employee shall receive specialized accreditation manager training conducted by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission within one year of being assigned to the position. **[33.5.4]**
- M. *Training Brief*: Permanent written directives, issued and approved by an Administrative Officer that outline a training topic. Training briefs are generally short in length and are distributed via the department computer server and/or posted. Employees shall be bound by the requirements of the training briefs, which have the full force and effect of a written directive. Training briefs remain in effect until amended, superseded, or canceled by the Chief of Police.

### **III. DEVELOPING & ISSUING NEW GENERAL ORDERS, SPECIAL ORDERS & PERSONNEL ORDERS **[12.2.1(8)]****

- A. All orders shall follow the following specific format:
  1. Department name and patch in the header at the top of all the pages.
  2. A heading section that identifies the type of order:
    - a. Subject title.
    - b. Department manual chapter name.
    - c. Department manual order type and general order number.
    - d. The date of issue.

- e. The effective date.
- f. The issuing authority.

B. General Order Formatting: The Accreditation Manager shall be responsible for set-up, configuration, layout, and assigning numbers of new General Orders. General Orders shall be assigned a number (indexed) and placed into one of the following subsections: **[12.2.1(12)]**

- 1. Operations
- 2. Investigations
- 3. Transportation and Detention of Prisoners
- 4. Administration
- 5. Traffic
- 6. Property Management
- 7. Special Occurrences

C. Special Orders shall be identified with the following order signifier: “Special Order” followed by the year the order was issued, then with number 1 and continuing to increase by one for each additional order until the close of the calendar year.  
(example: *Special Order # 2019-1*). See the Special Order template in the P-Drive.

D. Personnel Orders shall be identified with the following order signifier: “Personnel Order” followed by the year the order was issued, then with number 1 and continuing to increase by one for each additional order until the close of the calendar year.  
(example: *Personnel Order # 2019-1*). See the Personnel Order template in the P-Drive.

E. Job Descriptions shall be created for each position within the Department containing the duties and responsibilities of the position. **[21.1.1(1)]**

F. Employees of the department may prepare a proposed draft policy or training brief. In addition, the Chief of Police or his designee may assign to a subordinate the responsibility to draft a policy or training brief.

- 1. New Orders shall be numbered in accordance with the format requirements of this directive.
- 2. The content of the Orders shall be formatted as prescribed by this directive.

G. A draft of a proposed or revised policy shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police or his designee for review. The Chief may, at his/her discretion, permit employees the opportunity to review and provide input on the proposed or revised policy. One of the purposes of the review is to ensure that the proposed or revised directive does not contradict other existing agency directives or applicable laws. This may be done by utilizing one or more of the following methods: **[12.2.1 (24)(25)(26)]**

1. Review and discussion at the next available general staff meeting;
2. Review by a Review Committee designated by the Chief or Accreditation Manager; and/or
3. Distribution to all or selected members of affected units or bureaus within the Department.

H. The Chief may, after any review process is conducted, approve for distribution, deny, or return the draft to the author for modification. The Chief of Police has the final authority to sign/issue General Orders contained in this Manual. **[12.2.1(3)]**

#### **IV. DISTRIBUTION AND MAINTENANCE OF WRITTEN DIRECTIVES** **[12.2.2(1)]**

- A. The Accreditation Manager shall be responsible for the general development, maintenance, indexing, and administration of the written directive system. All policies, procedures, training briefs, and other directives shall be immediately available to all department personnel in hard copies and are also available on the department's in-house computer network system (P Drive), as well as issued in PMAM **[12.2.1(9)]**. A hard copy of the policies shall also be available at specific locations within the police station.
  1. Once the final draft of a written directive has been approved by the Chief of Police, the Accreditation Manager shall be responsible for:
    - a. Ensuring that the final copy is of the proper format and that all appropriate standards and requirements are documented within the policy.
    - b. Store the written directive in a separate, secure word processing directory.
    - c. Ensuring that hard copies are made available in the following locations **[12.2.2 (2A)]**:
      - 1) Sergeant's Office **[12.2.2 (3A)(4)]**
      - 2) Dispatch Center **[12.2.2 (3A)(4)]**
- B. Once the final draft of a written directive has been approved by the Chief of Police, the Deputy Chief shall be responsible for:
  1. Copying the written directive over into the electronic directive system (PMAM), and distributing the written directive to all affected personnel using the electronic system (PMAM). **[12.2.2(2B)(4)]**
  2. The Deputy Chief shall ensure employees read, review, and are tested on written directives and training briefs. A completion time limit will be set on the issued directives so that employees read the directive within a reasonable period of time from issuance. The Deputy Chief shall be responsible for maintaining the electronic receipts and signatures, using the PMAM system, of employees

acknowledging that they have read and understand the written directives and training briefs. **[12.2.2(5)(6)(9)(10)]**

3. The Deputy Chief may require officers to receive additional training on any policy or procedure that is distributed. The extent of any training in addition to the distribution memorandum will depend upon the complexity of the policy issue and the perceived need for more advanced training.
- C. Shift Supervisors or Division Commanders shall be responsible for ensuring that personnel under their command are thoroughly familiarized with all existing, new, or revised policies, procedures, directives, or other policy issues.
- D. As part of their initial training, during their probationary period, all newly hired sworn and non-sworn employees will receive a copy and training on the Department manual. Additionally, new hires will receive information on the accreditation process (introductory/familiarization-type information) during their Field Training Program (FTO). Employees will be given access to the Department manual on the P drive.  
**[33.5.3]**

## **V. PERIODIC REVIEW / REVISION OF WRITTEN DIRECTIVES [12.2.1]**

- A. The Accreditation Manager shall ensure that existing directives are periodically reviewed annually. This review is documented in an accreditation maintenance calendar. This review is to determine the extent of any revisions, additions, or deletions to any policy as follows:
  1. Whenever a revision is made to any chapter;
  2. At any time when there is a change in procedures, laws, court decisions, bargaining agreements, departmental organization, or other circumstances that indicate a specific Chapter may be in need of revision;
  3. Upon the request of any employee of the Department to review a Chapter for possible revision;
  4. As directed by the Chief of Police.
- B. Supervisory personnel with authority and responsibility over specific units and Divisions shall periodically review those chapters that affect their operations to ensure that current practices and requirements of the policy do not contradict other existing directives or applicable law.

The Accreditation Manager shall be notified when changes are required within a policy or chapter. Specific proposed language changes, as well as the reason for the proposed changes, shall be included within the memorandum.

- C. The fact that a review of an existing written directive is being undertaken does not necessarily imply that a rewrite or revision is necessary or desirable. The reviewer may find that the existing directive is satisfactory in its current form.

## **VI. DISTRIBUTION OF REVISED WRITTEN DIRECTIVES**

The Deputy Chief shall be responsible for ensuring that revisions to any department's written directive are disseminated to all affected personnel. One of the following methods may accomplish this:

- A. If there has been a major revision to a departmental policy or procedure, the Accreditation Manager shall disseminate the directive in accordance with procedures set forth in Section IV, Paragraph B above;
- B. If there has been a minor language revision to an existing written directive, all personnel shall be notified of the change via e-mail. Such record shall serve as an indication that the employee was informed of the policy revision and was instructed to refer to an Administrations & Operations Manual to read the revisions; or
- C. If there has been a revision in the formatting of any written directive, no distribution is necessary.

## **VII. RESCINDED / PURGED DIRECTIVES**

Whenever the Chief of Police authorizes that a written directive or part of a written directive be rescinded, the Deputy Chief shall ensure that all employees are notified of such. The Accreditation Manager shall be responsible for purging all copies of the rescinded directive from both the hard copy and electronic storage locations and destroying them by shredding and/or deleting all copies. **[12.2.1(14)]**

Additionally, the Accreditation Manager and the Deputy Chief must maintain a copy of all previously issued (rescinded) directives indefinitely either in hard-copy form or in a personal computer file in order to form a history of departmental policy on each directive.

## **VIII. ORGANIZATION OF THE WRITTEN DIRECTIVE SYSTEM** **[12.2.1(4)]**

A. The Table of Contents of the written directive system establishes the broad topical areas of policy organization as follows:

- Section 1..... Mission Statement & Organizational Chart
- Section 2..... Rules & Regulations **[12.2.1(5)]**
- Section 3 ..... General Orders
  - 1 – Operations
  - 2 – Investigations
  - 3 – Transportation and Detention of Prisoners
  - 4 – Administration

- 5 – Traffic
- 6 – Property Management
- 7 – Special Occurrences
  - Section 4 ..... Special Orders
  - Section 5 ..... Personnel Orders
  - Section 6 ..... Job Descriptions

B. As new directives are issued to sworn and unsworn personnel, the Accreditation Manager shall ensure their proper placement within the hard copy manuals as well as the P-Drive [21.1.1(4)]

C. The Accreditation Manager shall conduct an annual scheduled review of the Department's manual. The review shall commence on or about January 1 and shall be completed no later than January 30. A reminder notation shall be applied to the Accreditation calendar included in the in-house computer system of this task. Upon completion of the review, a report will be sent to the Chief of Police.  
[12.2.1(15)(16)(17)] [11.4.3]

D. At a minimum, every three years, the Deputy Chief shall be responsible for reviewing all Department job descriptions, and documenting the review with a memo to the Chief of Police, to ensure that they remain current [21.1.1(2)(3)]

## **IX. ACCREDITATION MAINTENANCE SYSTEM [11.4.3]**

The Accreditation Manager shall be responsible for tracking all scheduled Accreditation reports and activities to ensure completion and compliance. These reports are to include the annual analysis of the Use of Force and Vehicle Pursuits.

These reports are also to include:

- A. Scheduled and unscheduled property room inspections,
- B. Inventories and audits of the department's property, and
- C. Evidence storage areas.

The tracking shall be done by utilizing the department's in house computer system.

## **WRITTEN DIRECTIVE SYSTEM INFORMATION**

**History: Manual I, Section III.**