



Somerville Police Department 	TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		POLICY NUMBER: 400	VERSION: 3.00
	Subject: Written Directive System			
	Issuing Authority: Charles Femino Chief of Police		Signature: 	Effective Date: December 27, 2021
		Number of Pages: Page 1 of 8		
Accreditation Standards (5th Edition) 11.4.3, 12.2.1, 12.2.2		<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Amended		
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Purpose

A written directive system has been established by the Somerville Police Department in order to inform officers of what is expected of them in the performance of their duties, to provide guidance to them in performing such duties, and to establish the basis for employee accountability and the means to fairly evaluate officer and unit performance. It is the purpose of this policy to define the structure and application of this department's written directive system and provide staff members with a better understanding of its importance, use, and applicability.

1. The following are among the benefits of a well-written and well-organized policy manual:
 - a. Provides direction to staff by communicating the department's mission and values
 - b. Promotes consistency, efficiency, and professionalism by standardizing the way staff carries out their duties
 - c. Serves as a formal mechanism for the introduction of new ideas and concepts
 - d. Serves as a formal mechanism for the transfer of authority and responsibility to line-staff
 - e. Provides a basis for the establishment of comprehensive staff training
 - f. Provides documentation for the department's defense in court actions
 - g. Provides documentation for employee disciplinary actions
 - h. Provides a mechanism for achieving compliance with the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission standards

2. It is only fair that there should be reasonable uniformity in police actions when officers are dealing with the same or similar circumstances. Laws need to be enforced fairly, consistently, and with reasonable uniformity. Services to the public need to be provided equitably and impartially.

Policy

It is the policy of the Somerville Police Department to formally document the structure and component parts of the written directive system in a manner that will increase its utility and application and provide for continuity in its development.

Definitions

Written Directives: are position statements by, or authorized through, the Chief of Police that guide or direct the actions and activities of officers. Directives encompass all means by which this department communicates instructions, orders, and duty requirements to its members, to include:

General Orders: are permanent written orders issued by the Chief of Police, or with his/her authority, by a Deputy Chief, outlining policy matters which affect the entire department. A General Order is the most authoritative written order and may be used to revise, supersede, or cancel any previous order. General Orders remain in effect until revised, superseded, or cancelled by the Chief of Police. [12.2.1(d)]

Special Orders: are temporary written orders issued by the Chief of Police, or with his/her authority, by his/her designee, outlining instructions covering particular situations. Special Orders are automatically cancelled when their objective has been achieved. [12.2.1(d)]

Memos: are written communications issued by the Chief of Police, or other authorized command officers, for the following purposes: [12.2.1(d)]

1. To issue information or instructions which do not warrant a formal order
2. To direct the actions of subordinates in specific situations
3. To explain or emphasize portions of previously issued orders
4. To inform officers of actions or policies of other agencies

Personnel Orders: are orders pertaining to assignments or change of duty assignments. [12.2.1(d)]

Policies: summarize the department's position on specific matters. Policies are concise position statements based on underlying organizational principles, goals, values, and operational

philosophies. They are designed for broad general direction and guidance primarily for use by all members of the department or by more than one operational division.

Policy Manual: refers to the virtual compilation of policies within the Policy Tech software program.

Procedures: build on the foundation of policy statements to provide specific guidance on required, desired, or preferred methods of operations or conduct. Procedures are more detailed instruction on means and methods for carrying out the policy directive and generally draw the boundaries of permissible officer discretion in performing specific tasks or duties. The department usually issues Policies and Procedures as a combined document via the issuance of a General Order.

Rules and regulations: define situations where no deviation or exceptions to department-authorized actions are permitted, as opposed to procedural statements that provide officers flexibility and discretion. The department's Rules and Regulations are a separate and distinct document located within Policy Tech and are characterized by their inflexibility.

Procedures

A. Issuance:

The Chief of Police and his/her designee are authorized to issue, modify, or approve department written directives. (Somerville code of ordinances Ch. 10-4, M.G.L. c. 41 § 91, M.G.L. c. 41 § 98, M.G.L. c. 41 § 97A) [12.2.1(b)]

1. Maintenance: The written directive system is assigned to the Chief of Police who, through the guidance of the Accreditation Manager, will assign yearly reviews of policies to appropriate Division, Bureau and Unit Commanders. In coordination with affected divisions and units, these staff members shall be responsible for the organizing, reviewing, revising, and updating of the department's written directives on a continuous basis, but not less than annually from the effective date of issue. Yearly policy reviews shall be documented through Policy Tech. The Accreditation Manager will make recommendations to the Chief monthly on policies to be revised and be responsible for coordinating the posting of current policies on the Policy Tech website. Additionally, all written directives shall be reviewed and amended to coincide with the terms of the current collective bargaining agreement, changes in the law, accreditation standards, or any other legal requirement. [12.2.1(e)]
2. Supervisors: Certain supervisory personnel, specifically Deputy Chiefs, Captains and the Traffic Lieutenant, may, issue directives through memoranda, personnel orders, or special orders that have bearing only on the specific functions or operations of their area(s) of responsibility. These directives shall be consistent with established department policy and procedures. [12.2.1(c)]

3. Accreditation Manager: The accreditation manager shall coordinate development and refinement of departmental policy and procedures. He/she shall forward drafts of these documents for review and comment to the Chief of Police, and if the Chief so specifies, to other staff members as designated by the Chief of Police. An important purpose of the review is to ensure that new/revised written directives do not contradict others in existence. [12.2.1(i)]
4. Copies: Copies of proposed changes to departmental policy and procedures shall be provided to the applicable union(s) for review.
5. Final drafts: Final drafts of policy and procedure statements and supporting justification documents and personnel comments shall be forwarded to the Chief, or his/her designee, for approval or other action.
6. Approved policies: Approved policies and procedures, rules, and special orders shall be distributed to all sworn personnel and other appropriate personnel who are required to document that they have received, read, and understand the directive. Where deemed necessary, roll call, or other training regarding the policy, shall be conducted concurrently with policy distribution.

B. The Manual and its Components:

The purpose of the policy manual is to act as a guide for department personnel. In this document, the department provides direction for officers in order for them to perform their duties. The policies are developed using law enforcement community-wide best practices and procedures with the input of the representatives of those affected by them. While the policies may restrict options available to employees in some cases, the department spells out acceptable or desired procedure which, when followed by employees, holds the department accountable for the employees actions.

1. Employees should refer to the manual when questions arise as to the department's position on a topic addressed in the manual, or when questions arise as to how to proceed in a given situation. While the manual cannot address every set of circumstances, it will often lead the employee to a satisfactory conclusion.
2. The department's policy and procedure manual shall include the following components [12.2.1(d)]:
 - a. Oath of Office
 - b. Authority for Rules & Regulation
 - c. Table of Contents
 - d. Rules & Regulations

- e. Index of Policy and Procedures
- f. Policies & Procedure
- g. Department Organizational Chart
- h. Memoranda, Personnel Orders, and special orders

C. Organization of Policy and Procedure Statements

Each policy and procedure statement will contain the following information:

1. Name of the Department: Policy statements will identify the department on each page of the document.
2. Type of Directive: Directives will be designated as general orders, rules/regulations, memorandum, personnel orders, or special orders.
3. Subject: The subject of such directives will be identified by the topic or issue under consideration.
4. Policy Number: The decimal or other number identifying the chronological order in which the policy was issued.
5. Effective Date: Indicates the date the policy will be placed in force.
6. Approval: Signature or initials of the Chief of Police or other designated departmental executive indicating final approval of the policy.
7. Reference: If applicable, provide links to related departmental policies, procedures and rules that relate to, or have bearing on, understanding and use of the present policy (e.g., “motor vehicle search” referenced to “obtaining search warrants.”)
8. Revised/Amended: Indicates a former policy issued under the same or similar title or number that has been archived, superseded, deleted or modified by the present policy.
9. Accreditation Standard: Reference to the relevant standard defined by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission that deals with this policy topic or issue.
10. Number of Pages: The total number of pages contained in the policy statement or rule.
11. Policy and Procedure Statement: Each policy and procedure statement will usually provide the following indicated types of information:

- a. Purpose: A statement of the issues likely to confront officers and the reasons for the adoption of the policy and procedure. The policy will be introduced by a succinct statement concerning what the policy is about and what it is attempting to relate.
- b. Definitions: New or unfamiliar terms or words will be defined. This includes new, uncommon, or unusual terms, expressions, phrases, to include words or phrases used in law or not generally used in the police profession.
- c. Policy: The policy statement identifies a problem, need, or issue, and provides guiding principles for exercising judgment. Rather than providing officers with precise guidance as found in procedures, the policy statement establishes the rationale and overall approach to a problem, situation, issue, or concern. As such, it often draws upon the department's philosophy and values to provide direction.
- d. Procedures: Procedures will be included in each policy statement to the degree necessary, to provide officers with sufficient guidance to carry out the policy in accordance with department requirements and desires. Procedures provide a method for performing an operation or means for proceeding on a course of action.

D. Dissemination / Storage / Receipt Review of Written Directives:

The following methods may be used to disseminate written directives to employees: verbally, electronically, and/or by hard copy (printed) posted. However, the primary mode of dissemination will be electronic. [12.2.2(a)] [12.2.1(d)]

1. **Verbally:** Upon issuance of a written directive, it shall be the Shift Commander's responsibility to notify each individual employee, at roll call, that a written directive has been issued and they are required to read the directive using the Policy Tech software. Written directive notifications will be read at all roll calls for a minimum of three (3) consecutive days.
2. **Hard Copy Storage:** The Accreditation Manager, under the auspices of the Chief, shall maintain at least 1 hard copy of the original of all written directives. [12.2.2(a)(b)]
3. **Receipt/Review:** Using the Policy Tech software, the Accreditation Manager shall maintain an electronic record, signifying that all employees have received, read, and understand the issued directive. [12.2.2(c)]
4. **Computer File Storage:** All written directives shall be stored on the secure Policy Tech server [12.2.2(b)]

E. Familiarization with Written Directives:

It will be the responsibility of each employee to check the department's email system and Policy Tech **at least once per working shift** and to read all departmental email messages and their

attachments. It will be the responsibility of each employee to check the department's Policy Tech web portal **at least once per rotation** and to read all tasks assigned. Once a written directive has been posted to their Policy Tech account as a task, it is incumbent upon the employee to open the policy in the Policy Tech system, and within a reasonable amount of time check off "**Mark as Read**" when the document has been read and fully understood. In addition, it is the responsibility of each employee to review the information, and comply with each directive that has been issued. This includes directives that may have been issued during their absence from duty. [12.2.1(i)] [12.2.2(c)]

F. Indexing:

The original copies of all written directives will be maintained digitally in the Office of the Accreditation Manager. They will be filed chronologically by category of directive. A digital copy of all written directives will be maintained on the Policy Tech server and will be searchable. [12.2.1(e)]

G. Revising/Purging:

The Office of the Accreditation Manager, will be responsible for maintaining up-to-date policies on the Policy Tech. server. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for purging/archiving written directives within the Policy Tech system when they are revised or they expire. [12.2.1(e)]

H. Accreditation/Certification:

An Accreditation Manager shall be designated by the Chief of Police. This is a specialized position and requires familiarization with the accreditation process, department policies, and practices. The Accreditation Manager:

1. Shall receive specialized accreditation manager training within one (1) year of being appointed.
2. Shall maintain a liaison with the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission, Inc.
3. Remain intimately familiar with the accreditation standards and all aspects of the accreditation process.
4. Shall assign tasks through the Policy Tech system to the appropriate employee for review thirty days prior to the mandatory one year review for all directives. [11.4.3]
5. Maintain a spreadsheet on a minimum monthly basis for time sensitive items related to accreditation maintenance process. [11.4.3]
6. May provide accreditation updates at Police Stat. [11.4.3]

7. Will develop a way of tracking scheduled events such as weekly first aid kit inspection, fire equipment inspection and monthly emergency generator inspection. [11.4.3]
8. Remain abreast of all proposed changes in the accreditation standards and procedures. He/she shall also assess the impact of new or revised standards on the Department.
9. Conduct and/or prepare accreditation related training for Department personnel.
10. Prepare and maintain related files and reports. Reporting shall include monthly and quarterly reports to the Chief of Police.
11. Prepare, schedule and make presentations to the Police Policy Review Committee.
12. Should join and participate in CAMM
13. Should attend at least one CALEA/MPAC conference during the self-assessment period or current award period.
14. Shall establish a system to identify reports, reviews, and other activities mandated by accreditation standards and ensure that they are accomplished. [11.4.3]