

**Title: 2.1 Department Organizational Chart and Command Protocol**

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**PURPOSE:**

To describe the chain of command System.

**PROCEDURE:**

The military concept of the 'chain of command' is a simple precept but one frequently violated. It means that each person in the department is directly responsible to one supervisor at any one time.

Every member should be trained to recognize that they are a link in a chain of authority. This chain is a two-way communication channel. It is the channel, by which orders and information come down from above, and it is the channel by which information and requests pass up from the bottom to the top. Unless this line of authority or chain of command is respected and followed, chaos will result.

Thus, if a Police Officer goes to the Chief to ask that they be allowed to change days off, the officer is out of order. If the Chief should tell the Patrol Officer to go ahead, the Chief is out of order. Obviously, the Patrol Officer should be sent back and told to make his request through channels so that his supervising officer can point out any problems which this request might entail.

The chain of command is also a system of appeal. If the police officer doesn't feel the Sergeant has given him fair treatment, he is entitled to go up to the Lieutenant, but only after advising the Sergeant that they intend to do so. In the same way, an officer can go up to the Chief, but only after advising each staff level before contacting the next higher level. This protects the officer from arbitrary or unreasonable decisions but at the same time protects the supervisory officer from being short circuited.

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The chain of command has only two exceptions where members of the department may break the chain of command:

- a. When an officer desires to report a violation of the rules and regulations by a member of the department and does not feel that he can report it through channels without jeopardizing himself.
- b. When an officer wishes to break the chain of command in order to get personal advice that has nothing to do with his official duties.

All personnel will be required to respect and follow the chain of command so that two-way channels of communication consistently remain intact between the Chief and every member of the department.

**I. RULES:**

- 1. No member of the Department may bypass the chain of command except in extreme emergencies.
- 2. The chain of command for each section is as follows:

**Patrol Division:**

- A. Police Officer
- B. Police Sergeant/Detective Sergeant
- C. Police Lieutenant/Detective Lieutenant
- D. Assistant Chief
- E. Chief of Police

**Detective Division:**

- A. Detective Sergeant
- B. Police Lieutenant/Detective Lieutenant
- C. Assistant Chief
- D. Chief of Police

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**II. AUTHORITY AND COMMAND:**

1. Command is exercised by virtue of office or special assignment of officers who are eligible by law to exercise command. Subject to direction from higher command, a commanding officer has direct control over all members and employees within his command.
2. When officers of equal rank are present and in the performance of the same operation, the senior ranking officer shall be in command unless otherwise directed.
3. A member who succeeds to any command or duty stands, in regard to his duties, in the same situation as his predecessor. The member relieved shall turn over to his successor all orders relating to that position in force at the time, and all funds and properties pertaining to it. He shall receive, upon request, receipts showing the condition of each article so transmitted.
4. An officer relieving or temporarily filling the position of a superior, in an acting capacity, shall be vested with all the authority and responsibilities of the superior, but the acting officer shall not interfere with, countermand, or modify the orders previously issued by the superior, except in extreme emergency. However, when such action is taken, a report shall be made to the Chief of Police through the chain of command in writing, stating the reasons therefore in such instances.
5. Members acting in the capacity of a higher rank shall be afforded the same obedience and respect as the permanent ranking officer.

**III. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY:**

1. Ranking officers shall not perform the duties regularly assigned to a subordinate, when the subordinate is available to perform them, except in the event of an emergency, or when necessary to evaluate those duties.
2. Whenever authority is delegated to a member of the department, he shall be held accountable for the proper use of such authority.
3. In order to maintain a proper chain of command, a member will, as a general rule, be required to take direct orders from, and be responsible to, one ranking officer. Ranking officers however, shall exercise direct command over lower ranks outside their usual command in all situations where the police purpose or the reputation of the department is jeopardized; or if no other provision is made for personnel temporarily unsupervised. If a ranking officer requires a

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subordinate, not of his command, to leave a regular assignment, the ranking officer so directing will inform the subordinate's superior as soon as possible.

**IV. FIELD SUPERVISION:**

1. Since emergency situations occur without warning, and their duration is often brief, officers must frequently make critical decisions without benefit of on-the-scene direction. In most police operations, however, supervision gives coherence to the police task and directs the energies of the department into an organized effort. Proper supervision is essential to maintain a professional level of competence in law enforcement operations.

**V. COMMAND RESPONSIBILITY AT POLICE SITUATIONS:**

1. Command of department resources at a police situation rests with the Officer in Charge or the assigned senior officer. Such person has the authority to direct the operation and is responsible for its outcome. A senior command officer may make suggestions; however, he may not actively direct the operation unless he relieves the subordinate of command. A senior command officer at an emergency scene who does not choose to take command may be held accountable for unfavorable developments which he could have prevented by assuming control.

**VI. CRIME SCENE SUPERVISION**

1. The senior Detective Sergeant or the Detective Lieutenant present is in charge of a crime scene.

AUTHORITY:



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