

ELIZABETH POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



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SUBJECT: COMMAND PROTOCOL

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BY THE ORDER OF:
Deputy Chief Giacomo Sacca

BY AUTHORITY OF:
Police Director Earl J. Graves

SUPERSEDES ORDER #:

PURPOSE: To provide a clear illustration to all employees of the established lines of authority in the Police Department and to briefly explain the attendant responsibilities of those employees serving in positions of rank.

POLICY: In all law enforcement agencies it is imperative that a clear line of authority is identified and recognizable to all employees. The lines of authority in the Police Department have been established in furtherance of the management concepts of "unity of command" and a manageable "span of control". In police departments it is essential that only one person be in complete control of each situation and that the number of officers reporting to any one supervisor does not exceed the number that can be effectively supervised. Employees promoted to supervisory and command positions have specific responsibilities that must be exercised without exception.

PROCEDURE:

I. Chain of Command

- A. Rank in the Police Department shall descend in the following order:
1. Chief of Police;
 2. Deputy Chief of Police;
 3. Captain;
 4. Lieutenant;
 5. Sergeant;
 6. Officer; Detective
 7. Civilian Employee.
- B. The Chief of Police shall exercise any and all of the rights, authorities, powers and responsibilities reserved solely to the Chief of Police as set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:14-118 and other rights, authorities, power and responsibilities, not reserved solely to the Chief of Police by statute, as delegated by the Police Director. The Chief of Police is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the police department. In the Chief of Police absence, such responsibility will be assumed by his/her designee.
- C. In the event that the Chief of Police position is vacant, the Police Director shall assume, possess, and exercise all duties, responsibilities, and authority of the Chief's position as set forth in NJSA 40A:14-118 and other applicable law. Any reference to the Chief of Police in these Rules and Regulations or any other General Order, Policy, Procedure, or related document shall be construed as meaning the Police Director. The Director shall be empowered to administer and enforce said Rules and Regulations; issue special emergency directives for the disposition and discipline of the force and its officers and personnel; have, exercise and discharge the functions, powers, and duties of the force; prescribe the duties and assignments of all subordinates and other personnel; and delegate such of his authority as he may deem necessary for the efficient operation of the force to be exercised under his direction and supervision. These enumerated powers are not by way of limitation, and the Director shall have and may exercise such additional powers as may be permitted by law.

II. General Provisions

- A. In the absence of a personnel order to the contrary, command shall always be exercised by virtue of rank, and in cases of equal rank, by length of time in service in such rank; and where equal, and the officers are of the same rank, seniority is determined by the highest ranking on the civil service appointment list.
- B. The Chief of Police or designee may, based upon specialized training/expertise/experience, appoint a specific person, not necessarily by rank, to

be in charge for a predetermined emergency/unusual occurrence or for a specific operational activity/special event.

- C. During the temporary absence of a command officer in normal day-to-day operations, when competent authority makes no other provision, the command automatically devolves upon the subordinate present who is next highest in rank.
- D. Employees of the department who, by order of competent authority may be temporarily assigned to a position of a employee of higher rank, shall exercise the authority and perform the duties of such higher rank, and shall be held responsible in like manner as if regularly appointed to such higher office. They shall not alter or countermand any order issued by the employee whose place they temporarily occupy, except when expediency demands.
- E. Upon all occasions when a body of employees of the department is assembled, the ranking officer present shall take command and will be held responsible for the official action and conduct of those present. Command shall be familiar with all that affects their command and shall exact from subordinates efficient performance of duty.
- F. Consistent with the provisions herein stated, when personnel from two or more Divisions, Section or Units are operational at the same event, overall command of the operation shall rest with the highest-ranking supervisor, regardless of assignment.
- G. When two or more employees are sent upon any special duty and no ranking employee accompanies them, absent a designation of command by competent authority, the employee senior in terms of department service shall have command.
- H. To promote efficiency and responsibility, employees are only directly accountable to one supervisor at any given time. They shall be accountable to their immediate supervisor unless situations/circumstances dictate accountability shifting to a supervisor outside their established chain of command.
- I. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, personnel wishing to move up or down the chain of command shall adhere to the established structure.
 - 1. Extenuating circumstances would be any on-going situation resulting in the emergent need for immediately reporting such situation to prevent injury to any person or to protect the integrity and/or reputation of the police department.
- J. In order to promote efficiency, it may from time to time be necessary for a supervisor to relay an order through a subordinate employee. In such situations, the employee receiving a relayed order shall treat the order as though directly issued by the applicable superior officer, regardless of the rank of the employee relaying the order.