
	<b>GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>		
	<b>Unity of Command and Supervision</b>		
	<b>GENERAL ORDER</b> <b>102.1</b>	<b>Related CALEA Standards:</b> 11.2.1, 11.3.1, 11.3.2, 12.1.2, 12.1.3, 22.1.1, 41.2.2, 46.1.5, 82.2.4	
<b>Effective Date</b> <b>04/28/2017</b>			
<b>Authorized by:</b> <b>Mark P. Sroka</b> CHIEF OF POLICE		<b>SIGNATURE</b> <i>Mark Sroka</i>	<b>DATE</b> <b>04/28/2017</b>

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of unity of command is to provide clear delineation of authority applicable to daily operations as well as emergency situations. This clear outlining of authority reduces or eliminates any confusion concerning who is in command of an incident or operation.

## II. POLICY

The Department provides adequate supervision to ensure the Department goals, objectives, functions and missions are carried out in accordance with established laws, policies and procedures. There is a clear precedence of rank and chain of command in place and all personnel can identify a supervisor to whom they are accountable. The Department's leadership provides the level of supervision necessary to facilitate efficient operation and allow for employee career development.

## III. DEFINITIONS

### A. Chain of Command

Within the context of this directive, the term "chain of command" refers to the line of authority and responsibility along which orders are passed between the supervisor and the employee. In general, supervisors will give orders only to those directly supervised by them and an employee will generally receive orders only from his or her direct supervisor.

### B. Employee / Personnel

Within the context of this directive, the terms "employee" and "personnel" refer to all personnel employed by the Department.

### C. Relative

According to the City's Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual, the term "relative" is defined as "Immediate family by blood, marriage, previous marriage, or adoption including the following: spouse, child/stepchild, parent/stepparent, sibling, half-sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, cousin, or any other person residing in the employee's residence or financially dependent upon the employee."

**D. Span of Control**

Within the context of this directive, the term “span of control” refers to those personnel over whom a supervisor exercises direct authority and has direct responsibility.

**IV. PROCEDURE**

**A. Accountability and Span of Control**

1. Each employee shall be directly accountable to only one supervisor at any given time.
2. Supervisors shall be accountable for the performance and direction of employees under their immediate control. Special circumstances may dictate that the span of control be larger for short periods of time; however, under normal operating conditions the Department will adhere to the span of control herein described.
  - a. During daily operations, bureau commanders will not have more than seven full time supervisors under their immediate control.
  - b. First line supervisors shall have immediate control of the officers of lower rank on their respective patrol shifts.
  - c. The Administrative Support Supervisor will not have more than seven full time members under his or her immediate control.
3. In accordance with Section 309 of the City Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual no employee may be supervised, at any level of the chain of command, by a relative. Temporary exceptions may be allowed, as enumerated in Section 309 or approval by the Chief of Police in extenuating circumstances.
4. The failure of a police employee to take the appropriate action, either on or off-duty; on the occasion of a crime, disorder, or other condition deserving police or Department administrative attention is considered neglect of duty.

**B. Commensurate Authority**

1. Personnel will assume authority to carry out the duties and responsibilities delineated in written directives, orders, personnel policy, City Charter and any law or ordinance governing employee conduct.

2. In keeping with delegated authority, duty and responsibility, an abuse or improper discharge of authority could amount to misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance.
3. Corporals shall have authority over their respective shifts in the absence of the shift sergeant. When acting on behalf of the shift sergeant, the corporal will assume the respective duties and responsibilities of the sergeant, including but not limited to:
  - a. Closely monitoring and supervising any vehicular pursuits in which Department members become engaged to ensure conformity to Department policies and procedures;
  - b. Responding to calls where supervisor response is required, requested or prudent;
  - c. Approving reports and forms submitted by officers;
  - d. Granting leave requests for the current shift, taking into account call volume, staffing, etc.;
  - e. Conducting routine inspections of weapons, uniforms, equipment and vehicles;
  - f. Ensuring that timely notifications are made when required to command staff, investigators, the Department's media representative, etc.;
  - g. Conducting roll-call and roll-call training; and
  - h. Other duties as assigned.

**C. Precedence of Rank and Command Protocol**

1. The Chief of Police may designate a sworn employee to perform his or her duties as the Acting Chief of Police during temporary absence from the Department or a period of disability.
2. Unless designated otherwise by the Chief of Police, the Department's precedence of rank and command, in descending order, shall be:
  - a. Chief of Police;
  - b. Operations Bureau Commander;
  - c. Special Operations Bureau Commander;

- d. Administrative Bureau Commander;
  - e. Sergeant;
  - f. Corporal; and
  - g. Police Officer.
- 3. In accordance with mutual aid agreements, when at the scene of incidents where specialized personnel have been requested, such as investigators, canine, SWAT, etc.:
    - a. Officers will adhere to the direction of the highest ranking member of the specialized unit at the scene; and
    - b. Supervisors will coordinate City Police efforts with the specialized units, assist with the direction of City Officers and minimize any possible conflicts.
  - 4. In accordance with Maryland Public Safety Article, §14-303, if the Governor proclaims a state of emergency and part of or the entire City is within the emergency area, the Department shall operate under the direction of the person designated by Governor, if so ordered.

**D. Obedience to Orders**

- 1. Personnel shall strictly obey and properly execute the lawful orders of their superiors and any lawful order from a superior that is relayed by another employee.
- 2. Superiors shall not issue, and personnel shall not obey, any order known to require the commission of an illegal, immoral or unethical act.
- 3. In the instance where an issued order is in conflict with a previously issued order or directive:
  - a. The employee to whom the order was issued will respectfully call attention to the conflict and, if not rescinded by the superior, the order shall stand; and
  - b. The responsibility for the conflicting order will rest with the issuing superior and the employee shall not be answerable for disobedience to the previously issued order.