

# Written Directive System

**Index Code:** 201.2

**Effective Date:** 2/1/2010 (Revised 1/4/2022)

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## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to offer guidance on a formal written directive system that provides all employees with a clear understanding of the constraints and expectations relating to the performance of their duties.

## **II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to maintain a formal written directive system to allow all employees rapid access to individual policies, procedures, rules and regulations and written directives.

All employees are encouraged to submit suggested additions, deletions or changes to agency documents. Suggestions should be forwarded on inter-office correspondence, via the chain of command, to the Chief Deputy who will authorize, modify or deny the suggestion. Employees may submit drafts of proposed additions or changes or simply state the basis for the suggestion along with recommended action.

Employees who suggest changes will be kept informed of the status and final approval or rejection of the suggestion.

## **III. Definitions**

### **A. Policies**

Policies are general statements guiding the agency to the attainment of its goals. Policies explain the reasons for, or build the foundation for, procedures and rules.

### **B. Procedures**

Procedures are guidelines to assist employees in performing a wide range of tasks. They describe expected methods of operation and generally allow some flexibility within certain constraints or when justified by the circumstances applying to a specific case.

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### **C. Rules and Regulations**

Rules and regulations are directives that prohibit specific behavior and/or require the performance of certain duties. Rules and regulations are established to apply to situations in which no deviation is permitted. They are inflexible and apply to all employees.

### **D. Written Directives**

Written directives are official documents that are intended to affect or guide the actions of agency employees. The types of written directives used for this purpose are described below.

#### **1. Agency Directives**

Agency directives are issued by the Sheriff to establish policies, procedures, and rules. Agency directives will be maintained by the agency Office of Professional Standards and electronically filed in the PowerDMS® program. They will be filed in numerical order according to their respective Index Code.

#### **2. Formal Memoranda**

Formal memoranda are available to the Sheriff and Command Staff Personnel to implement or supplement agency directives. Memoranda may not impose conditions either more or less restrictive than those issued by the Sheriff but are used as a means to specify implementation of agency directives, provide direction, or to define a specific audience.

Formal memoranda may also be used to implement short-term operational initiatives, to implement interim changes in policy or procedure or to establish policies and procedures directed at employees of the issuing command only.

The purpose of formal memoranda, as opposed to interoffice correspondence, is to provide a permanent record of the directive for accountability and reference purposes.

Memoranda will be issued in the same format as Interoffice Correspondence and must display a sequential memorandum number which will be obtained from the **Administrative Services Division**. When applicable, a formal memorandum will include a reference to the Index Code of the agency directive it is implementing or supplementing.

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Memoranda will remain in effect until incorporated into an agency directive or cancelled by another memorandum. If related to an agency directive, they will be filed behind that directive in the manual.

### **3. Standard Operating Procedures**

Standard Operating Procedures (S.O.P.) are designed to give guidance and provide specific information, which is binding, to specific individuals and/or units that perform specialized functions. Division Commanders are responsible for developing, issuing, revising, and retaining S.O.P. as they pertain to their respective units.

Division Commanders who are newly assigned to any agency entity will review existing S.O.P. to determine if revisions are necessary. A final copy of any new or revised S.O.P. will be forwarded to the **Chief Deputy** for retention

No S.O.P. may change or contradict a directive issued by a higher authority.

### **4. Training Lesson Plans**

Training lesson plans also serve as directives by providing guidelines for the Office of the Sheriff. Training lesson plans are normally developed by agency authorized instructors to meet the training needs of the agency. All lesson plans must be reviewed by the Commander or **Assistant Commander** of the **Support Services Division**, who serves as the agency's Training Coordinator, to ensure MPCTC training standards are met if applicable.

The Training Coordinator will maintain a record of all information taught from training lesson plans and test scores, if applicable.

## **IV. Authority**

- A. The Sheriff is the Chief Administrator and Chief Executive Officer of the Office of the Sheriff. Final responsibility for issuing, modifying, and approving policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and directives rests with the Sheriff. The discharge of these duties is granted to the Sheriff through Common Law, Maryland State Constitution, Maryland State Legislation, and Court Rulings.

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- B. In the Sheriff's absence the **Chief Deputy** retains the authority to act on behalf of the Sheriff in the best interest of the agency and the citizens of Queen Anne's County. The Undersheriff's authority includes the issuing, modifying, and approving of policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and directives.

### **V. Written Directive Format**

The **Office of Professional Standards**, which serves as the agency's Accreditation Manager, maintains templates for the development of written directives. Each written directive will include the following:

- A. A unique name that easily identifies the nature or topic of the directive.
- B. A three or four digit Index Code that serves as a means for tracking each directive.
- C. An effective date for the directive and a revision date if applicable.
- D. A beginning paragraph describing the purpose of the directive.
- E. A brief policy statement providing the guiding principles for which the balance of the directive will build on.
- F. The body of the directive providing guiding actions necessary to complete the assignment/task or accomplish the mission.
- G. A list of CALEA references/standards, if applicable.
- H. The name and index code of any existing directive or memorandum, if applicable, being cancelled upon issuance of the new directive.
- I. A signature line for the Sheriff's signature, or **Chief Deputy** in the absence of the Sheriff.

### **VI. Indexing, Purging, and Revising Directives**

- A. The agency **Office of Professional Standards** maintains a list of Index Codes available for the indexing of new and/or revised directives and will issue an appropriate code upon request.
- B. The purging of old/obsolete directives must be authorized by the Sheriff or Undersheriff, unless an automatic purge date is included in the original directive.

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- C. Directives will be revised as needed to accomplish the mission of the Office of the Sheriff. In addition, all directives will be reviewed annually by the issuing authority to ensure their applicability and continued need.

### **VII. Statements of Agency Policy**

A statement of agency policy will be included in every written directive, when applicable, to provide guidance and help explain the reason for the directive.

### **VIII. Dissemination and Storage**

- A. Dissemination of an existing, new, or newly revised policy, procedure, rule or regulation, written directive or memorandum, will be through the PowerDMS® computerized documentation system, and all employees subsequently notified via email. After notification, a sufficient amount of time will be allowed for review prior to the effective date. It will be the responsibility of all supervisors to ensure that agency personnel under their command have reviewed and signed for all new/revised documents/directives.
- B. All directives and other documents placed into PowerDMS will be backed up on a computer maintained by the Accreditation Manager. In addition, the Accreditation Manager shall maintain a hard copy file of all active directives and related documents
- C. Acknowledgment indicating receipt and review of disseminated directives and other documents are generated automatically by PowerDMS via an electronic signature. The Undersheriff will maintain a list of all acknowledgments and signatures received, and notify the appropriate Division Commander if an employee has not reviewed and signed for a directive or other applicable document disseminated through PowerDMS.
- D. The Commander of the Administrative Services Division will serve as back-up personnel for administrative access to the PowerDMS computerized documentation system, and all matters concerning the dissemination of directives.

### **IX. Review of Proposed and Revised Policies and Directives**

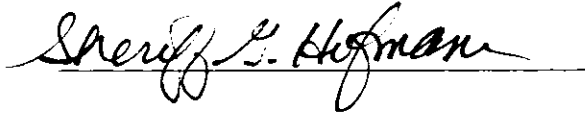
Prior to promulgation all new/revised policies, procedures, rules and regulations, written directives and memoranda will be reviewed by the Chief Deputy, or his/her designee, to ensure they do not contradict other existing agency documents or any applicable laws.

- X. **CALEA References:** 12.2.1a, 12.2.1b, 12.2.1c, 12.2.1d, 12.2.1e, 12.2.1f, 12.2.1g, 12.2.1h, 12.2.1i, 12.2.2a, 12.2.2b & 12.2.2c.

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**XI. Proponent Unit:** Administrative Services Division

**XII. Cancellation:** This directive cancels Index Code 201.2 dated 04/15/11.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sheriff G. Hofmann", written over a horizontal line.

Sheriff Gary Hofmann