

HARRISON TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



SUBJECT: **COMMAND PROTOCOL**

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 7, 2018

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ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: **1.5.3d-e**

BY THE ORDER OF:
Chief of Police Thomas Mills

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. Captain;
 - 3. Lieutenant;
 - 4. Sergeant;
 - 5. Detective;
 - 6. Patrolman;
 - 7. Special Law Enforcement Officer;
 - 8. Civilian Employee.
- B. 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.

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 Chief of Police.
- 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 an 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.