



Sheridan Police Department  
Policies and Procedures

1.3

Chapter 1 – Department Manual and Written Directives

Section 3 – Drafting, Reviewing, & Revising

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Signature:

The chief of police chairs the command staff that regularly convenes to discuss matters of departmental activities at every level. The command staff is composed of the chief of police, the captain, lieutenants, sergeants, administrative manager and the administrative coordinator to the chief of police. Other key personnel may be requested to participate in meetings, at the chief's discretion, based on the individual's specific expertise and the nature of the discussion. Since the command staff regularly meets for the purposes of dissemination of information and to discuss departmental issues, these meetings will also serve as a forum to propose, create, evaluate and develop new directives, and to review existing directives according to a schedule, or as-needed.

**1.3.1 Authority**

The chief of police has the sole authority to issue or modify the contents of this manual.

**1.3.2 New or Revised Directives**

When the command staff establishes the need for a new directive or revision, the need will be communicated to the person or group assigned to draft it.

- A. The person(s) assigned may consult with subject-matter experts, use legal research materials, and solicit input from key individuals, for the purpose of gathering necessary information to create the draft within specified guidelines.
- B. The person(s) assigned will draft all directives in keeping with the requirements set forth by federal law, state statute, city ordinance, city policy, and in line with current law enforcement best practices.
- C. Directives shall be drafted with the following considerations:
  - 1. Determine the objective in performing tasks or activities covered by the directive;
  - 2. Identify the problems the employee is likely to encounter when making decisions to reach the objective;
  - 3. Ensure that the directive is positive, definitive, clear, and readily understood by all employees;
  - 4. Endeavor to address reasonably foreseeable conditions;
  - 5. Ensure that directives are compatible with the public interest, conform to the law, and are in accordance with established standards for law enforcement professionals;
  - 6. Terms Limiting Discretion - There are three (3) categories of terms used in written directives of the department. Personnel responsible for development of such directives and employees who carry them out shall be aware of the limitations on discretion that

these terms convey. These terms are classified as judgmental, discouraging, and prohibitive in nature:

- a. Judgmental: The word "may" is used to convey the utmost discretion to employees. "May" indicates that employees should employ their best judgment in addressing a situation by relying on experience, training, the stated mission and values of the department, and the general guidance provided in statements of department policy;
- b. Discouraging: The words "should" or "should not" are used to convey the department's desire for employee actions in given circumstances. Directives should be followed whenever reasonably possible. However, it is recognized that exceptions to desired actions can be anticipated. Employees are therefore authorized, whenever reasonable, to use discretion to deal effectively with the situation or problem;
- c. Prohibitive: The terms "shall" or "shall not" or "will" or "will not" impose requirements or prohibitions on employee actions. Considering that the full set of circumstances surrounding many situations confronted by employees cannot be fully predicted, such terms must be used with care and with the understanding that failure to abide by such restrictions may result in disciplinary action. Where deemed appropriate, however, these terms may appear in department directives.

### **1.3.3 Suggesting Change**

The written directive system used by the department provides direction to members in performance of their duties. This system is a continual process of revising and updating written directives. Therefore, any member who sees a need for a change or improvement in a written directive to reflect the best practices for accomplishing organizational activities is encouraged to submit the idea to the command staff through the chain of command.

### **1.3.4 Repealed on Review**

### **1.3.5 Cancelling Directives**

- A. Directives may be cancelled by:
  1. Revisions in a newly issued directive; or
  2. A memorandum issued by the chief specifically cancelling a directive.
- B. Until such time as new directives are issued by a current chief of police, all previously issued written directives will remain in effect.