



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure			
	APD.SOP.1100 – Requests for Legal or Ethics Opinions Effective Date: March 25th, 2025		
Chief Darin Schierbaum	Signature by: DS	Date Signed: 3/25/2025	Renewal: 2029

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

APD Staff,

The Policy and Standards Section is dedicated to providing the department, and its employees, with accurate, understandable and transparent policies. In order to publish policies that reflect the most up-to-date standards, the Policy and Standard Section regularly reviews all policies to ensure that they are reflective of the current mission and objectives of the Atlanta Police Department.

No significant changes were found during the review and renewal of APD.SOP.1100 Requests for Legal or Ethics Opinions. We encourage you to read the policy below in its entirety to better understand the process of obtaining Legal assistance and opinions regarding ethics.

Thank you and stay informed!

Policy and Standards Section
Planning, Research, and Accreditation Unit

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of government agencies and promote public trust by providing employees written direction when requesting legal assistance or opinions regarding ethics pertaining to the Department.

2. POLICY

Unless otherwise authorized by the Chief of Police, all requests to the City of Atlanta Law Department for legal opinions or any requests to the Ethics Division made on behalf of the Atlanta Police Department will be in writing, approved by the Chief of Police, and coordinated through the Office of the Chief.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The Chief of Staff is the designated liaison with the Law Department and the Ethics Division for all legal and ethics opinions.
- 3.2 Unit Commanders and supervisors will ensure the implementation of this directive in their respective commands. This will include ensuring that all legal and ethics opinions sent through the chain of command are ONLY on behalf of the Atlanta Police Department. Unless otherwise authorized by the Chief of Police, no employee requests an opinion from the Law Department or Ethics Division without following the procedures outlined in this directive.
- 3.3 The Policy and Research Unit will maintain copies of all legal and ethics opinions affecting the Department.

4. PROCEDURE

- 4.1 A City of Atlanta Employee requesting a real, or hypothetical, set of circumstances requiring interpretation of the Ethics code, will submit such request in writing by using the Request for Legal Services form, located at the bottom of this policy.
- 4.2 Original requests submitted to the Law Department or to the Ethics Division will be forwarded, through the chain of command, to the Chief of Police.
- 4.3 Each commander will notify the Chief of Police, or their designee, of subsequent developments relative to any requests submitted.
- 4.4 The employee's supervisor will notify the Chief of Staff for any requests that require an immediate response from the Legal Department or Ethics Division.
- 4.5 After a legal or ethics opinion is received from the Law Department or the Ethics Division, the Chief of Staff will be responsible for its distribution. The original copy of the opinion will be filed in the Chief's office and copies will be forwarded to the requesting Commander and the Policy and Research Unit.
- 4.6 Any person requesting an opinion in accordance with this section who has made a full and complete disclosure of all relevant facts will be entitled to rely on the opinion or finding of the Ethics Division per City Ordinance 8-109.
- 4.7 The requesting commander will promptly advise the Chief of Police, the Chief of Staff and the Planning, Research and Accreditation Unit of the need for changes to existing rules, policies, procedures, or training resulting from a legal or ethics opinion.

5. DEFINITIONS

Legal Opinion: A written opinion issued by the City Attorney or the City Attorney's designee expressing the position of the Law Department on a matter of law.

Ethics Opinion: A written advisory opinion issued by the Ethics Division expressing the position of the Division on an ethics matter.

6. CANCELLATIONS

APD.SOP.1100 "Requests for Legal Opinions" effective 2020

7. REFERENCES

Atlanta Code of Ordinance, Section 8-109 "Ethics Division"

Atlanta Code of Ordinance, Section 2-801 to 2-825 "Code of Ethics"



CITY OF ATLANTA

DEPARTMENT OF LAW

REQUEST FOR LEGAL SERVICES

A City of Atlanta Employee requesting interpretation of the Ethics or Legal code, will submit, through their chain of command, such request in writing with this completed form attached to the request.

<u>Request Date:</u> (MM/DD/YYYY): _____	<u>Requesting Department:</u>
<u>Requestor's Name and Title:</u> 	
<u>Telephone:</u> 	<u>Email:</u>
<u>Desired Completion Date:</u> * (MM/DD/YYYY): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> URGENT REQUEST (Legal Services needed within 3 business days)	<u>COVID-19 Related?</u> <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
<u>Description of Request:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> General Advice/Counsel Special Projects <input type="checkbox"/> Draft/Review/Interpret Legislation (Questions re City Code and/or State Law) <input type="checkbox"/> Draft/Review/Interpret Contract, MOU, or other Agreement Additional Information: 	
<u>Identify and Attach Documents Related to Request (include prior contracts, amendments, memos, related legislation, etc.)</u> 	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"><p>*Each request is important to the Department of LAW. The assigned Attorney will make every effort to (i) complete the initial review of your Request within 3-5 business days of receipt, and (ii) provide an update regarding the status of your request. If additional time is needed to complete your request, the assigned attorney will contact you.</p></div>	

This REQUEST is to the City of Atlanta's Department of Law for legal advice. This communication, including attachments, may contain confidential information and is protected by the attorney-client privilege, work product doctrine and may otherwise be legally exempt from disclosure.