



# Colorado Springs Police Department

## Standard Operating Procedure

### DL-150-02 Principles of Command

#### Section 100 – Organizational Values and Structure

Effective Date: 8/18/2022

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#### **.01 Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to specify the principles underlying the command functions, including unity of command, and to designate the order of succession of command.

#### **.02 Cross-Reference**

[GO 150 Expectations of Leadership \(Sworn and Civilian\)](#)

[GO 402 Orders and Discretionary Judgement](#)

[GO 1220 Incident Command System](#)

[DL-150-01 Principles of Supervision](#)

[DL-150-03 Rank and Responsibility](#)

[HR-32 Worker's Compensation Procedures](#)

#### **.03 Definitions**

*Command:* The oversight and responsibility for a specific assignment of the department (e.g., a division). Such responsibility is typically reserved for command staff or staff level officers.

*Command staff:* Reserved for those at or above the rank of commander, division manager, or a member of executive staff.

*Chain of command:* A series of positions, each of which is directly commanded by the position immediately above it. Although a department member may have numerous subordinates, they will have only one immediate supervisor. Each organizational component is under the direct command of only one supervisor.

*Executive Staff:* Comprised of the managers who supervise Human Resources, Research and Development, and Fiscal Services for CSPD.

*Staff:* Reserved for those at or above the rank of lieutenant or section manager.

## **.04 Procedure**

As a para-military organization, the department embraces and uses the principles associated with a chain of command structure. However, it is recognized that policing is dynamic and constantly changing, and as such, the application of the chain of command structure must be fluid in its application.

One of the department's foundational missions is to effectively provide the community with a high-quality law enforcement service rooted in integrity and the spirit of excellence. It is for this purpose that, from time to time, the department may explore, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches to leadership, supervision, project management, and organization within its various components. These approaches may have variations from the traditional unity of command principles. Such changes will be assessed for their efficiency and effectiveness.

### **Consistency in Command**

To ensure consistency of command and efficient management of the department and its resources, clearly defined lines of authority have been established using the department's chain of command structure. The chain of command structure allows personnel from different operational aspects of the department to receive direction from only one superior at any given time. Likewise, the chain of command supports commensurate authority specific to the varying ranks and responsibilities.

### **Chain of Command Structure**

The department is rank structured as follows, with those at the top of the structure having the most significant levels of responsibility and authority:

- Chief of Police
- Deputy Chief
- Commander and Division Manager
- Executive Staff member, Lieutenant, and Section Manager
- Sergeant and Supervisor
- Patrol Corporal (an appointed position with limited chain of command authority/responsibility)
- Police Officer, and Civilian Employee

Regardless of classification, employees, sworn or civilian, will report to the next higher authority level and exercise authority over and responsibility for their assigned direct reports in lower authority positions.

## **Acting Chief Assignment**

In their absence, the chief of police will appoint an acting chief of police. In unforeseen circumstances and in situations where no specific acting chief of police is named, the following order of succession will apply:

1. Deputy Chief of Operations Support Bureau
2. Deputy Chief of Patrol Bureau
3. Deputy Chief of Investigations and Specialized Enforcement Bureau

## **Acting Command Assignments**

In the department's best interest, the chief of police may make a temporary appointment to an acting position of command. Such special appointment should only be as long as necessary to allow for the department's regular assignment procedures.

## **Acting Supervisor Assignments**

In the absence of an assigned supervisor (e.g., extended leave, vacation, illness, etc.) and if operationally necessary/required, an acting supervisor will be identified from the next rank below that being filled (e.g., a deputy chief can be named the acting chief of police, a sergeant can be named an acting lieutenant, etc.). Such a position will be filled for the duration of the assigned supervisor's absence. If the normally assigned supervisor is unavailable to identify an acting supervisor, the responsibility to do so will become that of the supervisor who holds the next highest level of authority.

If an acting patrol sergeant is to be identified, the first preference should, but is not required to, be given to the shift's assigned corporal.

## **Acting Chief, Command, and Supervisor Authority and Responsibilities**

While functioning in the role of acting chief of police, command, or supervisor, the acting will have the same authority and responsibility as the position being filled. In this role, they are responsible for performing the duties associated with the position.

## **Assumption of Command by a Higher Authority**

In the absence of an assigned command officer, an officer from a higher-ranking echelon within the direct chain of command may assume command of a given area. When assuming command under these circumstances, the chief of police and all subordinates affected by the action will be

immediately notified. Those who assume command will retain the position's responsibility until relieved by a higher authority or through the department's regular assignment procedures.

## **Absent a Commanding Officer**

In the absence of a command officer of any component of the department, the senior member of the next lower echelon within the chain of command will assume responsibility for the operations unless an alternate has been designated or intentionally left vacant by a higher authority in the direct chain of command.

## **Command Related Assignments**

### *Command Assignments*

The chief of police has final authority to assign personnel to particular area commands. The chief of police will ensure that employees of the appropriate rank fill the positions and that they either possess or can develop the qualifications required for the position. Among the criteria to be considered include:

- Level of experience
- Extent of training
- Past performance
- Ability to perform the duties required

The day-to-day operations of any command will be the responsibility of the person selected to fill the position unless otherwise dictated by this process.

### *Transfer of Command*

Upon assuming a new assignment, and continually thereafter, command officers should critically evaluate all aspects of the operation being assumed. Newly assigned command officers should review existing policies, procedures, and programs to determine if changes should be implemented or left unchanged.

In changing command, the command officer being replaced will lend their full assistance in making the command transition as smooth and orderly as possible. Orientation of a new command officer should include but may not be limited to:

- Discussions about any known or suspected problems affecting the operation
- Assistance in maintaining helpful community and professional contacts

- Briefings on any financial components the command is responsible for (e.g., budget, grants, etc.)

### *Direction and Control*

Command officers may develop policies or procedures for directing and controlling the specific functions of their assignment, subject to the approval of the deputy chief of their assigned bureau and/or the chief of police.

Command assignments that include similar functioning operations (e.g., patrol divisions, investigative assignments, etc.) should include the perspectives of other command officers in the decision-making process to avoid confusion and perceived inequity in the services provided. Similarly based operations should be kept as consistent as possible.

For command assignments associated with a specialized assignment, the approved policies and procedures will apply only to the employees of that component. In an emergency, special orders deviating from the rules may be issued but will only last as long as the duration of the emergency.

### *Authority Outside the Chain of Command*

While not prohibited, command officers will attempt to limit orders given to those outside their immediate chain of command. When necessary, command personnel may provide direction to personnel assigned to another chain of command. If orders are given by the command officer that ultimately conflicts with the direction provided by a member's chain of command, the member will adhere to the direction so long as it does not conflict with the expectations outlined in [GO 402 Orders and Discretionary Judgement](#). If given conflicting orders, the command officer and the involved member will notify the member's supervisor as soon as it is practical and safe.

### *Delegation*

The chief of police may assign the responsibility for certain significant department functions, programs, and projects, which may then be undertaken by the person receiving the assignment or delegated to the appropriate personnel in the chain of command.

Supervisors may delegate appropriate duties to subordinates within the department's rank structure unless prohibited explicitly by policy, procedure, or orders given by a higher authority. Such a delegation implies a delegation of the authority necessary to accomplish the task. While duties may be delegated, the task results remain the responsibility of the delegating supervisor.

### *Assistance Available*

Command officers may also choose to accept available assistance from other areas and assignments in the department to successfully discharge their duties. Under these circumstances, command officers who choose to get assistance remain responsible for the outcome and processes undertaken.

### **Multi-Bureau or Multi-Division Assignments**

When responsibility for an assignment is entirely within a single bureau but requires the assistance of components from other bureaus, divisions, or sections, the command officer attached to the responsible component and present for duty will have authority over an officer of the same rank detailed from another component.

### **Seniority as a Factor of Command**

Seniority will be determined first by rank and second by continuous service in a rank. Seniority will not be used to determine command, except in an emergency. When two or more officers of equal rank work together on the same assignment or detail, and an emergency arises requiring a command decision, the senior officer will assume responsibility for the emergency until relieved by a ranking member or another qualified person.

### **Chain of Command During Emergencies**

Employees will assume command of all police personnel assigned to the scene of an emergency in the regular command structure of the geographic area in which the operation occurs (e.g., police officer, sergeant, lieutenant, commander, deputy chief, etc.). For situations lacking the regular command structure, the senior officer on-scene will supervise the operation until relieved by a higher authority.