

FORT MYERS POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER 7.6

TITLE: The Written Directive System

INDEXING: Written Directives, Power DMS, General Orders, Standard Operating Procedures, Department Manual, Special Orders, Memos

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this general order is to establish a consistent format for the preparation, indexing, distribution and review of all general orders, procedures, policy statements, and any other form of written directive in order to provide an effective system to communicate departmental principles and procedures.

SCOPE

These procedures shall apply to all Fort Myers Police Department personnel.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Fort Myers Police Department to establish and maintain a formal written directive system to provide employees with a clear understanding of the constraints and expectations relating to the performance of their duties, and to communicate them in a consistent and timely manner. The directive system applies to all departmental employees, and employees are required to comply. **Only the Chief of Police or other designee acting in their absence, may issue, modify, or approve a General Order (C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 b & c).** Deputy Chief's and Bureau Commanders have the authority to issue standard operation procedures, directives and special orders to divisions and organizational elements under their commands. Unit supervisors have the authority to issue memorandums to elements under their commands, only after approval from the Bureau Commander. No subordinate order may conflict with a departmental general order.

SECTION I: DEFINITIONS

- A. **General Orders:** Permanent directives regarding policies, rules, and procedures affecting more than one organizational component.
- B. **Special Orders:** A written statement of policy or procedure regarding a specific circumstance or event that is of a temporary nature (Spring Break, Hurricanes, etc.). Special Orders may not be used to permanently dictate policy or procedures. Special Orders may be issued by Command level personnel for areas pertaining to their specific areas of responsibility. A copy of the Special Order shall be filed with the Accreditation Office. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 h)**

- C. Standard Operating Procedures: A directive that affects only a specific segment of the organization (Communications, Records, etc.). They give a working knowledge of how day-to-day functions of the component are conducted. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 h)**
- D. Rules and Regulations: A set of specific requirements or limitations to which all employees must adhere. They are the most narrowly drawn of written directives that allow for the least amount of interpretation. They represent precise commands, which members are to obey to the letter. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 g)**
- E. Written Directives: This term includes policies, procedures, rules, regulations, general orders, special orders, emergency orders, addendums, and directive letters and memorandums that are issued by the authority of the Chief of Police.
- F. Policy Statement: A broad statement of principles of the department. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 f)**
- G. Procedure: A written directive that provides methods, guidelines, or instructions for carrying out agency activities. A procedure may be made mandatory in tone by using "will" or "shall" rather than "should" or "must" or "may." Procedures sometimes allow some latitude and discretion in carrying out an activity. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 g,h)**
- H. Department Manual (DM): Unless otherwise specified, the term "manual" means the bound General Orders Manual of the police department, including the binder and all directives issued for inclusion. Partial manuals may be issued for specific purposes. Manuals may also be provided in digital media form. The term may also be used in a generic sense to refer to a book, booklet, or publication provided by another source. Examples may include the FCIC Operator's Manual, the FDLE Evidence Submission Manual or various equipment operators' manuals. The Accreditation Manager (AM) is responsible for the compilation, production, and maintenance of the (DM).
- I. Directive: Refers to an official agency document containing authoritative instruction, including but not limited to; General Orders, Standard Operating Procedures, Official Letters, Announcements, Memorandums, Special Orders, etc.
- J. Directive Memorandum: An informal, written document that may or may not convey an order. It is generally used to clarify, inform, or inquire. Memorandums that are used to convey orders must be issued by Command level personnel. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 g,h)**
- K. Directive Letters: Directives, in letter format, primarily used to notify affected employees of departmental commendations, discipline, and other issues requiring formal notification. Issued by the Chief of Police or designee in their absence.
- L. Training Bulletins: A written document issued by the Division Commander or designee in charge of the training function that provides personnel with legal updates, new information, explanations or guidance. Copies will be issued to all affected personnel, and one copy will remain in the training files.
- M. City of Fort Myers Policies: In addition to departmental directives, all employees are obligated to comply with policies set forth in the City of Fort Myers Policies and Procedures Manual.
- N. Gender: Whenever the male or female pronoun is used, it shall refer to both the male and female gender.

- O. Power DMS: A document management software program that provides electronic archival and distribution of directives. It also provides an electronic receipt and testing system that can be assigned to all, or specific members.
- P. Shall or will: Indicates a mandatory action.
- Q. Should: Indicates a generally required or expected action, absent a rational basis for failing to conform.

SECTION II: DIRECTIVE & MANUAL FORMAT (C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 d)

- A. All general orders, special orders and standard operating procedures shall be formatted in a consistent manner. A header will be utilized on the first page of all directives to identify key information about the directive.
- B. Each General Order, Standard Operating Procedure, and Regulation shall contain the following: (C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 d)
 - 1. A heading to include the "Ft. Myers Police Department" and assigned number.
 - 2. Index section.
 - 3. Date issued.
 - 4. Date revised.
 - 5. Rescinds section.
 - 6. Accreditation standards section.
 - 7. Number of pages.
 - 8. The body of all written directives shall be in standard outline form and typed using the Arial, size (11) Font.
 - 9. A footer to include the number of the directive, page number with total pages, and date of issue or revision.
- C. All general orders shall be organized into chapters. Chapter numbers will be assigned for proper placement in the department's manual. Each general order or regulation shall be issued a unique and specific number **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 e)**. All Rules and Regulations will be in a separate chapter in the departments' manual.
- D. Special Orders and Memorandum shall be issued in standard department Memorandum format. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 d)**
- E. The department manual shall have a Glossary of appropriate terms in one location.
- F. The department manual shall have an Index of all appropriate subjects / topics in alphabetical order. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 e)**
- G. The department manual shall have a Table of Contents.

- H. The Appendix is the supplemental material that affects the policy, and is attached at the end of a policy. Forms to be used in performing tasks associated with a particular general order are contained in the appendix of the general order.
- I. The Fort Myers Police Department written directives manual is an official publication of the Fort Myers Police Department. Members of the department shall keep their manuals updated and in good condition.

SECTION III: DIRECTIVE REVIEW & MODIFICATION

- A. The Accreditation Manager will review, update, purge, or revise policies and procedures as necessary. If a directive needs to be or has been updated, it will be submitted for Command Staff review, as delineated in this directive. Deputy Chiefs/Bureau Commanders shall oversee an annual review of all directives. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1i)** Directives dealing with high liability procedures may be reviewed more frequently. Directives may also be modified or reviewed more frequently, depending upon need, court decisions, new legislation, or other factors that may have an effect on the directive. The Deputy Chiefs/Bureau Commanders shall forward the results of the review to the Accreditation Manager, along with any recommendations for change they feel is needed. If no changes are recommended, that should also be noted.
- B. Any component recommending a new policy or policy revision, shall prepare a draft of the proposed/revised policy. The draft shall be forwarded through the chain of command to the Accreditation Manager, who will edit, format, and review the document to ensure revisions, additions or new policies, do not conflict with existing policies, laws, and accreditation standards, prior to promulgation. The Accreditation Manager will enter all new policies and policy revisions into a Power DMS workflow for review/comment/approval by the affected Section Commander, all Bureau Commanders, Deputy Chiefs and Police Legal Advisor. The Command Staff review and approval process should be completed within 10 business days. The Accreditation Manager will provide the Chief of Police with a final copy of the new or revised policy, for review and approval, following Command Staff review. The Chief of Police will have the final approval on all new policies and/or policy revisions (General Orders). **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 e, i)**
- C. If the need exists for a directive to be purged, the Accreditation Manager will forward a memo to the Chief of Police, stating the rationale for the request. The Chief must authorize the removal of the directive in writing. A copy of the purged directive will remain on file in the Accreditation Office. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.1 e)**
- D. Any department employee may submit a recommendation that a written directive be reviewed or modified. The employee making the request should submit the reason for recommending the review or change, in writing, to the Chief of Police through the chain-of-command. The employee should include the rationale for making the recommendation, as well as providing the documentation for any proposed changes. The Chief will review the request and assign the matter to the Accreditation Manager for further consideration, to ensure it meets accreditation standards. The Accreditation Manager will follow the process as outlined above, if they determine the policy requires a revision.
- F. Department general orders are not self-canceling unless specifically stated in the order. Each general order is in effect until and unless superseded, rescinded, or abrogated by law or court decision.

SECTION IV: DISTRIBUTION & POWER DMS

- A. All department personnel will be issued General Orders (GO's), Legal Bulletins, and Rules and Regulations electronically utilizing the Power DMS system, to include amendments and revisions. Special Orders, Training Bulletins, City Policies, and Standard Operating Procedures will also be distributed through this system and will follow the same procedure for the issuance and distribution. Employees will be able to access directives through their laptop or department computers. Hard copies shall be maintained in the Chief's Office, Communications Division and the Accreditation Office. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.2 a)**
- B. When a new directive is issued, members of the department will be notified by e-mail. All members of the department are to review their e-mail at least once each day during their duty hours. Personnel who are in training, on extended leave, or detached duty are to review their e-mail on a regular basis upon their return to duty. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.2 a)**
- C. Upon being notified that a new directive has been issued, members of the department will be required to log onto the Power DMS system within (10) ten business days to access, read and digitally sign the new/revised directive. A business day is defined as Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.2 a) (C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.2 c)**
- D. Each member of the department shall be responsible for reading and understanding the contents of the directive and following the policies and procedures specified within the document. All members are responsible for seeking clarification of a general order from their immediate supervisor, if it is not fully understood. The system will prompt the employee to enter their ID number and password acknowledging that they have read and understood the document, and agree to carry it out. This creates an electronic signature verifying that the employee has read and understood the document. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.2 c)**
- E. In the future, some directives may have a test attached to the document containing questions relating to key points within the directive. If a test is attached to the document, it must be successfully completed before the employee's signature is recorded.
- F. Employees are expected to provide the information for the electronic signature and successfully complete any required tests within (10) ten business days after being notified that a new directive has been issued. If an employee is unable to complete the requirements within the specified time period, they are to notify their immediate supervisor in writing as to the reason why they were unable to do so.
- G. If an employee fails to complete the requirements outlined above, a warning will be sent to the employee and their supervisor through the email system. The employee will be given (4) four additional business days to access, read and digitally sign the new/revised directive. If the employee fails to complete the requirements outlined above after the warning period, their supervisor will be directed to inquire as to the reason and address any issues that may arise. The employee may be subject to disciplinary action.
- H. Hard copies of any issued documents will be maintained in the Accreditation Office.
- I. Individual employees receiving a new or revised directive(s) through the on-line policy system can print the directive for inclusion in their manual and place the directive in the appropriate section should the member choose to do so. However, the only official copies of all general orders will be located in the Power DMS system and the Accreditation Section.

- J. Written directives that address tactical methods or information of the police department may be marked “confidential”, pursuant to [Florida Statute 119.07](#), and the release of such written directives coordinated through the public information office. This may include: **(C.A.L.E.A. 54.1.1 e)**

1. Surveillance techniques and procedures.
2. The identity of surveillance personnel.
3. Mobilization / deployment plans or policies for emergencies.
4. Other tactical plans or policies for emergencies.

SECTION V: STORAGE & DISPOSAL

- A. All current, revised, and rescinded master copies of policies, general orders, special orders, and standard operating procedures will be stored and archived in the Accreditation Section (Accreditation Office). These documents will be stored in the Power DMS System. Reviewed drafts will also be maintained, but they will be filed separately. **(C.A.L.E.A. 12.2.2 b)**
- B. Obsolete or superseded master files and draft files may be disposed of only when:
1. There are no pending or anticipated lawsuits or investigations (criminal or internal) where the document may have evidentiary, regulative, or investigative value.
 2. All other administrative value is lost.
 3. At least four years have passed since the document was current. (Four years is used due to the statute of limitations on liability.) **(C.A.L.E.A. 82.1.3)**
- C. The Accreditation Manager may authorize destruction after ensuring the above criteria has been met. **(C.A.L.E.A. 82.1.3)**
- D. Disposal or deletion of computerized written directives will be in accordance with the Florida [General Records Schedule GS1-SL](#). A copy of the destruction request and disposition approval will be maintained in the Records Section. **(C.A.L.E.A. 82.1.3)**

SECTION VI: MISCELLANEOUS

- A. Any correspondence issued on the City of Fort Myers Police Department’s letterhead shall be signed by a Lieutenant or above, unless approved by the Chief of Police or his / her designee. Exceptions to this will be general contact letters sent out by detectives working cases, letters sent to citizens by the Internal Affairs Office, and the Background/Recruitment Unit.
- B. Precedence of Laws and Directives:
1. All department directives will be written to comply with Federal Laws, Florida Statutes, Lee County Ordinances, Ft. Myers City Ordinances, resolutions, and policies. Conflicts will be resolved in favor of the superior directive as listed below in descending order of precedence.
 - a. Federal Laws.
 - b. Florida State Statutes.
 - c. Lee County Ordinances.

- d. City of Fort Myers Ordinances.
 - e. City Resolutions.
 - f. City Employees Policies and Procedures.
 - g. Police Department Written Directives Manual.
 - h. Police Department Memorandums.
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REFERENCES:

[Florida State Statute 119.07](#)

[General Records Schedule GS1-SL.](#)

APPROVED:
[Electronic Signature on File]

Jason Fields, Chief of Police
Fort Myers Police Department

08/23/2024

Date _____