



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Administration

Section: 201

Subject: Written Directive System

Topic:

Enacted: 07/30/2015

Last Review: 07/02/2025

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I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the implementation and management of a written directive system for employees of the Sheriff. The written directive system will include a General Order [Manual](#), Standard Operating Procedures, written directives, memorandums, and written correspondence.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) to issue written directives by authorized personnel to establish, define, and communicate the agency-wide policies, procedures, or programs to guide the efforts and objectives of the Sheriff in a consistent manner to support the agency's mission and philosophy.

III. PROCEDURE

The following procedures shall be used in the formulation of any written directive:

- A. Authorization: The following persons/positions are authorized to issue written directives as specified:
1. Sheriff: Any directive to all personnel.
 2. Lieutenant Colonel/Bureau Commanders: Any directive to all personnel.
 3. Division Commanders: May promulgate Standard Operating Procedures for the division, or section, and units under their span of control in addition to memoranda. The Administration and Technical Services Division Commander may issue directives to all divisions in matters concerning training, promotional processes, and technology matters.
 4. Section and Unit Supervisors: May draft Standard Operating Procedures for their sections or units and issue them with the concurrence of the Division Commander. Section and unit supervisors may also issue memoranda that are special orders, informational memorandums, and instructional memorandums only to people within their span of control. Accountability and maintenance of files shall be the responsibility of the originating section or unit supervisor.

5. Policy and Accreditation Manager: The person to whom all changes and revisions to General Orders or suggestions for new General Orders are directed. All new General Orders or changes to General Orders shall be reviewed to ensure that Accreditation Standards are met and changes to the Code of Virginia and applicable County of Loudoun Human Resources policies are included. All new General Orders, amendments and changes must meet the approval of Command Staff personnel, the Sheriff and County Attorney's Office before being made into official policy and issued.

B. Written Directive System: The written directive system consists of the following:

1. General Orders

- a. General Orders are indexed by functional area. They are dated, and when updating or revising an existing order, identified with the date of the existing order being replaced.
- b. A General Order is in effect until replaced or rescinded by the Sheriff.
- c. General Orders are formulated under guidelines set forth in [General Order 101, Authority and Organization](#).
- d. New and revised General Orders will be maintained, updated and distributed to all personnel through an electronic document management system.
- e. The following are the functional areas indexed in General Orders:
 - i. 100 - Organizational
 - ii. 200 - Administration
 - iii. 300 - Personnel Management
 - iv. 400 - Operations
 - v. 500 - Corrections and Court Services

General Orders are sequentially numbered by functional area, i.e. 300, 301, 302, etc. for orders falling into the Administration category

2. Standard Operating Procedures

- a. Standard Operating Procedures (“SOPs”) are developed by qualified personnel and approved by the affected Division Commander and Bureau Commander. SOPs detail specific methods to accomplish agency activities, e.g., communications, records management functions, evidence collection, etc.
- b. SOPs are generally step-by-step, or “how-to” in nature. They are revised, updated or purged as required by policy, procedure or technological change.
- c. SOPs are binding upon those people performing the activity.
- d. SOPs are identified by division, year, and sequential number (e.g. 01-24-001).
- e. Generally, an SOP will begin with functions required at the start of a task and continue in logical progression until all aspects of the task have been addressed.
- f. Division identifiers are as follows:
 - i. 01 – Office of the Sheriff
 - ii. 02 – Administrative and Technical Services
 - iii. 03 – Field Operations
 - iv. 04 – Criminal Investigations
 - v. 05 – Operational Support
 - vi. 06 – Corrections
 - vii. 07 – Court Services

3. Memoranda

- a. Memoranda are developed by, or at the direction of, people who have the authority to do so as set forth elsewhere in this Order.
- b. All memoranda will be forwarded to the Office of the Sheriff administrative staff for number assignment and distribution, with the exceptions specified in paragraph A, “Authorization,” above. In most cases, memoranda are distributed through an electronic document management system.

- c. Each memorandum shall have an effective date and a cancellation date, if applicable.
- d. The subject line of the memorandum shall indicate which of the four categories below has been designated:
 - i. [Personnel Order](#)
 - ii. [Special Order](#)
 - iii. [Informational](#)
 - iv. [Instructional](#)
- e. The reference line shall indicate content. When memoranda have expired, been canceled or superseded, they may be archived in the document management system.
- f. Each division shall identify a method of numbering their memorandum. [Memorandum](#) originating from the Office of the Sheriff shall be assigned an individual number consisting of a year designator (2 digits) followed by a 3-digit sequential number indicating chronological order. Memorandum originating from a division shall be assigned an individual number consisting of a year designator (2 digits) followed by the initials of the division and followed by a 3-digit sequential number indicating chronological order.

C. Purging

The following guidelines are procedures for the purging of written directives:

- 1. General Orders: In effect until rescinded by the Sheriff.
 - a. Notification to rescind or cancel a General Order shall be sent to all personnel on a memorandum by the Administrative and Technical Services Division Commander.
 - b. When a General Order has been rescinded or canceled, it shall be archived in the electronic document management system.
 - c. The Administrative and Technical Services Division shall archive all rescinded or canceled General Orders for a period of not less than five years.

2. Standard Operating Procedures: These directives are rescinded at the direction of the affected Division or Bureau Commander, usually when the task is no longer performed or has been modified. The appropriate section(s) is replaced by revised sections or are deleted altogether.
 - a. When an SOP no longer applies and is required to be rescinded, the Division or Bureau Commander shall issue a memorandum notifying the affected personnel. The SOP shall then be archived in the electronic document management system.
3. Memoranda: Memoranda are purged automatically in most cases by affixing an expiration date to the document.
 - a. When the expiration date has been reached, the document may be archived.
 - b. On memoranda that state "Expiration – when canceled," a directive will be sent to all affected persons when the document is to be purged.

D. Promulgation

All written directives shall be promulgated in the following manner:

1. General Orders: To all personnel (sworn and civilian).
2. Standard Operating Procedures: To all personnel within the affected division. Occasionally an SOP affects more than one division and shall be issued by the Office of the Sheriff.
3. Personnel Order: To all personnel when the order is an announcement of the change in status of personnel. When the order is specific to only a few individuals, it may be distributed to "affected personnel."
4. Special Order: To those "affected personnel" as appropriate.
5. Informational Memoranda: To all affected personnel.
6. Instructional Memoranda: To all personnel, except for directives to attend functions or training, addressed to certain individuals.

E. Receipts for written directives

1. When a document is published, the document manager will assign it to the appropriate personnel in the electronic document management system and require a signature.
2. The electronic document management system signature feature shall be utilized to ensure assigned personnel have acknowledged receipt of the document.
3. The Policy and Accreditation Manager shall notify Division Commanders of those employees who have not acknowledged the document within the established due date.
4. The due date will vary based upon the time sensitivity of the document.