



# GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

**Chapter:** Administration

**Section:** 201

**Subject:** Written Directive System

**Topic:**

**Enacted:** 07/30/2015

**Last Review:** 03/31/2021

**Review:** 10/01/2022

## 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

The policy and procedures of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office ("LCSO") will be disseminated through the issuance of written directives authenticated by the appropriate authority. Written directives are official documents establishing, defining, and communicating agency-wide policy, procedures, or programs. These directives are intended to guide the efforts and objectives of the LCSO, so the activities of the employees are consistent with and support the mission and overall philosophy of the agency. The authority to issue, amend, or approve agency written directives is vested in the Sheriff. No person shall draft, authorize or promulgate any written directive that is in conflict with any General Order. If a specific unit has an explicit operational need, that may be addressed through an approved Standard Operation Procedure or Special Order, as defined below.

## III. DEFINITIONS

**Written Directive:** Any written document used to guide or affect the performance or conduct of agency employees. This term includes policies, procedures, rules, regulations, General Orders, Special Orders, and instructional material.

**General Order:** A term used to describe permanent directives concerned with policy, rules and procedures affecting the agency.

**Special Order:** Directives affecting only a specific segment of the organization, or statement of policy or procedure regarding a specific circumstance or event that is of a temporary nature.

**Standard Operating Procedure:** A written directive that is a detailed guideline for a specific agency activity.

Personnel Order: An announcement of changes in the status of personnel, such as transfer or promotion.

Instructional Material: Training guidelines, bulletins, and checklists.

Policy: A written directive that is a broad statement of agency principles.

Informational Material: A written document that may or that is generally used to clarify, inform or inquire.

Memorandum: A written document that may contain a personnel order, instructional/informational material, or a special order.

Manual: A collection of policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and/or other written directives.

#### IV. 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 any and all persons.
  - 2. Undersheriff: Any directive to any and all persons.
  - 3. Bureau Commander: Any directive to any and all persons.
  - 4. 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.
  - 5. 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 persons within their span of control. Accountability and maintenance of files shall be the responsibility of the originating section or unit supervisor.

6. 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 in order to assure 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

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. A General Order is in effect until replaced or rescinded by the Sheriff. General Orders are formulated under guidelines set forth in General Order 101, Authority and Organization of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office. New and revised General Orders will be maintained, updated and distributed to all personnel through the PowerDMS system.

The following are the functional areas indexed in General Orders:

100	Organizational
200	Administration
300	Personnel Management
400	Operations
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

Standard Operating Procedures ("SOPs") are developed by qualified personnel and approved by the same method as General Orders. SOPs detail specific methods to accomplish agency activities, e.g., communications, records

management functions, evidence collection, etc. 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. SOPs are binding upon those persons performing the activity. SOPs are not numbered but may be indexed by task. Generally, an operating procedure 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.

3. Memoranda

Memoranda are developed by, or at the direction of, persons having the authority to do so as set forth elsewhere in this Order. 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 PowerDMS. Each memorandum shall have an effective date and a cancellation date, if applicable.

The subject line of the memorandum shall indicate which of the four categories below has been designated:

- a. Personnel Order
- b. Special Order
- c. Informational
- d. Instructional

The reference line shall indicate content. When memoranda have expired, been canceled or superseded, they may be discarded. However, administrative staff shall maintain a complete file of all memoranda generated within the last five years. Each memorandum shall be assigned an individual number consisting of a year designator (2 digits) followed by a 3-digit sequential number indicating chronological order. As an example, 10-001 is the first memorandum issued in 2010.

D. Purging

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

General Orders: In effect until rescinded by the Sheriff. Notification to rescind or cancel a General Order shall be sent to all personnel by the Accreditation Manager. When a General Order has been rescinded or canceled, it shall be archived in PowerDMS. The Administrative and Technical Services Division shall archive all rescinded or canceled General Orders for a period of not less than five years.

Standard Operating Procedures: These directives are purged at the direction of the division 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.

Memoranda: Memoranda are purged automatically in most cases by affixing an expiration date to the document. When the expiration date has been reached, the document may be archived. On memoranda that state "Expiration – when canceled," a directive will be sent to all affected persons when the document is to be purged.

E. Promulgation

All written directives shall be promulgated in the following manner:

General Orders: To all personnel (sworn and civilian).

Standard Operating Procedures: To all personnel within the affected division.

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."

Special Order: To those "affected personnel" as appropriate.

Informational Memoranda: To all affected personnel.

Instructional Memoranda: To all personnel, with the exception of directives to attend functions or training, addressed to certain individuals.

F. Receipts for written directives

When a document is published, the document manager will assign it to the appropriate personnel in PowerDMS and require a signature. The PowerDMS signature feature

will be utilized to ensure assigned personnel have acknowledged receipt of the document. The document manager shall notify division commanders of those employees who have not acknowledged the document within the established due date. The due date will vary based upon the time sensitivity of the document.