



Lincoln Police Department

Standard Operating Procedures

Integrity, Competency, Fairness



Subject:	Chain of Command	Policy #	A-14
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	<i>Rescinds All Previous Policies Related To This Current Policy</i>		
Issuing Authority:	Chief of Police Lee Miller		

I. POLICY:

This policy recognizes the Chief of Police as Chief Law Enforcement Officer and provides a clear delineation of authority as it relates to the issuance of verbal orders, written directives, and supervisory responsibility. The policy provides a process that ensures that minimum levels of direct communication with the Chief occur and that the Chief of Police’s staff properly orchestrates the agency’s day-to-day activities.

II. PURPOSE:

The Chief of Police, as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer, is responsible for administering and directing the Lincoln Police Department. A chain of command exists within the agency through which a para-military style ranking structure establishes command authority. Responsibility and authority exist within the chain of command or as designated by the Chief of Police through written directives.

III. COMMAND PROTOCOL:

A. Unity of Command

1. Unity of command ensures that all employees are aware of what is expected of them. Additionally, it promotes efficiency and responsibility in that each organizational component of the agency is under the direct command of only one supervisor.
2. Each member of the agency is accountable to only one Supervisor/Command Officer at any given time. There may be times when a supervisor has to provide a command to an employee who is outside the chain of command, including:
 - i. During an emergency when immediate action is required, or
 - ii. When immediate action is necessary to prevent embarrassment or discredit to the agency.

B. Chain of Command

1. The chain of command is a formal line of communication extending downward or upward through each successive level of command. The chain-of-command will generally mirror

the Lincoln Police Department's organizational chart, which chart depicts the functional area and lines of responsibility. The chart shall be updated annually.

- i. The Chief of Police is responsible for updating the organizational chart annually to reflect the current state of the Department. **MLEAP 1.01**
- ii. Civilian and sworn personnel will be assigned to positions within the organization corresponding to their rank or level of supervision. The hierarchy of rank is listed below, from highest to lowest:

<i>Chief of Police</i>
<i>Sergeant</i>
<i>Detective</i>
<i>Patrol Officer/School Resource Officer</i>

2. Decision-making within the Lincoln Police Department must follow the chain of command; therefore, the flow of information must be along the same lines. It is incumbent upon every member of the Lincoln Police Department to keep their respective supervisor informed.
 - i. Generally, no employee will circumvent their immediate supervisor to report information to a higher-ranking individual.
 - ii. Similarly, no one will withhold information from a supervisor that is needed by that supervisor to make a sound decision.
 - iii. There are some exceptions to the above rule where it is permissible to circumvent the chain of command, including:
 - a. Emergencies where an immediate decision is needed, but the immediate supervisor isn't readily available.
 - b. A request is received from a person of a higher rank than your supervisor. In this case, report back to the person making the original request.
 - c. Criminal violations, harassment, or other violations of the department's *Code of Conduct* policy where the alleged violator is the immediate supervisor.
3. During single operations involving personnel of different sections, divisions, or units, the ranking supervisor, who is responsible for the incident, is deemed to have supervisory control. Another Command Officer's appearance at the scene does not automatically place them in charge of that scene unless they assume control by an announcement.

IV. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:

A. Command Officers

1. The Chief of Police is responsible for the overall management of the Lincoln Police Department.
 - a. In the Chief's absence, the on-call duty supervisor will assume command.
2. Any commanding officer may designate a subordinate to fill their duties during an absence. If a specific designation has not been made, the duties rest with the senior member of the preceding rank (time in grade).
 - i. Personnel will be given the authority to make decisions necessary for the effective execution of their duties at every level within the agency. The commensurate authority will accompany responsibility.

- ii. All agency personnel are fully accountable for the use of delegated authority or for the failure to utilize it.
3. During natural and man-made disasters, civil unrest, and other unusual occurrences, the command will be established according to emergency management plans.

B. **Supervisors**

1. Supervisors within every rank level of the Lincoln Police Department, have the authority necessary to carry out their duties and responsibilities. They are accountable for the use of such authority.
2. Supervisory personnel are accountable for the activities and performance of employees under their immediate control.
3. Supervisors have the authority to delegate responsibility, make necessary assignments, issue orders, and enforce Lincoln Police Department policies, regardless of the subordinate's area of assignment.
4. Supervisory officers of the same rank will defer to the senior ranking officer (time in grade) for direction unless previously designated by the Chief of Police.

Example: When there is a conflicting direction within a group of two or more Sergeants, the junior Sergeant(s) will defer to the senior Sergeant.

5. Acting supervisors and/or command personnel assume the same responsibility and will command the same respect as the supervisor and/or command personnel regularly assigned. In the absence of delegation, the senior officer of rank will assume such responsibility and is accountable for their decisions and actions.

C. **Subordinates**

1. Subordinates are required to obey any lawful order issued by a superior, including any orders relayed from a superior by an employee of the same or lesser rank.

MLEAP 1.08

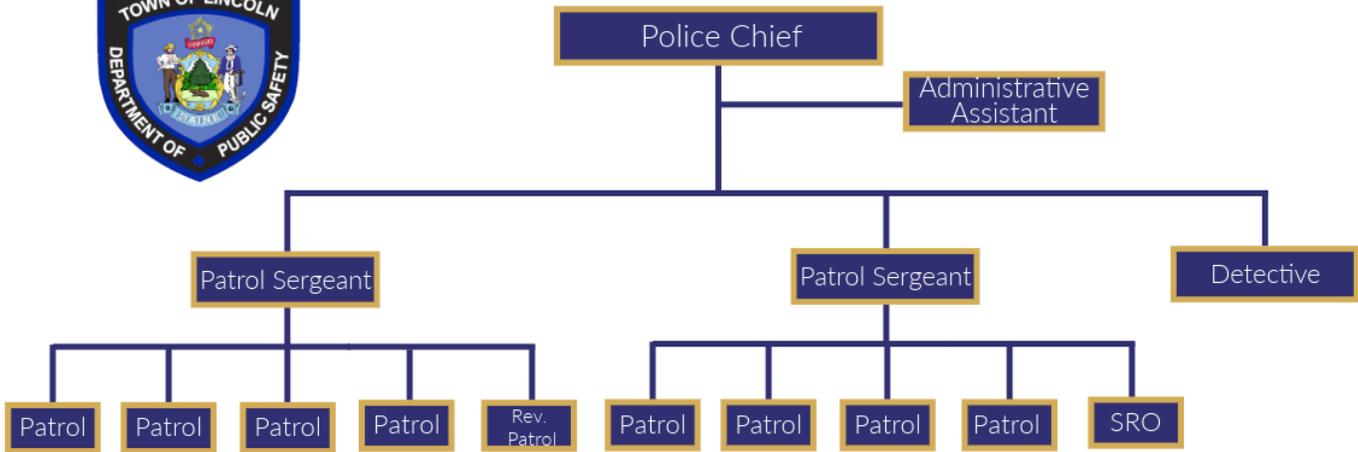
- i. This applies to the subordinates even if they are generally not under the supervisor's direct command.
 - ii. Employees in doubt as to the nature, meaning, or details of a lawful order will seek clarification from the person issuing such orders.
2. If a subordinate receives an order that conflicts with a previous order, they will inform the supervisor of the last command. The supervisor is responsible for determining if the first or second order will prevail.
3. At no time is a subordinate to obey an order from a superior that they know to be unlawful.
 - i. Obedience to an unlawful order is never a defense for any unlawful act; therefore, no member is required to obey any order which is contradictory to federal law, state law, or a local ordinance. Responsibility for refusal to obey rests with the member. The member shall be strictly responsible for justifying their action(s).
 - ii. A member receiving an unlawful or improper order, shall at first opportunity, report, in writing, the same to the Chief of Police through official channels.
 - iii. This report shall contain the facts of the incident and the actions taken. Appeals for relief from such orders may be made at the same time.

VII. STAFF MEETEINGS:

- A. The Chief of Police may direct any staff meeting to be mandatory or optional. The Chief of Police may also direct that the agenda of any meeting be specific or general.



**Lincoln Police Department
Organizational Chart 2026**



Reviewed 1/27/2026 (MLEAP 1.01)