



MICHIGAN STATE POLICE

# Style Guide

Purpose: When preparing department documents, the Style Guide, Official Order 13-20: Official Forms, Procedure Manual 13-04: Creation and Maintenance of Official Forms, Official Order 19-10: Written Correspondence, Official Order 19-11: Official Correspondence, Official Order 19-12: Electronic Mail, and Official Order 19-13: Filing Correspondence and Reports shall serve as the style and formatting reference for all correspondence.

Please keep in mind that all documents created on behalf of the MSP are subject to public review and FOIA requests. As a representation of the department, documents should be professional in tone and format.

For grammar related questions, members are encouraged to reference the following documents:

[The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation](#)

[The Franklin Covey Style Guide](#)

## Written Directives:

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Official Order 01-01: Written Directive System, Official Order 02-02: Department Philosophy, Official Order 19-01: Department Organization, Procedure Manual 01-01: Written Directive System. These directives provide guidance on rank structure descriptions, title usage, temporary policies, written directive revisions, and the department philosophy.

Official Order 14-04: Retention and Disposition of Records and Official Order 14-05: Master File Storage of External Documents. Retention schedule information can be obtained by contacting the Records Management Officer (RMO) in the Freedom of Information (FOI) Unit, or by referencing the [State of Michigan Retention and Disposal Schedules](#).

Official Order 13-20: Official Forms, Official Order 19-10: Written Correspondence, Official Order 19-11: Official Correspondence, Official Order 19-12: Electronic Mail and Official Order 19-13: Filing Correspondence and Reports. These directives describe the process for documents requiring the Director's signature, posting correspondence to the Intranet, the official forms process, and the process for ordering forms.

Official Order 14-20: Web and Social Media General Policy and Official Order 14-21: Department Use of Social Media and Official Order 17-02: Landline Voicemail Greetings.

Official Order 19-30: Department Awards and Recognition and Procedure Manual 19-10: Department Awards describe the process and guidelines for department awards.

## **Correspondence Preparation:**

General instructions for preparation of Michigan State Police (MSP) documents are outlined below. Sample letters are provided in the attachments as formatting guides.

The letter format should be used in correspondence addressed to all individuals outside the MSP and may be used in formal correspondence to department members.

Refer to Official Order 19-10-2 for additional guidance on authoring authorities.

The memo format should only be used for correspondence to be posted on the Intranet or distributed internally.

Members should use judgment in tone and format to ensure letters are professional, and consistent with term use and style throughout each document

### **Letters**

State of Michigan watermark bond paper is required for all letterhead correspondence. Stock can be obtained by contacting the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, Printing Services.

#### **A. Font**

All letters shall be typed using the Arial 10-point font. The Arial 11 or 12-point font may be used if needed to make the appearance more presentable.

#### **B. Format**

All letters shall be typed in traditional/business format using block letter style

#### **C. Margins**

A letter is centered on the page, with right and left, top and bottom, margins approximately the same. Do not use right justification.

#### **D. Inside address**

Except for titles, avoid abbreviations in the inside address. The name of the state should be spelled out.

#### **E. Continuation pages**

Continuation pages have an altered header. Use the same left and right margins as the first page. Insert the name of the addressee, letter date, and page number within the document header.

Mr. John Doe  
March 1, 2020  
Page 2

Resume typing the body of the letter on the third line below the last line of the heading.

#### **F. Email addresses in letter**

When including an email address in a letter to be delivered in hard copy, spell out the email address, and remove the hyperlink and the underline (e.g., "...contacted at smithj@michigan.gov" rather than "...contact Ms. Jane Smith").

## E. Signature Block

Commanders shall begin correspondence originating within their command dealing with official business. Begin typing the commander's signature block on fourth line below the closing. If attempting to keep a letter to one page, reduce the signature space to two blank lines.

Signature block information should contain the author's name, rank (for enforcement members), title, and district/division or worksite.

(full name), Rank

Title

(name of bureau, or district/division)

Jane M. Doe, Captain

Commander

Training Division

John Doe

Commander

Office of Highway Safety Planning

### Preparing Correspondence for the Director's or Deputy Directors' Signature:

When submitting correspondence for the Director's or a deputy director's signature, always include a copy of the original correspondence which is being answered.

Submit prepared correspondence for the Director's signature through channels, including your bureau.

Correspondence should be prepared according to the rules in this manual, using the following signature block for the Director:

Sincerely,

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DIRECTOR

The following signature block format applies to all deputy directors:

Sincerely,

¶

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(full name), Lt. Colonel

Deputy Director

(name of bureau)

Interoffice Correspondence - Refer to Official Order 19-11: Official Correspondence

- A. The first line of the body of a memo should begin on the third line below the “subject” line. This should be followed even when typing very short memos as it is not necessary to center, top to bottom, the body of a memo.
- B. The left margin of the body of the memo should be aligned with the word “Subject.”
- C. The MSP Value Statement (“A PROUD tradition of SERVICE through EXCELLENCE, INTEGRITY, and COURTESY”) shall be printed at the bottom of each page.
- D. The header on continuation pages are formatted the same as letters.
- E. To and From lines should include: Distribution list name, rank or gender identifier, first and last name, title, if appropriate, and bureau or district/division fully spelled out.

Date: February 2, 2022

To: Capt. Jane M. Doe, Commander, Training Division

From: Mr. John S. Doe, Assistant Commander, Criminal Justice Information Center

Date: February 2, 2022

To: F/Lt. John Smith, Commander, Second District

From: Sgt. Joe Smith, Second District

Date: February 2, 2022

To: Department Members

From: Lt. Col. Amy Dehner, Chief Deputy Director, Executive Operations

Forms of Address and Salutation:

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***President***

President (full name)  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President:

***Heads of State Depts., Appointed***

Mr. or Ms. (full name)  
Director  
Michigan Department of (name)  
(Building or Street)  
Lansing, Michigan (zip code)

Dear Mr. or Ms. (last name):

***Governor***

The Honorable (full name)  
Governor of the State of Michigan  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor (last name):

***Heads of State Dept., Elected***

The Honorable (full name)  
Attorney General  
P.O. Box 30212  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Mr. or Ms. (last name):

***State Representatives***

The Honorable (full name)  
State Representative  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Representative (last name):

***County or Township Supervisors***

Mr. or Ms. (full name)  
Supervisor (township or county)  
Address

Dear Mr. or Ms. (last name):

***State Senators***

The Honorable (full name)  
State Senator  
State Capitol  
P. O. Box 30036  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Senator (last name):

***Municipal Offices***

The Honorable (full name)  
Mayor of the City of (city)  
Address

Dear Mayor (last name):

***U.S. Senators***

The Honorable (full name)  
United States Senator  
Address

Dear Senator (last name):

***Judicial Offices***

The Honorable (full name)  
Judge of the (name of court)  
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

***U.S. Representatives***

The Honorable (full name)  
United States Representative  
Address

Dear Congressman/woman (last name):

***Magistrate***

Magistrate (full name)  
70th District Court  
Address

Dear Mr. or Ms. (last name):

***Police Chief***

Chief (full name)  
(city/township) Police Department  
Address

Dear Chief (last name):

***Sheriff***

Sheriff (full name)  
(county) County Sheriff's Office  
Address

Dear Sheriff (last name):

***Prosecutor***

Prosecutor (full name)  
(county) County Prosecutor's Office  
Address

Dear Prosecutor (last name):

***Federal Law Enforcement***

SAC (full name)  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Address

Dear Mr. or Ms. (last name):

# State Police Rank Guidelines:

<b><u>RANK</u></b>	<b><u>WHEN USING FULL NAME</u></b>	<b><u>WHEN USING SURNAME ONLY</u></b>
Colonel	Col.	Colonel
Lieutenant Colonel	Lt. Col.	Lt. Colonel
Major	Maj.	Major
Captain	Capt.	Captain
Inspector	Insp.	Inspector
First Lieutenant	F/Lt.	F/Lieutenant
Specialist First Lieutenant	Spl/F/Lt.	Spl/F/Lieutenant
Detective First Lieutenant	D/F/Lt.	D/F/Lieutenant
Lieutenant	Lt.	Lieutenant
Specialist Lieutenant	Spl/Lt.	Spl/Lieutenant
Detective Lieutenant	D/Lt.	D/Lieutenant
Sergeant	Sgt.	Sergeant
Specialist Sergeant	Spl/Sgt.	Spl/Sergeant
Detective Sergeant	D/Sgt.	D/Sergeant
Detective Trooper	D/Tpr.	D/Trooper
Specialist Trooper	Spl/Tpr.	Spl/Trooper
Detective Trooper Specialist	D/Tpr/Spl.	D/Tpr/Specialist
Trooper	Tpr.	Trooper
Probationary Trooper	P/Tpr.	Probationary Trooper
Motor Carrier Inspector	MC Insp.	MC Inspector
Motor Carrier Lieutenant	MC Lt.	MC Lieutenant
Motor Carrier Specialist Sergeant	MC Spl/Sgt.	MC Spl/Sergeant
Motor Carrier Sergeant	MC Sgt.	MC Sergeant
Motor Carrier Investigator	MC Inv.	MC Investigator
Motor Carrier Officer	MC Ofcr.	MC Officer
Security Sergeant	Sec. Sgt.	Sec/Sergeant
Security Officer	Sec. Ofcr.	Sec/Officer
Recruit	Rec.	Recruit

When using a member's full name, always abbreviate the rank (e.g., Capt. John N. Doe).

When using only the surname, always spell out rank (e.g., Captain Doe).

When addressing correspondence to a retiree of the MSP, add Ret. after the member's name (e.g., Capt. John N. Doe, Ret., or Lieutenant Doe, Ret.)

Do not use rank when addressing an envelope to a member's home address.

In written correspondence, address civilian members with a title (e.g., Mr., Ms., Mx. [mix, em ex], or Ind. [individual]). The title used should align with the civilian's gender identity. It is proper and most respectful to ask what title the civilian would like to be addressed.

Correspondence recipients should be listed in rank order, including civilians.



## General Grammar Guidelines:

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### Pronouns

Pronouns used should align with the person's gender identity. A person's gender identity should not be based on perceived gender expression (e.g., name, appearance).

Common pronouns:

Male pronouns include: he/him/his

Female pronouns include: she/her/hers

Gender neutral pronouns include: they/them/theirs

Members may prefer a pronoun not listed above. The pronoun they identify with should be used by members to be respectful and accommodating of the person's gender identity.

### Dates

Do not use th, rd, or st except when using the day only.

(e.g. "...scheduled on the 22<sup>nd</sup>" rather than "...scheduled on July 22<sup>nd</sup>")

### Telephone Numbers

In order to comply with the Americans with Disability Act, use the following format: 517-241-0407.

### Capitalization

Keep capitalization to a minimum:

*state, city, department* (unless it is a specific department), *national, federal*

*Legislature* and *Governor* are always capitalized.

**Note: When a title is used as part of the name (separated only by commas), it is a proper noun and is capitalized.**

- Capt. Jane Doe, Commander, Training Division
- Capt. Jane Doe, commander of the Training Division
- Capt. Jane Doe, the Training Division commander
- Capt. Jane Doe is the commander of the Training Division

Capitalize all official titles when they precede a person's name (e.g., Capt. Jane Doe or Captain Doe). Do not capitalize titles when they are used without the person's name (e.g., "The captain attended the meeting.").

**Exception: Always capitalize the word "Director" when referring to the MSP Director.**

Do not capitalize a job classification unless it is part of the person's proper and official name or you are referring to the specific job classification.

- Dr. Joseph Smith or Doctor Smith
- Sgt. Jane Smith, aircraft pilot, is a member of the Field Support and Aviation Section.
- The departmental analyst position is currently vacant.
- Jane Doe, an emergency dispatcher, was selected to join the committee.
- We will be creating a new Departmental Technician 10 position for the section.

Capitalize formal titles of acts and laws, but do not capitalize common-noun elements that stand alone in place of a full name.

- A debilitating medical condition, as defined by the Michigan Marihuana Act, can be found in MCL Chapter 333, Section 333.26423. The act was approved in 2008.
- The suspect was charged with operating while intoxicated causing death, a violation of the Michigan Vehicle Code, MCL 257.625(4) ©.

Note: Formal titles of Michigan laws can be found using the Michigan Compiled Laws Basic Search found on the [Michigan Legislature website](#).

When referring to one post by name, capitalize the word, "Post." When referring to two or more posts by name, do not capitalize the word, "post." This same rule applies to divisions and districts (e.g., Monroe, Ionia, and Brighton posts, but Brighton Post. CJIC, FSD, and HR divisions, but Human Resources Division.)

*Department* of State Police, but *departments* of Education and Natural Resources.

### Numbers

Numbers one through ten should be spelled out, unless they need to stand out for quick comprehension. Use numerals for numbers above ten unless used at the beginning of a sentence, then the number should be spelled out.

### Clock Time

Omit colon and zeros with even times (e.g., 8 a.m. rather than 8:00 a.m.); however, this format is acceptable if doing so makes the document aesthetically pleasing.

### Miscellaneous

Spell out district numbers, (e.g., First District; not 1<sup>st</sup> District).  
Use "member" rather than "employee."

Use worksite, one word

Multijurisdictional, one word, no hyphen.

Always capitalize Internet and Intranet

Always use two spaces between sentences.

Always place an acronym after the phrase or words the first time it is used in the document (e.g., Michigan State Police (MSP)). Once an acronym is identified, use the acronym throughout the remainder of the document.



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE  
LANSING

COL. JOSEPH M. GASPER  
DIRECTOR

ATTACHMENT A

July 11, 2020

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Ms. Emily Smith  
174 Hickory Drive  
Troy, Michigan 48083

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Dear Ms. Smith:

¶

Thank you for writing to let me know you were impressed with the service you received from  
Tpr. Jane Doe. I am pleased to hear that she was professional, caring, and informative in her dealings with you.

¶

I will share a copy of your kind letter with Trooper Doe and her supervisors. Again, thank you for writing.

¶

Sincerely,

¶

¶

¶

DIRECTOR

cc: Lt. Col. John Doe  
Capt. John Thomas  
F/Lt. William Moore  
Ms. Julie Jones  
Tpr. Jane Doe



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE  
LANSING

COL. JOSEPH M. GASPER  
DIRECTOR

ATTACHMENT B

July 11, 2020

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Mr. John Smith  
110 Main Street  
Lansing, Michigan 48910

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Dear Mr. Smith:

¶

Your request for an investigation involving questionable occurrences in the area surrounding your residence has been reviewed.

¶

As police officers, we are concerned for the safety and well-being of all citizens in Michigan. It is regrettable that you feel distressed and a sense of insecurity in your home.

¶

I have taken the liberty of referring your letter to Chief John Thomas, Lansing Police Department, as your residence is in their jurisdiction and this matter can best be handled by local officers. Chief Thomas can be reached at 123-456-6789.

¶

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

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Sincerely,

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John C. Doe, Lt. Colonel  
Deputy Director  
Field Operations Bureau



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE  
LANSING

COL. JOSEPH M. GASPER  
DIRECTOR

ATTACHMENT C

January 9, 2020

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Chief John Jones  
Detroit Police Department  
Detroit Public Safety Headquarters  
1301 Third Street, Suite 7S – 751  
Detroit, Michigan 4822

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Dear Chief Jones:

¶

Thank you for your letter concerning the software utilized at the Detroit Detention Center (DDC). The DDC collaboration among the Detroit Police Department, the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC), and the Michigan State Police (MSP) has resulted in many successes. At the core of this collaboration was the use of the Statewide Records Management System (SRMS) hosted by the MSP to capture the business activities at the center. The SRMS project within the DDC began in the summer of 2013 and was successfully brought online through the contributions of all three agencies involved.

¶

The MDOC currently operates the facility using the SRMS software and reports great satisfaction with the performance of the software, the support from the MSP, and the tools put in place by the MSP team. MDOC will remain on the SRMS software and continue to rely on the efficiencies in place for management of what is well known as a very fast-paced environment within the DDC. The MSP is committed to supporting the MDOC and their needs on the SRMS.

¶

This brings us to requesting a meeting to clarify items listed in your letter so we can continue to focus on information sharing to support the interests of all parties in this collaboration. At this time, the Criminal Justice Information Center Director and the SRMS manager will serve as MSP representatives in this matter.

¶

Sincerely,

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Col. Joseph M. Gasper  
Michigan State Police

Heidi Washington, Director  
Michigan Department of Corrections

cc: Mr. James Smith, Assistant Chief, City of Detroit Police Department

**ATTACHMENT D**

**STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE**

**DATE:** April 20, 2020  
**TO:** Col. Jane J. Jones, Director  
**FROM:** Tpr. Sample B. Memo, Lansing Post  
**SUBJECT:** Retirement

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¶

Per Written Directives, I am writing to request regular retirement from the department effective May 31, 2017.

¶

I enlisted in the department on May 31, 1990. My last scheduled workday is May 28, 2020. I request that my name appear on all accouterments as Sample B. Memo.