



**Chapter:** Department Operations  
**Subject:** 19-02 – Chain and Succession of Command  
**Effective:** November 10, 2025  
**Supersedes:** Official Order 19-02, dated October 16, 2024  
**Distribution:** Department Members

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**PURPOSE:** This Order establishes the department's chain of command to ensure work-related directives, assignments, and communications are properly routed through the appropriate levels of authority.

**POLICY:** To ensure clarity and consistency, members shall adhere to the chain of command as required by this Order, and in the absence or incapacitation of a commander, acting commanders shall assume responsibility for their assigned work units in accordance with this Order.

#### **19-02-1 CHAIN OF COMMAND**

- A. The chain of command is the line of authority and responsibility through which work-related directives, assignments, routine communication, and other matters are passed. Each member's chain of command begins with their immediate supervisor and includes each succeeding supervisor or commander ending with the Director.
- B. Each member shall have only one supervisor and unless otherwise required or permitted by this Order or another department written directive, members shall communicate work-related matters through their chain of command.
- C. This section shall not be construed as prohibiting commanders from meeting with or otherwise communicating with or directing the work of members under their command, nor shall this section be construed as prohibiting any member from communicating with any other member when required by operational need.

#### **19-02-2 MEETINGS WITH THE DIRECTOR OR DEPUTY DIRECTORS**

- A. Members may request a personal meeting with the Director or a deputy director. Such requests shall be made through the chain of command to the Director or to a deputy director stating the nature of the subject the member desires to discuss.
- B. When it is in the best interest of the department, as determined by the Director or a deputy director, the Director or a deputy director may accept a direct request for a meeting.

#### **19-02-3 MEETINGS WITH COMMANDERS**

Members may request a personal meeting with their commanders. Such requests shall be made through the chain of command; however, district, division, and section commanders may

accept direct requests when it appears to them that sufficient reasons exist to grant such requests.

#### **19-02-4 ACTING DIRECTOR**

- A. When appropriate, the chief deputy director or a deputy director designated by the Director shall serve as acting director. In the absence of the Director and the deputy directors, the Director shall designate a commissioned officer to serve as acting director.
- (1) An officer serving as acting director shall perform the duties and have the power and authority of the Director, including the authority to issue temporary directives required to meet operational demands. Unless granted to the acting director by the Director, the acting director does not have authority to promote any member of the department or to revise or issue any department rules and regulations, or written directives.
  - (2) An acting director who has been appointed by the Governor to temporarily fill the position of Director has the full authority of the Director unless limited by the conditions of the Governor's appointment.

#### **19-02-5 SUCCESSION OF COMMAND**

- A. In the event the Director is unavailable or incapacitated and an acting director has not been appointed, the following is the succession of command:
- (1) Chief Deputy Director
  - (2) Field Services Bureau Commander
  - (3) State Services Bureau Commander
  - (4) Professional Development Bureau Commander
  - (5) Information and Technology Bureau Commander
  - (6) Chief of Staff
- B. During emergencies, disasters, or for drill purposes, the succession of command requires an enlisted officer to assume the position of acting director. In the event a civilian member holds one of the above positions, that position would not participate in the succession of command.
- C. The member assuming the position of acting director shall have full authority and responsibility to administer the public safety needs of the State of Michigan.

#### **19-02-6 ACTING COMMANDERS**

##### **A. Planned Temporary Absences**

When a commander will be temporarily absent (e.g., vacation, military deployment, medical leave) from their area of responsibility and unable to carry out their duties and responsibilities due to that absence, they shall appoint a member under their command to serve as the acting commander.

##### **B. Unplanned Absences**

When a commander is unable to carry out their duties and responsibilities due to incapacitation or other unplanned absence, the assistant commander or the work unit will serve as the acting commander until or unless another member is appointed by the next

higher level in the chain of command. When a work unit has more than one assistant commander, the senior assistant commander shall assume command. When a work unit does not have an assistant commander, the senior member at the next level down the chain of command shall assume command.

C. Departure of a Commander

When a commander vacates their position (e.g., retirement, transfer, reassignment), an acting commander shall be appointed by the next higher level in the chain of command.

**19-02-7 ACTING AUTHORITY**

A member who has been designated to serve in an acting capacity in accordance with this Order shall have the authority and responsibility of the position, provided it is not inconsistent with department written directives.

**19-02-8 COMMAND AUTHORITY**

When members on patrol, desk duty, detail, or other assignment are of equal levels, the member with the greatest seniority shall be in command unless orders to the contrary have been issued by members at a higher level in the chain of command. If such members are of equal rank and seniority, the commander shall designate one member to be in charge and responsible in all cases.

**19-02-9 SENIORITY**

For purposes of determining command authority, seniority shall be determined first by rank and level, second by length of service in rank and level, and third by length of service in preceding ranks and levels considered successively, when necessary.

DIRECTOR

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**Annual Review Responsibility:** Transparency and Accountability Division

**Accreditation Standards:** CALEA 12.1.2