



# POLICY AND PROCEDURE NO. 55

## Specialized Units

Massachusetts Police Accreditation Standards:  
16.2.1, 16.2.2, 16.2.3, 33.6.1

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4 Pages

### 1. PURPOSE:

This policy and procedure statement provides guidance for the formation, deactivation, selection, supervision, and evaluation of the department's specialized units and the personnel assigned to those units. Supervisory responsibilities include ensuring the appropriateness of unit activities, maintaining operational effectiveness, and ensuring accountability of supervisors and officers to the department and the community.

### 2. POLICY:

The Worcester Police Department assigns most personnel to general patrol duties. However, certain roles require personnel with specific training and experience to address particular types of crimes. Specialized unit assignments require additional training and experience. These assignments may involve confidentiality due to the nature of the investigations. Personnel selection and supervision for these units are based on operational needs.

The Chief of Police determines the formation or deactivation of specialized units based on community needs and available resources. Input may be sought from city officials, community stakeholders, police personnel, and affected populations.

Most specialized unit positions are designated as "select" positions and are filled based on job performance. Continued assignments are contingent on ongoing performance. Personnel are assigned based on demonstrated ability to perform the required duties.

### 3. SPECIALTY UNIT FORMATION AND DEACTIVATION:

Specialized units are formed based on community needs and departmental mission. Some units are mandated by law, while others are created in response to specific crime trends or conditions. Units may be permanent or temporary. **MPAC 16.2.3**

Due to limited training resources, training is provided to selected personnel with the necessary skills. Personnel assigned to these units are expected to maintain and develop their skills. **MPAC 33.6.1**

All units must adhere to departmental policies and procedures and comply with applicable legal and professional standards.

Each specialized unit must have a clearly defined mission and scope. The unit's role within the department must be clearly articulated to ensure coordination, reduce redundancy, and support

effective investigations. Collaboration with other units is encouraged to support information sharing and coordination.

Depending on the unit's function, coordination with local government and community stakeholders may be necessary. Some functions are performed by police, others by external organizations, and some through joint efforts.

Before deactivating a specialized unit, its functions must be reassigned. Input from affected communities and stakeholders should be obtained to ensure continuity of service.

#### **4. PERSONNEL SELECTION AND SUPERVISION:**

Assignment to specialized units may involve increased responsibilities and these positions may attract personnel seeking advancement.

The selection process for specialized units must be open, clearly defined, and transparent. Selections are made by the Chief of Police, the relevant Deputy Chief, the Unit Commander, and the applicant's current command staff. Selections are based on qualifications and past performance. **MPAC 16.2.2**

When a position within a specialized unit becomes available, the following process shall be followed:

##### **A. Specialized Unit Selection Process**

The position shall be advertised department wide. The notification will include the mandatory qualifications and the desired training, experience, and skills for the position. A minimum number of years of police experience may be specified. **MPAC 16.2.2**

Personnel who meet the stated qualifications may apply by submitting a letter of interest to the Unit Commander of the specialized unit. Applicants must also submit a current resume outlining relevant training, experience, and skills.

Upon receipt of application materials, the Unit Commander shall review the qualifications of each applicant and identify any relevant skills or abilities applicable to the unit's function.

The Unit Commander shall review the applicant's past performance, including: Attendance; BOPS history; Complaint history; Disciplinary history; POST record; Performance evaluations; Experience working with the community; Tactical performance; Problem-solving ability; Teamwork; Communication skills; Relevant technical aptitude; Compatibility with unit operations; Alignment with departmental mission and responsibilities.

If the applicant meets the criteria, the Unit Commander shall consult with the applicant's current Unit Commander for a recommendation regarding the transfer.

If recommended, the applicant shall participate in an interview with the supervisory staff of the specialized unit or its superior command staff. The interview process may include: A review of position expectations; Practical scenario testing; Assessment of communication, teamwork, and understanding of the unit's mission.

The Unit Commander shall receive the interview results and recommendations.

The Unit Commander shall consult with the Chief of Police and the appropriate Deputy Chief to make the final selection.

Selected personnel shall be notified by the Unit Commander.

Personnel not selected shall also be notified and may receive feedback for future applications.

### **B. Bid Positions (as defined by collective bargaining agreements)**

Positions designated as bid positions shall be advertised department-wide. The notification will include the mandatory qualifications and the desired training, experience, and skills. No minimum years of experience are required for bid positions. **MPAC 16.2.2**

Qualified personnel may apply by submitting a letter of interest and a current resume to the Unit Commander.

The Unit Commander shall review the qualifications and identify any relevant skills or abilities applicable to the unit's function.

The Unit Commander shall review the applicant's past performance, including: Attendance; BOPS history; Complaint history; Disciplinary history; POST record; Performance evaluations; Experience working with the community; Tactical performance; Problem-solving ability; Teamwork; Communication skills; Relevant technical aptitude; Compatibility with unit operations; Alignment with departmental mission and responsibilities.

If the applicant meets the criteria, the Unit Commander shall consult with the applicant's current Unit Commander for a recommendation.

If recommended, the applicant shall participate in an interview with the supervisory staff of the specialized unit or its superior command staff. The interview process may include: A review of position expectations; Practical scenario testing; Assessment of communication, teamwork, and understanding of the unit's mission.

The Unit Commander shall receive the interview results and recommendations.

The Unit Commander shall consult with the Chief of Police and the appropriate Deputy Chief to make the final selection.

If the most senior qualified applicant meets the requirements, they shall be assigned to the position.

If the applicant does not meet the requirements for the position, they may be bypassed based on documented performance concerns.

Selected personnel shall be notified by the Unit Commander.

Personnel not selected shall also be notified and may receive feedback for future applications.

### **C. Supervisor Selection for Specialized Units**

Supervisors of specialized units perform leadership functions within the unit and serve as part of the broader agency structure. In addition to possessing technical skills relevant to the unit's discipline, they are responsible for coordinating between the specialized unit and other units within the department. They are also responsible for the performance and conduct of the officers they supervise.

Supervisors are expected to manage personnel, establish operational standards consistent with department policies, and oversee daily unit functions. Due to the nature of specialized unit

operations, supervisors are required to plan and implement risk mitigation strategies to support officer and public safety.

Supervisor selections for specialized units will be conducted by the Chief of Police, Deputy Chief of Police, and the Unit Commander, following the established selection procedures.

## **5. MANAGEMENT, EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Periodic evaluation of specialized units is required to assess their necessity and operational effectiveness. Evaluation criteria may include: **MPAC 16.2.1**

Identification of the original problem or condition the unit was formed to address.

Assessment of whether the unit's mission remains aligned with its original purpose.

Determination of whether conditions have changed, requiring modification or deactivation of the unit.

Evaluation of the unit's impact on the identified problem.

Metrics used for evaluation must be specific, measurable, and aligned with the unit's mission and departmental standards. These may include:

Quantitative metrics: arrests, recoveries, citations, interventions, etc.

Qualitative metrics: changes in crime rates, community safety indicators, and community feedback.

Additional evaluation considerations include:

Effectiveness of risk assessment and mitigation strategies.

Responsiveness to community and stakeholder input.

Existence and enforcement of unit-level policies and procedures consistent with department standards.

Availability and implementation of advanced and ongoing training for unit personnel. **MPAC 33.6.1**

Per:

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