


Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs User Resource Guide in PowerDMS

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) has teamed up with PowerDMS to provide WASPC Standards in an electronic format through PowerDMS Standards. These guidelines are best practice **recommendations** and, if followed, can enhance the review process for both the agency and WASPC assessors.

The WASPC Standards Manual



Your WASPC Standards Manual must be downloaded to your PowerDMS site. **Only one user should download the standards manual.** Once downloaded, the standards manual will populate in PowerDMS for all designated users. This is a two-step process. You must download the manual before you can build your first assessment.

Step 1:

- a. Navigate to your **Administration Menu**, located in the “**Welcome, Name**” dropdown menu.
- b. Locate “*Standards Manual Communities*” in the list of items in the Administration Menu.
- c. Click “Standards Manual Communities” and locate the WASPC community on the table (you may need to navigate through the pages. All accrediting bodies are in alphabetical order).
- d. Click 

A representative from PowerDMS will approve your access request to the WASPC Community, which will trigger an email informing you that your request for membership has been approved. Please allow up to 24 hours or the next business day for completion of Step 1. Step 1 must be completed before advancing to Step 2.

Step 2:

- a. Navigate to your **Administration Menu**, located in the “**Welcome, Name**” dropdown menu.
- b. Locate “Standards Manual Communities” in the list of items in the Administration Menu.
- c. Click “Standards Manual Communities” and locate the WASPC community, which will be at the top of the list on the first page.
- d. Click  then click  next to the manual.

Please allow at least an hour for the manual to download to your PowerDMS site. Once downloaded, you are ready to Create your Assessment.

Click [HERE](#) for a Video on Subscribing to your Standards Manual or [HERE](#) for the article. Click [HERE](#) for how to open an assessment.

Naming of Assessments

When naming your assessment, add the manual acronym and the start month/year of your assessment cycle.

Example: *AGENCY NAME: ASSESSMENT DATE RANGE*

WASPC: 01/2026 – 12/2026 (Initial assessment)

WASPC: 01/2026 – 12/2029 (Re-Accrediting assessment)

Naming Conventions, Definitions, and Labels

1. Attachments

All attachments should have a prefix and a brief description of the document. Prefixes act as “keywords” that benefit you as you build your assessment. First, they inform your assessors about the type of document they are reviewing. Second, they simplify searching, filtering, and copying attachments from one assessment cycle to the next.

Agencies should select a prefix for their documents which guide practices (i.e., policy and procedures) and a prefix for those documents which prove compliance with the standards or expected practice (i.e., annual report). The key is to be consistent in how you use prefixes throughout your assessment.

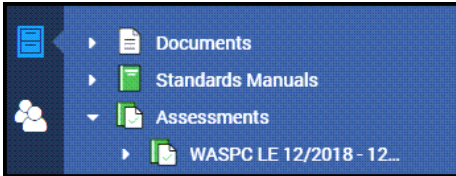
2. Definitions

- Policy – Policy can be agency or community policy, plan, procedure, rule or regulation, general or special order, training directive, contracts, city / county / state personnel rules, state or federal laws, or other document which is binding upon agency personnel. The form of the policy can be what the agency has determined best fits its quality management system.
- Proof – Proofs can be intra-departmental memorandum, computer printouts, screen shots, job descriptions, letters from citizens, photographs, videos, rosters, forms, investigative reports, newspaper clippings, budget documents and logs, and other evidence which can be examined periodically and/or continuously to confirm practices are being properly implemented.
- Simple Note – In PowerDMS, a simple note is an attachment type used to provide WASPC assessors with additional information about compliance with the standard.

3. Accessing Standards

You can navigate to your standards in several ways. *You must have the appropriate assignment and/or security privileges to access standards.* For information on security privileges and assignments, see the article [Security – Assessments](#).

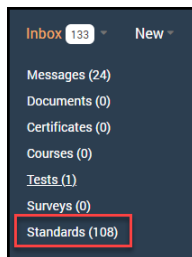
1. From the Blue Menu under the Assessment root



2. From your To Do List

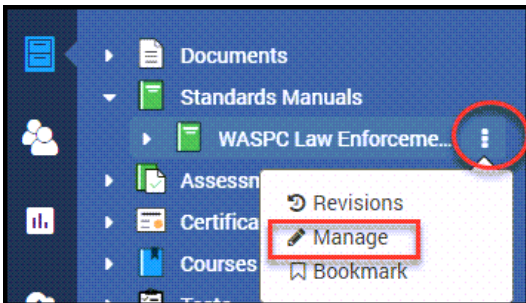


3. From your Inbox under Standards

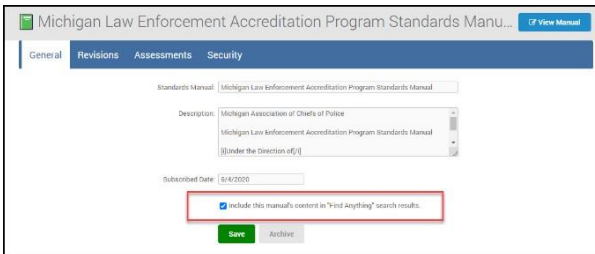


You may also filter your standards when looking for specific topics or standards. The most efficient way to find a keyword or standard is to use the *Find Anything* search engine within the blue menu. To use this feature, you must ensure your standards manual is searchable.

1. Use the triple dot menu to the right of your standards manual in the blue menu and select *Manage*



2. Ensure the box next to “include this manual’s content in “Find Anything” search results is checked.



4. **Order of Presentation**

The order of presentation should be in a logical order in terms of attachment types and the year of the assessment cycle.

TIP: Present POLICY documentation first, then PROOFS (by year with the oldest year on top), then any Simple Notes.

Example:

1. POLICY
2. PROOFS (Y1, Y2, Y3)
3. Simple Notes



5. Labels

- Label attachments with the agency's preferred prefixes and a brief description of the document.

Example: POLICY: Policy 11000 Incident Management

- Labels for proofs should include the assessment year of the documentation.

Example: Proof Y1 and/or Y2 and/or Y3



- Label highlights with language that informs the assessor what information is contained in the highlighted material.
- For bulleted standards, include the bullet letter in the highlight label in addition to the language that informs the assessor what information is contained in the highlighted material.



- Label Simple Notes with a prefix identified above and any justifications or additional information that the assessor may need.

The Prefix "NO" represents a Non-Occurance

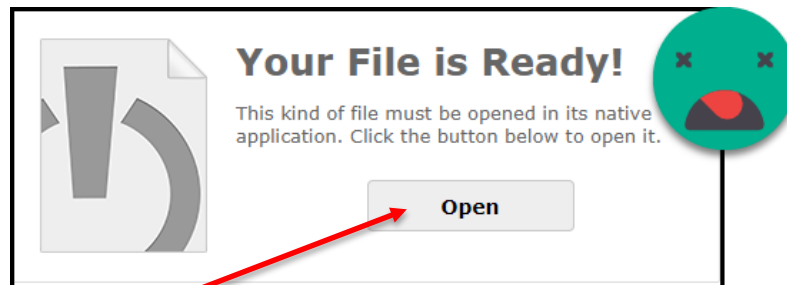
NO: Bullets a,b,c,d,e,f, Y2020 2023
During the current accreditation assessment period, no grievances were filed against the agency. Interview: Lt. Hayes Professional Standards Manager. Accreditation Manager

6. Standards with Bullet Points

PowerDMS recommends attaching a document only once to the standard. When you add the attachment, you will see checkboxes next to the standard root and each subsection. You must select at least one checkbox next to the standard. PowerDMS recommends “anchoring” the attachment to the standards statement and “mapping” highlights to all applicable bullet points. This process ensures attachments copy appropriately when updates are made to the standards manual.

7. Best Practice for Attaching Uploaded Files

PowerDMS allows for any file type (i.e., Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, PNG, etc.) to be attached to a standard as an “Upload File” attachment type. However, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint file types will not be viewable as documents in the assessment. In fact, your assessor will see:

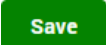


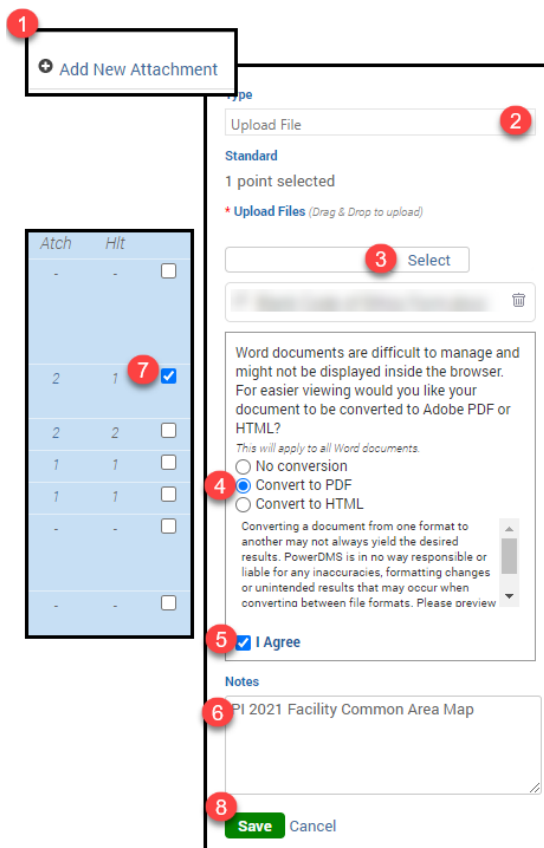
Clicking the “OPEN” button will launch the computer’s Word, Excel, or PowerPoint application and open the document. You will not be able to use PowerDMS’ highlighting tool, and you risk the assessor downloading your proprietary (and possibly) confidential document.

PowerDMS recommends you convert these file types to a PDF format as you attach them to the assessment by following these steps.

1. Click “Add New Attachment”
2. Select “Upload File” from the dropdown list
3. Select the file by browsing your computer files or dragging and dropping the file into the box indicated
4. If a Word, Excel, or PowerPoint file is uploaded, a pop-up box appears. Select “Convert to PDF” as seen in the picture. When you select “Convert to PDF,” the box will expand

and “I Agree” appears at the bottom in blue lettering. You **MUST** select “I Agree” to continue with the conversion.

5. Check “I Agree”
6. If the title of the document needs editing to adhere to the best practices outlined in this resource guide for prefixes and labeling, edit the text that appears in the **NOTES** field, directly below the conversion pop-up box.
7. Ensure the uploaded file is anchored to the standard statement (see [Section 6 Bulleted Standards](#)).
8. Click 



Your Word, Excel, or PowerPoint document will now display correctly and allow you to use the PowerDMS highlight tool.

8. Helpful Links

- How to [Highlight](#) documents

- How to [Archive](#) past assessments
- How to Copy [Attachments](#) and [Tasks](#) to a new assessment

Best Practice for Assessment Roles

PowerDMS uses roles in a WASPC assessment: *Accreditation Manager*, *Accreditation Team*, *Accreditation Mentor*, and *WASPC Assessor*. These roles provide you with the ability to create “show or final files,” “working or dummy files,” files in a single location. When you add attachments to your assessment, you **MUST** select a role before PowerDMS will save the attachment. We do this so you can control which attachments you want your WASPC assessors to review during your assessment.

Note: Roles are not job titles or agency job functions! A good way to understand assessment roles is to think of them as a set of files. Each role is an imaginary filing cabinet that you can add documents to and designate who may “see” those documents (i.e., show files, working files).

When you assign users, accreditation mentors, subject matter experts, WASPC assessors, or yourself to an assessment, you select a role and a level of participation responsibilities for the specific role. This means you are granting these individuals permission either to add or merely to observe attachments in the role. If a person is not assigned to a role, they will not see or interact with any of the attachments saved within the specific role.

To assist you with understanding roles, we have provided the following definitions:

1. Accreditation Manager Role (“show” or “final” files): Attachments made to the Accreditation Manager role are attachments intended to be viewed by WASPC Assessor, Accreditation Team, or Accreditation Mentor to review during an assessment.
2. Accreditation Team Role (working files): Attachments to this role are not reviewed by WASPC assessors, but act as a repository for compliance documentation which **may** be used to show compliance during the assessment. Below are some reasons to use this role:
 - a. You have other people collecting documentation for you and you will need to review the compliance document before approving it for the assessment,
 - b. You do not want other users assigned to the assessment to access the documentation your assessors will review.

Ultimately, the use of roles is your choice. However, PowerDMS recommends the following:


1. Select Accreditation Manager role for all policies and proof of compliance attachments you want your WASPC assessor, or accreditation mentor to review.

2. Only assign agency users who are responsible for the agency's accreditation program to the Accreditation Manager role to *participate*. You may wish to give **Observe** responsibility to other agency personnel so they can see which attachments will be shown to the WASPC assessors. WASPC assessors **MUST** have *observe* responsibility for the Accreditation Manager role.
3. Have agency users who help you collect documentation and build the assessment to the Accreditation Team role. Once you review the attachments and approve them for audit, change the role of the attachment to the Accreditation Manager role.
4. Consider assigning subject matter experts or other personnel responsible for providing documentation to the assessment in the Accreditation Team role. This will streamline how proofs of compliance are transmitted to you. For example, the subject matter expert will add the proof of compliance to the assessment, the accreditation program manager reviews the attachment and moves the approved proof to the Accreditation Manager role.

Preparing for WASPC Assessments

To prepare for your WASPC assessment, you will need to add WASPC assessors to your PowerDMS assessment. In PowerDMS it is also best practice to use groups to manage your users, even users that will be in your site temporarily (i.e., WASPC assessors).

To add a new user for the WASPC assessment:

- Create a group for your WASPC assessors (if one has not been created already). The name of the group is your agency's decision. Navigate to the **NEW** create dropdown menu at the top of your homepage and select **Group**. Give the Group a name and click .

Example Group Name: WASPC Assessors

- Using the triple dot menu to the right of the group's name, select *Add User* from the dropdown menu.
- Complete the required fields on the New User page. Required fields include First Name, Last Name, and Username. You will need to create a password for your assessors. You also have the option of entering an END DATE. The end date will archive the user automatically, freeing up a user license. These steps will create the user directly into the appropriate group.

- You will need to email the WASPC assessors and provide the login credentials (Site Key, Username, and Password). **It is your responsibility to communicate this information to the WASPC assessors.**
- Do **NOT** enter an **email address** for your assessors. This creates an unnecessary step when they log into your PowerDMS site.

The following steps outline best practices for adding WASPC assessors to your assessment. These practices are necessary to ensure the WASPC assessors can review your final compliance documentation while having the ability to add simple notes and set a final compliance status to your assessment.

Step 1: Navigate to your assessment and click on the root of the standards manual.

Step 2: Click on the “Assignments” tab

Step 3: Click **Add New Assignment**

Step 4: In the **User / Group** dropdown field, type the group name you created for the WASPC assessors and select the group from the dropdown menu to populate the field.

Step 5: In the **Role** dropdown field, select *WASPC Assessor* from the list.

Step 6: In the **Responsibility** dropdown field, select *Participate* from the list.

Step 7: Click **Save**

Step 8: Click **Add New Assignment**

Step 9: In the **User / Group** dropdown field, type the group name you created for your WASPC assessors and select the group from the dropdown menu to populate the field. **This is the same group you added to the WASPC Assessor role in steps 4 – 6 above.**

Step 10: In the **Role** dropdown field, select *Accreditation Manager* from the list.

Step 11: In the **Responsibility** dropdown field, select *Observe* from the list.

Step 12: Click 

Your mock or WASPC assessors **MUST** have the ability to PARTICIPATE in their role (WASPC Assessor) to set status, clear tasks, and add simple notes. WASPC assessors **MUST** have the ability to OBSERVE the role all your attachments are in, which is recommended to be the Accreditation Manager role.

More information on adding WASPC assessors to your assessment is found in the article, [Preparing for Final Assessments](#), located within the PowerDMS Success Community.

DO NOT archive your assessors until you have received the final report from the WASPC Program Director. Your assessor may need access to your assessment between the time they complete the document review and the time they author the final report.

Archiving the Assessment

Do not archive the assessment until the award of accreditation is delivered from WASPC.

If your agency has only one assessment license, consider using your PowerDMS Folders to house your compliance documents until you can archive your assessment and open a new assessment.

To archive an assessment, refer to the article, [Archiving your Assessment](#), in the PowerDMS Success Community.

Tips for Empowering Assessment Continuity

One of the most difficult job functions within an agency is to establish continuity for an accreditation program. As agency accreditation managers change, the accreditation process used to achieve an award of accreditation changes. PowerDMS has the tools, regardless of the modules your agency purchased, to establish continuity for your accreditation process. Use the PowerDMS features below as suggestions to maintain continuity for your agency's accreditation program.

1. **Folders.** You have the freedom to build a folder structure not only to house your policy manual but also to house your compliance documentation. Housing your process indicators or secondary documentation within PowerDMS serves many functions to promote accreditation program continuity. Below are a few examples:
 - a. Encourage agency personnel to upload the proof as a document into an assigned folder in lieu of email or using a shared drive. ALL PowerDMS agencies have access to house as many documents as desired in PowerDMS!
 - b. Create historical records for your process indicators using folders. This will enable users to reference previous compliance documentation without providing administrative rights to an achieved assessment.
 - c. These documents may undergo a workflow for approval or as a reminder for time sensitive standards.
2. **Certificates.** Use this versatile feature to track equipment, driver's licenses, fleet vehicles, etc. Or use them as a reminder to document a time sensitive standard.
3. **Review Workflows.** Review workflows not only remind policy writers to review documents for validity but also remind accreditation managers of time sensitive standards.
4. **Courses.** Accreditation Manager training can be built specific to an agency's accreditation program using PowerDMS courses. These courses may be assigned to any user. You can also create trainings on how to upload a proof to a folder and how to identify a good proof of compliance.
5. **Survey.** Surveys are great instruments for gathering input for policy development.
6. **Tests.** Tests may be attached to a policy to test document knowledge. Tests promote policy knowledge and are another step for agency indemnification when faced with complaints or legal action.