	NEW PALTZ POLICE DEPARTMENT Policy and Procedures	
	<i>Subject</i> 2.3 Written Directive System	
	ISSUE: October 18, 2009	EFFECTIVE: October 18, 2009
	REVISED: September 29, 2017	RESCINDS:
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Written Directive System

I. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to define the structure and application of this agency's written directive system (WDS) and provide officers and other employees with a better understanding of its importance, use, and applicability.

II. POLICY

A written directive system has been established in this agency in order to inform officers of what is expected of them in the performance of their duties, to provide guidance to them in performing such duties, and to establish the basis for employee accountability and the means to fairly evaluate officer and unit performance. It is the purpose of this policy to formally document the structure and component parts of the written directive system in a manner that will increase its utility and application and provide for continuity in its development.

III. DEFINITIONS


Written Directives: Written directives are position statements by or authorized through the Chief of Police that guide or direct the actions and activities of officers. Directives encompass all means by which this agency communicates instructions, orders and duty requirements to its members, to include policies, procedures, rules, regulations, general orders, special orders, memoranda, and instructional materials.

Policies: Policies summarize the department's position on specific matters. Policies are concise position statements based on underlying organizational principles, goals, values, and operational philosophies. They are designed for broad general direction and guidance primarily designed for use by all members of the department.

Procedures: Procedures build on the foundation of policy statements to provide specific guidance on required, desired, or preferred methods of operations or conduct. Procedures are more detailed instruction on means and methods for carrying out the policy directive and generally draw the boundaries of permissible officer discretion in performing specific tasks or duties.

Rules: As opposed to procedure statements that often provide officer flexibility and discretion, rules are characterized by their inflexibility. Rules define situations where no deviation or exceptions to agency-authorized actions are permitted.

Terms Limiting Officer Discretion: There are three categories of terms used in written directives of this agency. Personnel responsible for the development of such directives and officers who carry them

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out shall be aware of the limitations on officer discretion that these terms convey. These terms are classified as *judgmental, discouraging, and prohibitive* in nature.

- (1) *Judgmental:* The word “may” is used to convey the utmost discretion to officers. “May” indicates that officers should employ their best judgment in addressing a situation by relying on experience, training, the stated mission and values of this agency, and the general guidance provided in statements of agency policy.
- (2) *Discouraging:* The word “should” or “should not” is used to convey the agency’s desire for officer actions in given circumstances. Directives should be followed whenever reasonably possible. However, it is recognized that exceptions to desired actions can be anticipated in these circumstances that could require alternative action. Officers are therefore authorized whenever reasonable to use limited discretion to deal effectively with the situation or problem.
- (3) *Restrictive or Prohibitive:* The terms “shall” or “shall not” or “will” or “will not” impose absolute requirements or prohibitions on officer actions. Considering that the full set of circumstances surrounding many situations confronted by officers cannot be fully predicted, such terms must be used with care and with the understanding that failure to abide by such restrictions may result in disciplinary action. Where deemed appropriate, however, these terms may appear in policies, and procedures, and rules.

IV. PROCEDURES


A. Directives Development and Approval

1. The Chief of Police is vested with the authority to issue, modify or approve all agency policy.
2. Maintenance of the written directive system is assigned to the department’s Accreditation Program Manager or an officer designated by the Chief. In coordination with affected divisions and units, this officer shall be responsible for organization, review, revision, update, and purging of the agency policy manual on a continuous basis and at a minimum of once during a five year accreditation period.
3. Sergeants and Detectives may, with the approval of the Chief, issue directives through memoranda or special orders that have bearing only on the specific functions or operations of their area(s) of responsibility. Such directives shall be consistent with established agency policy and procedures.
4. It is the concurrent responsibility of all supervisors to ensure that policies, procedures and other directives affecting their area(s) of responsibility reflect the best practices for

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accomplishment of organizational and division activities, duties and responsibilities. To this end, supervisors and their designees are responsible for ensuring that

- a. required development, updates, and refinements of all agency policies and procedures affecting their area(s) of responsibility are identified and that these requirements are forwarded in a timely manner to the Accreditation Program Manager and
 - b. A written explanation and justification of proposed and currently active directives is prepared and kept current. This justification/discussion may include but is not limited to the legal basis and requirements for the policy; reference to and adherence to professional standards or practices, compliance with agency philosophies, directives, standards, and protocols; and related information that supports, explains, and substantiates the policy position.
5. Development and refinement of agency policy and procedures shall be coordinated by the Accreditation Program Manager. That office or officer shall forward drafts of such documents for review and comment to a committee of affected agency personnel as designated by the Chief prior to their implementation.
 6. Copies of proposed changes to agency policy and procedures shall be distributed via email for general comment by agency personnel for a period of ten days.
 7. Final drafts of policy and procedure statements and supporting justification documents and personnel comments shall be forwarded to the Chief or his or her designee for approval or other action.
 8. Approved policies, procedures, rules, and special orders shall be distributed to all sworn personnel and other appropriate members who are required to document that they have received, read, and understand the directive.
 - a. This will be accomplished by providing every employee an electronic copy of the New Paltz Police Department Policy and Procedure manual and placing an electronic copy of the manual in the “Company Folder” utilized and accessible by all personnel.
 - b. As additions, deletions or modifications are required; they will be electronically emailed to all members, a copy placed in the department manual folder in the “Company Folder” by the Accreditation Program Manager.
 - c. Sergeants will speak with members at roll call briefing and verify they received the policy, reviewed it and had an opportunity to ask questions about it and understand it. When necessary, roll call or other training regarding the policy shall be conducted concurrently with policy distribution. The completed dissemination log will be forwarded to the Accreditation Manager for filing.

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B. Manual Components


The department's policy and procedure manual shall include the following primary components:

1. Purpose of the Policy Manual:
Describes the purpose, use and applicability of the manual.
2. Organization of the Manual:
Identifies the primary component parts of the manual such as agency organization, administration, operations, support services, investigations, and the manner in which individual and complimentary series of policy statements are grouped and numbered.
3. Table of Contents:
Sequential listing of topics covered in the manual and their location in the document.
4. Department's Source of Legal Authority:
The statutory authority granting police powers to the department from municipal, county, and/or state government.
5. Police Officer's Code of Conduct:
The Police Officer's Code of Conduct as officially adopted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.
6. Agency Mission and Values Statement:
This department's overall mission statement and the values adopted by the department that form the foundation for policy, procedures, and rules.
7. Policy and Procedure Statements:
Individual statements of agency policy and accompanying procedures with regard to duties, responsibilities, and tasks of departmental officers and civilian personnel.
8. Topical Index:
An index of subjects, topics, and issues addressed in the manual, organized in alphabetical order by key-word(s).
9. Authorized Forms:
An index to and samples of all forms authorized for use by this department.

C. Organization of Policy and Procedure Statements


Each policy and procedure statement will contain the following information:

1. Name of the Department:
Policy statements will identify the issuing agency on each page of the document.
2. Type of Directive:
Directives will be designated as policies, procedures, rules, or special orders.
3. Subject:

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Policies, procedures, and rules will be identified by the topic or issue under consideration.

4. **Policy Number:**
The decimal or other number identifying the sequential placement of the policy in the manual.
5. **Effective Date**
Indicates the date the policy will be placed in force.
6. **Review Date**
The date on which the policy is required to undergo formal review, though modifications may be made at any time as required. Policies are required to undergo review on a yearly basis unless otherwise designated.
7. **Authority**
Signature or initials of the chief or other designated departmental executive indicating final approval of the policy.
8. **NYS Accreditation Standard**
Reference to the relevant standard defined by the NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation Program that deals with this policy topic or issue.
9. **Number of Pages**
The total number of pages contained in the policy statement or rule.
10. **Policy and Procedure Statement**
Each policy and procedure statement will conform to the following format and provide the indicated type of information:
 - d. **Purpose**
The policy will be introduced by a succinct (generally one-line) statement concerning what the policy is about and what it is attempting to relate.
 - e. **Policy**
The policy statement identifies a problem, need or issue and provides guiding principles for exercising judgment. Rather than providing officers with precise guidance as found in procedures, the policy statement establishes the rationale and overall approach to a problem, situation, issue or concern. As such, it often draws upon the agency's philosophy and values to provide direction.
 - f. **Definitions**
New or unfamiliar terms or words will be defined. This includes new, uncommon, or unusual terms, expressions, phrases, to include words or phrases used in law or not generally used in the police profession.

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- g. **Procedures**
Procedures will be included in each policy statement to the degree necessary to provide officers with sufficient guidance to carry out the policy in accordance with agency requirements and desires. Procedures provide a method for performing an operation or means for proceeding on a course of action.