





POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

	WRITTEN DIRECTIVE SYSTEM	
	POLICY NUMBER: 12-2	ISSUING AUTHORITY 
	EFFECTIVE DATE: June 12, 2025	Christine A. Elow Police Commissioner

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The Cambridge Police Department establishes this written directive system under the authority of the Police Commissioner to provide guidance to all members of the department, sworn, non-sworn, and civilian, and adopts as its foundation the principles of procedural justice including fairness, transparency, impartiality, and inclusion. These directives serve as the basis for training, the means to fairly evaluate staff performance, a reference for the legal basis of police activity, and language for conveying the philosophy of the department.

A well-written and well-organized policies and procedures manual can provide:

- A. direction to staff by communicating the agency's values and mission;
- B. consistency and professionalism by standardizing the way staff carries out their duties;
- C. the basis for comprehensive staff training;
- D. documentation for the department's defense in court action;
- E. a mechanism for achieving compliance with accreditation standards; and
- F. a means to convey to the public the workings of the department.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Cambridge Police Department to:

- A. create and maintain a single written directive system in a manner that is accessible to all staff and useful to them in carrying out their duties;
- B. vest only in the Office of the Commissioner the authority to issue and revise written directives;
- C. engage members of the department at all levels in the development and review of written directives; and

- D. simplify the written directive system such that all standing directives are included and memorialized in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Policy*: A broad statement that summarizes the department's position on a specific matter. Policies are designed to provide general direction and guidance for all members of the department over a broad spectrum of responsibilities. Policies also provide a broad declaration of agency values, goals, and mission, or a statement regarding the intent of the law.
- B. *Procedures*: The step-by-step application or requirements for enacting the policy; detailed instructions on means and methods for carrying out policy. Procedures generally draw the boundaries and limits of permissible discretion in performing specific tasks.
- C. *Written Directive*: A general term encompassing the various sections of the Policies and Procedures Manual that stay in place until amended or rescinded. A written directive is a position statement by or authorized through the Police Commissioner that guides or directs the actions and activities of the members of the department. Written directives are one of the primary means by which the agency communicates instructions and duty requirements to its members. Other temporary documents such as assignments, memos, and announcements that serve to provide useful, timely, and time-sensitive information shall be referred to by their specific function and shall expire on a specified date or at the end of the assignment.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. 12.2.1 (M) The Written Directive System
 - 1. The Cambridge Police Department has a written directive system that includes the following.
 - 2. The department values and mission statements are included in policy 1-1 Law Enforcement Role and Authority.
 - 3. As a Department Head for the City of Cambridge, the Police Commissioner holds the responsibility for all actions taken by members of the department. As such, the Commissioner is the sole authorizing agent within the department to issue, modify, and approve policies and procedures.
 - 4. The Police Commissioner, the Superintendent of the Operations Division, and the Superintendent of the Support Services Division additionally have the authority to issue Temporary Orders. Temporary Orders are intended to address short-term administrative or operational issues, including, but not limited to, seasonal uniform changes or other adjustments to procedures, that are necessary to maintain public safety and the operational efficiency of the department. Temporary Orders shall be indexed chronologically, distributed to affected personnel via email, and made available on PowerDMS and the

department's intranet. Temporary Orders shall include an expiration date and be reviewed on an annual basis, at a minimum, to ensure they remain necessary and relevant.

5. For the purposes of this standard, the policy and procedures statements included in the Policies and Procedures manual are the only standing written directives. All other directives, either verbal or written, carry the weight of ranked authority; however, they shall be limited in scope and time and shall expire at the end of their useful life.
 - a. Each policy approved for dissemination shall bear the signature of the Commissioner and an effective date. Drafts of policies in circulation for review will bear neither a signature nor an effective date.
 - b. The Commissioner may designate members of the Command Staff to be the final reviewers who will provide advice regarding the readability, teachability, and defensibility of each policy document that comes to the Office of the Commissioner for consideration.
 - c. The Accreditation Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that whenever an accreditation standard calls for a written directive or procedures, the Policies and Procedures Manual addresses the standard in a manner that meets or exceeds expectations.
6. Other than the Commissioner, no member of the department is authorized to issue, modify, or approve policies and procedures.
7. Policies and Procedures shall be formatted as follows.
 - a. At the top of each document is a header to include the title, the number, the effective date, and the Commissioner's signature. The numbering system is designed to follow accreditation chapter titles.
 - b. Under the header is a section titled *General Considerations and Guidelines*, which provides the values and mission of the department as well as best practices. In many cases, the information in this section is taken from accreditation chapter introductions or commentary.
 - c. The second section includes the policy statements, usually no more than six in number.
 - d. Section three provides important and helpful definitions.
 - e. Section four includes detailed procedures. This section is designed to follow accreditation standards in sequence making it easy to follow for both the accreditation manager and assessors.
8. All written directives as defined in this policy shall be stored and managed in PowerDMS.
 - a. The Table of Contents will serve as an index. Policies will be identified with clear titles and numbers and placed within the manual under appropriate and logical chapter headings.

- b. The Accreditation Manager shall be responsible for keeping the manual up to date, including purging and archiving older versions of documents as they are revised and replaced.
 - c. The policy revision process may be initiated at any level of the department; recommendations should be discussed among staff and brought to the attention of the Unit Heads who will advise Command Staff. In many cases, policy revisions will be dictated by changes in the law.
 - 9. Every policy and procedures document in the manual shall include policy statements. These will emphasize the tenets of procedural justice, Constitutional rights and responsibilities, and ways to gain legitimate authority in addition to legal authority.
 - 10. The Cambridge Police Department no longer has a separate manual for Rules and Regulations. These are included in the policy titled *Code of Conduct*. Whereas policies and procedures allow for considerable discretion and define the limits of discretion, the Code of Conduct is specific and advises department members regarding what is and is not acceptable conduct.
 - 11. Each title in the manual includes procedures for carrying out department activities. When an accreditation standard calls for procedures, it requires a detailed sequence of steps describing how staff will go about their tasks to achieve the desired results. Accreditation does not tell departments how they must operate; however, accreditation does require that procedures are clearly written in the directives.
 - 12. Proposed or revised policies, procedures, rules, and regulations, prior to their promulgation and to ensure they do not contradict other existing directives or applicable law, shall go through a series of reviews throughout the department.
 - a. Recommendations for new policies and procedures and/or revision may be initiated at any level in the department but must be managed through the Professional Standards Unit and the Accreditation Manager.
 - b. The department encourages open dialogue related to the implementation of new policies and procedures.
 - c. Once a recommendation for a new policy or revision has been thoroughly vetted, it will go to the Command Staff for review, and finally to the Office of the Commissioner.
 - d. The Accreditation Manager shall be responsible for staying informed and reviewing the need for policy and procedures changes so that the manual stays current.
 - e. The department promulgates this Policies and Procedures Manual with an element of implicit permanence. During periods of leadership change the manual shall remain in effect but be subject to revision through previously established procedures.
- B. 12.2.2 (M) Dissemination and Storage
- 1. New or newly revised directives shall be disseminated to all affected personnel using the PowerDMS platform. All members of the department shall have access to the login and

password for their accounts. This will allow the Accreditation Manager to keep accurate records of activity.

2. The electronic version of the Policies and Procedures Manual will be housed in PowerDMS. At a minimum, three hard copies will be printed, placed in binders, and located in convenient and accessible locations for reference by all personnel.
3. At a minimum, attestations to receipt and review of new or revised directives shall be managed by the Accreditation Manager through PowerDMS. Officers' and civilian employees' understanding of the meaning, significance, and application of the directives is a matter for the Training and Certification Unit as well as supervisors at all levels.