



Eric Hawkins  
Chief of Police

# ALBANY, NEW YORK

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

165 HENRY JOHNSON BOULEVARD  
ALBANY, NY 12210



1789

### COMMAND PROTOCOL GENERAL ORDER NO: 1.2.05

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<b>Volume 1:</b> Organizational Structure	<b>Chapter 2:</b> Law Enforcement Role and Authority
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<b>Issuing Authority:</b> Chief Eric Hawkins	<b>Page:</b> 1 of 4

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to delineate the department's philosophy of command protocol, adherence to the chain of command, and channels of authority.

**POLICY:** It is the policy of the Albany Police Department to operate in a structured environment of command protocol, with adherence to the philosophies of unity of command, delegation of authority, and a specific chain of command.

#### I. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF COMMAND

- A. The Chief of Police is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council, through the City of Albany Charter, with the authority and responsibility for command of the management, direction, and operations of the department. Authority to act on behalf of the Chief of Police may be delegated, but the responsibility for those actions rests with the Chief of Police.
- B. The Chief of Police is responsible for the direction of all activities of the department. This direction shall be accomplished through written and oral orders, policy, directives, guidelines and guidance by personal leadership.
- C. At every level within this department, personnel are vested with responsibility and commensurate authority to make decisions necessary for the effective execution of their responsibilities.
- D. Each department employee will be held fully accountable for the use of, or failure to use, delegated authority and should bring questions of uncertainty to the attention of his/her supervisor for prompt resolution.
- E. Any gross improper use of authority or failure to accept authority will be reported through the chain of command, as rapidly as possible.

- F. Authority for decision making and action is to be delegated to the lowest level possible. Supervisors are accountable for the activities of employees under their immediate control.

## **II. UNITY OF COMMAND**

- A. Elements of Unity of Command within the Albany Police Department include:

- 1. Each employee is accountable to only one supervisor at any given time.
- 2. Each organizational component is under the direct command of only one supervisor.

- B. In cases of emergency, a supervisor is not relieved of the responsibility to act, even though a subordinate or incident is not under the supervisor's direct command.

## **III. CHAIN OF COMMAND**

- A. The Chief of Police has full control over department activities. In the event of a scheduled absence of the Chief of Police, the Chief will designate an individual to assume the authority vested in the position.

- 1. In the event the Chief of Police is unable to make such a designation, such as during exceptional situations as natural disasters, disturbances, other critical incidents or unusual occurrences, the chain of command shall be followed.
- 2. When personnel from various components are involved in a single operation, command protocol shall require the commander or on-scene supervisor with responsibility for the operation, or the Chief's designee, to be in command.
- 3. During normal day-to-day operations, the assigned or dispatched officer shall assume command responsibility unless specifically relieved.

- B. The seniority among members of this department shall be determined in the following manner:

- 1. First - By rank.
- 2. Second - By continuous service in rank.
- 3. Third - By date of appointment to previous rank or ranks.
- 4. Fourth - By date of appointment to the department.
- 5. Fifth - By highest score on civil service list from which appointments were made.
- 6. Sixth - By highest academy score.

- C. Whenever it becomes necessary to notify the next highest ranking officer, the following listed upward chain of command shall be followed:

- 1. Police Officers/Detectives will notify a Sergeant.
- 2. The Sergeant will notify a Lieutenant.
- 3. The Lieutenant will notify the applicable Commander.
- 4. The Commander will then notify the Deputy Chief.
- 5. The Deputy Chief will notify the Chief of Police.

- D. Personnel shall use the proper chain of command when it becomes necessary to officially communicate with a supervisor.

- E. In the event any subordinate submits a recommendation for improving the services provided by the Albany Police Department, he/she is expected to put such recommendation in writing via an Intradepartmental Correspondence ([IDC](#)) to the Chief of Police, through the chain of command.
- F. Breaking the chain of command is only permitted when all other traditional options of satisfying a grievance regarding a personal or department related problem are completely exhausted. Personnel should reference either their respective collective bargaining agreement or [General Order 2.3.40 – Grievances](#), for further detailed information on such.

#### **IV. ORDERS**

- A. Employees of this department shall obey every lawful command or order issued orally or in writing by any supervisor or superior officer, including any order relayed from a supervisor by an employee of the same or lesser rank.
  - 1. This includes any orders that are delivered by a supervisor of a different component, i.e. patrol, detectives, involved in a single operation
- B. Orders, written or oral, from any commanding officer or supervisor, to any subordinate in the department, shall be in clear, concise, understandable language, civil in tone, issued in pursuit of department business, and in accordance with all legal requirements.
- C. Supervisory personnel of this department will not knowingly or willfully issue any order in violation of any law or ordinance or of any rule, regulation, general or special order of the Department.
- D. Issuance of orders to a subordinate does not relieve a ranking officer from the responsibility to see that the orders are obeyed.

#### **V. CONFLICT OF ORDERS**

- A. To permit effective supervision, direction, and control, employees should promptly obey any lawful order of a superior, including any order relayed from a superior by an employee of the same or lesser rank. In the event an employee is given two apparently lawful but different orders that may be in conflict, the last order given should be complied with unless the order is retracted or modified.
  - 1. In the event an employee receives conflicting orders, the employee should inform that person giving the last order of conflict of orders.
  - 2. That person giving the conflicting order should then resolve the conflict by retracting, modifying, or requesting the employee to comply with the latest order.
  - 3. In the event the conflicting order is not altered or retracted, the employee will not be held responsible for disobedience of the order or directive previously issued.

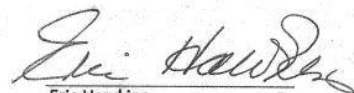
#### **VI. OBEDIENCE TO ORDERS**

- A. No employee of the department is required to obey any order which is contrary to the laws of the United States, State of New York, or ordinances of the City of Albany and

County of Albany; however, such refusal to obey is the responsibility of the employee and he/she will be required to justify his/her actions.

## VII. FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION

- A. The department encourages and supports the exchange of information among all functions and personnel for the purpose of communication, coordination and cooperation of all department activities.
1. Commanders shall conduct periodic staff meetings for the purpose of disseminating information, updating progress on specific projects, and general coordination of activities.
  2. The dissemination of current information and activities can be accomplished by sending electronic mail (e-mail) as permitted by direction from the department's policy on use of the e-mail system and posted on department bulletin boards, as applicable.
  3. The dissemination of current crime trends and sharing of related information is accomplished through the department's Information Coordination Unit. The Information Coordination Unit reviews daily crime analysis reports, establishes priority initiatives, disseminates investigative information as necessary, and in general coordinates the department's activities to combat and reduce crime.
  4. Periodic meetings shall be scheduled by the Chief of Police to discuss department related issues with supervisors.
  5. Patrol supervisors shall provide officers with all pertinent and up to date crime information during daily shift briefings (roll call) at the beginning of their tour of duty.
  6. Supervisors shall be responsible for keeping unit/station commanders and the Chief of Police informed (through the chain of command) of all pertinent information and/or matters of special interest via verbal or written communication. This shall include incidents that may involve agency liability or those of heightened community interest.



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