

# Command Protocol

**Index Code: 201.1**

**Effective Date: 1/15/10 (Revised 4/15/17)**

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## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to establish the chain of command protocol to be followed by employees of the Office of the Sheriff.

## **II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to establish and maintain a system of succession to ensure leadership is available if the Sheriff and/or the **Chief Deputy** are incapacitated, off duty, out of town, or otherwise unavailable and unable to command. For these anticipated and unanticipated absences, the Sheriff has designated the following acting authority.

## **III. Order of Rank**

A. The order of rank in the Office of the Sheriff for normal day-to-day operations is as follows:

1. Sheriff
2. **Chief Deputy** (Major)
3. Captain (Senior Commander)
4. Lieutenant
5. First Sergeant
6. Sergeant
7. Corporal
8. Deputy First Class
9. Deputy

B. Each organizational component, whether a Division, Unit, or Workgroup, is under the direct command of only one supervisor.

1. Employees assigned to a particular component, including employees assigned temporarily, are accountable to the supervisor of that component.

2. In situations involving personnel from different components, unless otherwise designated, the senior ranking deputy is in command.

C. All employees must adhere to the provisions of the order of rank (chain of command) in their official duties. Communications and correspondence must be

made through official channels within the chain of command.

## **IV. Authority of the Sheriff**

A. The Sheriff is the Chief Executive Officer of the Office of the Sheriff. The Sheriff has the final authority and responsibility for determining policies and discharging all duties imposed by the Maryland Constitution, Maryland Statutes, and Common Law. The Sheriff is accountable for the use of his /her delegated authority.

B. As Chief Executive Officer the Sheriff must officially sanction and approve any changes in agency organization before the changes can be put into effect. The detailed methods of directing and controlling specific functions of the agency, or any of its divisions and subdivisions, may be developed by subordinate executive officers, but the original direction and final approval and adoption of the guiding principles rests with the Sheriff.

C. In the capacity as Chief Executive Officer, the Sheriff maintains administrative control and governs activity through the **Chief Deputy** and agency supervisors. In the Sheriff's absence, the **Chief Deputy** acts in the Sheriff's name to provide continuity of command.

## **V. Chief Deputy (Major)**

The Chief Deputy is second in command of the Office of the Sheriff. The **Chief Deputy** is accountable and subordinate to the Sheriff. In the Sheriff's absence he/she acts in the capacity of Chief Executive Officer and assumes the authority and responsibilities of the Sheriff. During such times the **Chief Deputy** is in command, upon him/her rests the responsibility of making administrative decisions and otherwise overseeing the operations of the agency on behalf of the Sheriff. The **Chief Deputy** is accountable for the use of his/her delegated authority.

## **VI. Captain (Senior Commander)**

The Captain is third in command of the Office of the Sheriff and is accountable and subordinate to the Chief Deputy. In the Chief Deputy's absence, he/she acts in the capacity of the Chief Deputy and assumes the authority and responsibilities of the Chief Deputy. During such times that the Captain is in command, upon him/her rests the responsibility of making administrative decisions and otherwise overseeing the operations of the agency on behalf of the Chief Deputy. The Captain is accountable for the use of his/her delegated authority.

## **Lieutenants**

Lieutenants are normally Division Commanders accountable and subordinate to the Major. They assume the authority and responsibility to actively manage, oversee, and supervise the units or workgroups within their respective division. The lieutenants are accountable for the use of their delegated authority.

## **VII. First Sergeants, Sergeants and Corporals**

First Sergeants, Sergeants and Corporals are the agency's first line supervisors. They are accountable and subordinate to their respective Division Commander. First Sergeants, Sergeants and Corporals assume the authority and responsibility to actively manage, oversee, and supervise the performance of subordinates within their respective unit or workgroup to ensure compliance with agency policies, directives, and procedures. The First Sergeants, Sergeants and Corporals are accountable for the use of their delegated authority.

## **VIII. Deputies**

Deputies include the rank of Deputy First Class. Deputy First Class is a Deputy who has successfully completed their two year probationary period and is senior to those who have not. Together they are responsible for prompt and proper action in law enforcement matters and the rendering of prompt and courteous service in the manner prescribed by the agency's policies, directives, and procedures. In the absence of written policies, directives, and/or procedures covering specific situations, a deputy is expected to exercise proper and reasonable judgment in the performance of his/her duties. Deputies are accountable and subordinate to their immediate supervisor, usually a Corporal or Sergeant.

## **IX. Seniority**

During exceptional situations involving the temporary absence of a commanding officer, and when competent authority makes no other provision, command automatically reverts to the senior ranking deputy. When a question of seniority arises regarding who is in command, such seniority is determined:

- A. First, by rank.
- B. Second, if members are of equal rank, time in grade will be the determining factor when no other designation has been made.
- C. Third, by continuous service in the Office of the Sheriff. Where two or more deputies are working together on the same assignment or detail and are of equal rank, seniority is not exercised except when necessary to complete the assignment or during emergency circumstances.

## **X. Additional Command Protocols**

During regular operations, the Office of the Sheriff will follow the command structure as outlined above. When personnel of different commands are engaged in a joint operation, or during certain emergencies and critical incidents, a commander will be predetermined when possible and will have primary responsibility for the operation. The commander will determine the chain of command for the joint operation.

When a deputy of any rank has been selected to temporarily fill a position of a higher rank (acting position), he/she will retain the authority, privileges, rights, and responsibilities associated with that higher rank as long as they remain in that acting position.

## **XI. Saluting**

The salute isn't simply an honor exchanged; it's a privileged gesture of respect and trust among Office of the Sheriff personnel. Remember: The salute is not only prescribed by regulation but is also recognition of each other's commitment, abilities, and professionalism.

The salute is an expression that recognizes each other as a member of the law enforcement profession, that each has made a personal commitment of self-sacrifice to preserve our way of life. The fact that the junior extends the greeting first is merely a point of etiquette — a salute extended or returned makes the same statement.

All personnel in uniform are required to salute others of a higher rank in uniform when they meet on the first occasion of the work day.

The junior person shall salute first. Accompanying the rendering of the hand salute with an appropriate greeting such as, "Good Morning, Sir" or "Good Morning, Ma'am" is encouraged.

Civilian personnel are not required to render the hand salute to uniformed personnel or vice versa. Salutes are not required to be rendered or returned when the senior or subordinate or both are:

- (1) In civilian attire.
- (2) Engaged in routine work if the salute would interfere.
- (3) Carrying articles with both hands so occupied as to make saluting impracticable.
- (4) When saluting would present a safety hazard.

The following applies for all sworn deputies for both the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem unless otherwise indicated by the event organizer:

- (1) When in uniform, whether indoors or outdoors, stand at attention, face the flag, and render the hand salute.
- (2) When in civilian attire, stand at attention, face the flag with the right hand over the heart and recite the Pledge of Allegiance or remain at attention for the National Anthem.

**XI. CALEA References: 11.2.1, 11.2.2, 11.3.1, 11.3.2, 12.1.2a, 12.1.2b, 12.1.2c & 12.1.2d.**

**XII. Proponent Unit: Sheriff**

**XIII. Cancellation: This directive cancels Index Code 201.1 dated 10/31/16.**

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**Sheriff Gary Hofmann**