

**CITY OF FERGUSON  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE****Index as:**

Chain of Command  
Component Command  
Delegation of Authority  
Span of Control  
Supervisor Accountability  
Unit of command

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**ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES****110.00 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the chain of command within the Department and to identify specific responsibilities afforded sworn members of this Agency.

**110.01 POLICY**

- A. It is the policy of the Ferguson Police Department to grant broad discretion to employees in determining what level of action is required of them in the performance of their duties. The use of this discretion will be based on written guidelines, training, and supervision. Furthermore, we recognize other avenues of problem solving exist in addition to the Criminal Justice System and employees are encouraged to utilize these alternative avenues.
- B. Further, in police agencies, authority is delegated to subordinates. The Ferguson Police Department delegates to all employees the necessary authority to allow them to perform their assigned duties and responsibilities in an effective manner.

**110.02 DEFINITIONS**

**SPAN OF CONTROL** –The number of employees a supervisor can effectively supervise at one time.

**110.03 COMMAND**

- A. The Chief of Police is responsible for establishing policy, for the overall operation of Police Department, and has authority over all bureaus, units, and personnel in the Department. All General Orders are issued under the authority of the Chief of Police.
- B. In his absence, under normal circumstances, the Chief of Police will designate the Captain as “in charge”. In exceptional situations where the Chief of Police is incapacitated the following line of command succession will be followed:

1. Captain (Most-in-Grade)
2. Captain
3. Supervisor in Charge

For additional information regarding “Acting Chief” see *G.O. 115.00 “Command Authority”*

- C. In situations involving personnel of different functions involved in a single operation, the Chief of Police will designate the officer in charge. In the absence of the Chief of Police, the highest-ranking officer on the scene will assume the role of scene commander, until relieved by the Chief of Police or a higher-ranking officer.
- D. Under normal conditions, the chain of command shall be adhered to, and will not be circumvented.
  1. Chief of Police
  2. Captain – The Captain reports directly to the Chief of Police and is responsible for the overall operation of the Police Department. In the absence of the Captain, the Chief of Police may appoint a Lieutenant to assume to the duties of the Captain.
  3. Lieutenant – The Patrol Lieutenant is the Platoon commander. The Squad Sergeant reports to the Lieutenant; the Lieutenant reports to the Commander of Field Operations. The Administrative and Criminal Investigations Lieutenants report to the Chief.
  4. Sergeant – The Sergeant is the shift supervisor. The Sergeants in each squad will report directly to the Lieutenant of the Platoon.
  5. Detective, Police Officer, or Probationary Officer – Police Officers will report directly to their immediate supervisor.
- E. All lawful orders and instructions issued by supervisors will be promptly and precisely obeyed. Lawful orders relayed from a supervisor to a subordinate via an employee of the same or lesser rank shall also be obeyed. Disobedience to orders and failure by supervisors to enforce orders are just cause for disciplinary action. Employees who are given any instruction or order that is in conflict with any previously received instruction or order shall call this fact to the attention of the person giving the second order. If so directed, the second order shall be obeyed. Any employee who countermands an existing order or instruction shall be held accountable for that action.

No employee is required to obey an unlawful order, and no employee shall knowingly issue any order that is in violation of any Federal or State Law, County or Municipal Ordinance or Department Order, Rule or Policy. The responsibility to refuse to obey an unlawful order rests with the receiving employee and will require sufficient justification. Any employee receiving an unlawful order has a duty to report such order, in writing, to the next higher authority through the appropriate chain of command.

#### 110.04 PROCEDURE

- A. **COMPONENT COMMAND:** Each component (platoon, unit, squad) in the Department will be under the direct command of only one commander, appointed by the Chief of Police.
- B. **UNITY OF COMMAND:** Each employee is accountable to, and under the command of only one supervisor at any given time. The line of accountability may be assigned daily, as in patrol officers riding assignments to a direct line supervisor, or may be permanently designated by the organization chart.
- C. **SPAN OF CONTROL:** Supervision at the line level will not exceed a ratio of nine (9) employees to one supervisor.

#### 110.05 SUPERVISOR AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- A. All supervisors are held accountable for the performance and conduct of employees under their command.
- B. Any employee of a subordinate position who may be placed temporarily into a higher supervisory position will exercise the authority and perform the duties of that higher position and will be held accountable and responsible for performance in that position.
  1. In order to promote consistency and avoid confusion, employees in acting supervisory capacities should avoid countermanding any lawful standing order issued by the supervisor they are replacing, except in an emergency.
  2. Employees in acting supervisory capacities will receive a shift differential and may wear "Corporal" chevrons during that period to designate authority.

November 30, 2011

**110.06 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

A. The Department will assign and delegate all authority necessary to meet the responsibilities of the various levels in the hierarchy. Authority is defined as the right to give orders and the power to exact obedience.

1. Responsibility – As each level of command in the Department has responsibilities associated with the command, those levels and members associated with those levels shall also have authority to make decisions necessary for the effective execution of their responsibilities. Authority shall be delegated commensurate with the responsibility of the position.
2. Accountability – Each employee shall be held strictly accountable for the use of his or her delegated authority, as well as for the failure to use it.
3. Employees shall exercise their authority within parameters that are designed to prevent the abuse of the authority, yet allow for the completion of functions associated with the position.
4. The employee shall also be held fully accountable for the failure to use the authority in matters of Department rules, regulations, and procedures.
5. All entry-level personnel are given the authority to make decisions necessary for the effective execution of their responsibilities.

By order of:



COLONEL THOMAS JACKSON  
Chief of Police

**Distribution**

All Department Personnel

**MPCCF Reference 5.2, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4**