

	<b>SUBJECT: WRITTEN DIRECTIVE SYSTEM</b>		
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**DISCUSSION:**

This Order establishes guidelines for the implementation and management of a written directive system and provides guidance for issuing and controlling official correspondence. Written directives establish procedures and guidelines for employees to follow while carrying out their assigned duties. As revisions are made, input will be obtained from all levels in order to include/reflect current agency practices. This Order applies to all personnel.

Where the scope of a change to any directive implicates wages, hours or terms and conditions of employment applicable to employees in certified bargaining units and bargaining units where representation elections are pending, those changes will not become effective to these employees unless or until the affected union(s) acquiesce or agree to those changes. If any rule, regulation, directive, general order, or procedure conflicts with any applicable section of a current collective bargaining agreement, the conflict will be resolved in favor of the collective bargaining agreement only for employees covered thereunder.

Nothing contained herein will establish an expectation of continued employment in any position as an employee of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff, pursuant to the law, will maintain the sole right to appoint employees and withdraw appointments of employees, at any time with or without prior notice, subject only to the applicable provisions of the Career Service Act.

Agency general orders, rules and regulations, policies and procedures, etc., do not create an implied or direct contract of employment with the Sheriff and designees of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, nor does it create an expectation of privacy in the workplace.

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**POLICY:**

Official written orders and office correspondence will conform to the provisions of this general order. Only the Sheriff, or his designee, has the authority to issue, modify, or rescind a policy or procedure promulgated by general order. Once a general order is adopted, authenticated, and distributed, it will become the official order on the subject. The Sheriff delegates the authority to issue other written directives to command levels or positions within the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO) as specified in this order. The issuing authority and/or chain of command with primary responsibility for the function covered by a directive are responsible for periodic reviews, updates and revisions as necessary. All written directives will remain in force until they are revised or rescinded by competent authority.

All employees are charged with acquiring a sound working knowledge of general orders, rules and regulations, and all other directives applicable to their specific duties. Each employee is responsible for seeking clarification from his immediate supervisor when necessary. Training may be provided for new or amended orders.

It is the policy of the PBSO to make no distinction among individuals by gender. For simplicity and uniformity, the words "he," "him," and "his" in all written directives, policies, procedures, orders, and rules and regulations, will be construed to read "she," "her," and "hers" when applicable to females.

**DEFINITIONS:**

ACCREDITATION – The act of accrediting; the state of being accredited; especially the granting of approval or certification of compliance to a law enforcement agency as having met certain prescribed standards as determined by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA), the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission (FCAC), the American Correctional Association (ACA), or any other accrediting body subscribed to by PBSO.

ADDENDUM – An addition or supplement to the existing policy.

AMEND – To edit by adding, deleting, or rephrasing.

ANNEX – An attached example to the policy that clarifies a statement or instruction.

BULLETIN – A bulletin will be issued by any component having information that should be disseminated to other components. Legal updates are examples of a bulletin.

BUREAU DIRECTIVE – A written directive issued by a bureau commander to further clarify general orders or department directives, or to direct activities within that particular bureau.

CERTIFICATE – A record of and method for distributing training content and courses within the DMS.

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COMMAND STAFF – The Sheriff, Chief Deputy, department colonels, bureau commanders and division commanders and the civilian equivalents.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE – A written directive issued by a department colonel or a civilian department director to further clarify general orders or direct activities within that particular department. Examples include Corrections Operating Procedures and Corrections Post Orders.

DIVISION PROCEDURE – A written directive issued by a division commander to further clarify general orders, department directives, and bureau procedures or to direct activities within that particular division.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (DMS) – A computer based method of storing, disseminating, accessing, and archiving written directives, bulletins and other content.

EXECUTIVE STAFF – The Sheriff, Chief Deputy, department colonels, bureau commanders, and civilian equivalents.

GENERAL ORDER (GO) – A written directive issued by the Sheriff stating the policy, procedure, rule, or regulation to establish guidance of employee behavior or operations in achieving specific Sheriff's Office goals. General orders are applicable to day to day operations of the Sheriff's Office, covering broad segments of the agency with direction and/or operational knowledge necessary to achieve those goals.

MANUAL – Manuals are formal guidebooks or references, separately maintained, which prescribe procedures relating to specific subject areas. Manuals have the effect of a division or bureau procedure.

MEMORANDUM – A document that may or may not convey an order; it is generally used to clarify, inform or inquire within the Sheriff's Office.

NUMBERED MEMORANDA – Numbered memoranda are directives used by command staff employees to disseminate information or instructions to further explain, or emphasize previously issued general orders, department directives, or district/bureau/unit procedures.

PERSONNEL ACTION FORM – A directive issued by the Sheriff or his designee, designating a change in the status or assignment of agency personnel.

PLAN - A General Order applicable to specific circumstances or emergency conditions with broad impact. This does not include operational plans related to a single case (such as a search warrant plan) or a special event (such as a concert or the South Florida Fair).

POLICY – A broad written statement of agency principles. Policy statements may be characterized by such words as “may” or “should” and usually do not establish set procedures for conduct of a particular activity, but rather provide a framework for development of procedures.

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**PROCEDURE** – A written directive that is a guideline for carrying out agency activities. A procedure may be made mandatory in tone by using “will” rather than “should,” or “must” rather than “may.” Procedures may allow some latitude and discretion in carrying out an activity.

**PROTOCOL** – A written directive providing guidelines or processes for carrying out a specific division or unit activity or to provide additional details for completing division or unit responsibilities assigned by a General Order. Protocols are classified as "manuals" for purposes of this Order. If the process or activity applies beyond a specific division or unit, a Protocol will not be used and a Special Order or a General Order is required.

**RESCIND** – To make void; repeal or annul.

**SPECIAL ORDER** – A written directive issued by the Sheriff, or other command personnel upon authority of the Sheriff, announcing specific instructions for special, short-term situations, events, training activities, official travel of agency employees, or to bridge the time necessary to revise an existing order when immediate action is required. These orders cover temporary situations and are self-canceling once the situation or event ceases to exist or a specified expiration date has been reached. Special Orders may be extended or reactivated at the direction of the Sheriff or designee.

**SUPERSEDE** – To take the place of; replace.

**WRITTEN DIRECTIVES (WRITTEN ORDERS)** – Any written document used to guide the performance or conduct of agency employees. The term includes but is not limited to procedures, general orders, directives, protocols, memoranda, union contracts, written orders, and instructional material.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **I. GENERAL ORDERS**

- A. General orders will be formatted in a consistent manner.
  - 1. Each order will be assigned an identifying number unique to that order and assigned by Staff Inspections.
  - 2. A header will be used on the first page containing the directive type, GO number, Subject, Date Effective, Supersedes date, Revision Number, page number, and, if applicable, a list of Rescinded orders and/or a Reviewed date.
  - 3. All subsequent pages excluding annexes will contain the GO number, Date Effective, Supersedes date, Revision Number, and page number.
  - 4. The body will be in standard outline format.
- B. General orders are indexed by subject matter and assigned number.

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- C. When developing a general order, information must be specific, accurate, dependable, and include all relevant data.
1. It must be organized for easy comprehension.
  2. General order text will be written in the third person.
  3. Language will be clear and simple, avoiding technical jargon unless absolutely necessary.
- D. Employees may propose new general orders or suggest revisions to or deletion of existing orders.
1. Proposing a new general order or revisions to an existing general order will follow this process:
    - a. Staff Inspections (SI) must be notified before you begin any new GO or a revision to a document published in the document management system (DMS).
      - 1) Send notice to Staff Inspections with the subject of the new GO or the existing GO's number and name, along with a list of anyone who will be involved in the draft, either as an editor or a reviewer. Email all requests to SI: [StaffInspections@pbso.org](mailto:StaffInspections@pbso.org).
      - 2) Written explanations are required for all requests to create or modify any GO.
    - b. SI will review the proposal, the document published in the DMS and any applicable accreditation standards. A staff inspector will be assigned to the creation/revision.
      - 1) The Inspector will create a new draft in the DMS. The new draft will be assigned and sent to the involved editors/reviewers through the DMS.
      - 2) The designated staff inspector will provide assistance and answer any questions editors/reviewers have during the process.
      - 3) Each command will have up to 30 days to complete the initial review, make any edits to the draft and approve the document. For complex issues or exigent circumstances, extensions may be requested, in writing, with an explanation.
  2. Proposing a deletion of an existing general order will follow this process:

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- a. Send notice to [StaffInspections@pbso.org](mailto:StaffInspections@pbso.org) with the GO's number and name, along with a list of anyone in the proposer's chain of command who may need to review and/or approve the deletion.
  - b. A written justification is required for any proposed deletion of a GO.
  - c. SI will review the proposed deletion, any applicable accreditation standards, and assign a staff inspector to the deletion.
3. Upon completion of the review, Staff Inspections will distribute the final draft of new, revised or rescinded GOs electronically to Executive Staff and the Sheriff for final approval.
- E. Staff Inspections will distribute general orders, addenda, amendments, and rescinded policies and procedures electronically. All affected employees will receive notification via the document management system.
  - F. Staff Inspections will maintain a complete file of current and rescinded general orders. Staff Inspections will maintain a complete library of reference material referred to or incorporated by all current general orders excluding Florida Statutes, U.S. Codes, or any other rule or law published by any governmental entity responsible for maintaining that public record.
  - G. All general orders issued by PBSO will be organized, indexed, and maintained in the document management system.

## II. DIRECTIVES

- A. The Sheriff authorizes commanders or civilian equivalents to issue written directives affecting only their respective commands. These directives will be written in the same format as general orders or in a format approved by the commander or civilian equivalent, which conveys the information in a logical and meaningful way. Directives will include step-by-step procedures for carrying out activities. The respective commander or civilian equivalent is the approving authority for organizational component directives.
- B. The structure of directives is as follows:
  1. General Orders supersede all Department Directives
  2. Department Directives supersede Bureau Directives
  3. Bureau Directives supersede Division Directives
- C. The proposed adoption of new directives and updating, revising, or purging of existing directives may be initiated by any employee. Proposals will be submitted through the chain-of-command.

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- D. Before implementation, the commander or civilian equivalent will:
1. Review the proposal with his staff;
  2. Forward the proposal to Legal Affairs for determination of legal sufficiency; and,
  3. Forward the proposal to Staff Inspections for review to ensure there is no conflict with accreditation standards or current general orders.
- E. Each commander or civilian equivalent will distribute directives and an alphabetical topic index to affected employees/components within his respective span of control. This can be accomplished via the document management system or printed material.
1. The commander or civilian equivalent will ensure that a written directive receipt, acknowledging receipt and review of the order, is signed manually or electronically by each employee.
  2. Where it is practical and cost effective, an appropriate number of manuals may be placed in the affected work area for reference by employees.
- F. The issuing organizational component will maintain all original directives in a historical file as a permanent record.
- G. The DMS may be utilized to create, edit, approve, and distribute directives using the process outlined for general orders.

### **III. SPECIAL ORDERS**

- A. Special orders are temporary directives issued by the Sheriff, or his designee, to announce policies or procedures concerning a specific matter, a set of circumstances, or an event. These orders are self-canceling once the situation or event ceases to exist.
1. If the situation or event does not have a definitive schedule, a special order will expire 90 days after the date of issue unless extended at the direction of the Sheriff or designee.
  2. A special order may be issued to address an immediate need until an existing general order can be revised or a new one created.
  3. A special order addressing circumstances or events that are not recurring and involve a period of less than one week may be issued in email format by the Sheriff or his designee.

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- B. Special orders with an anticipated duration of 30 days or less will be issued in memoranda format. Special orders with a duration exceeding 30 days or for circumstances or events that may recur will be issued in General Order format and titled Special Order.
1. All special orders, regardless of format, will be numbered with a prefix consisting of the last two digits of the year, a hyphen, the two-digit month of issuance, a space, and the sequential number of special orders issued for that month in parentheses i.e., SPECIAL ORDER 05-01(1), SPECIAL ORDER 05-01(2), etc., assigned and maintained by Staff Inspections.
  2. All special orders will be submitted to [StaffInspections@pbso.org](mailto:StaffInspections@pbso.org) for publication. A staff inspector will be assigned to process the special order and assign the order number.
  3. Special orders for recurring events or conditions will be reviewed every 90 days. After review, the order may be extended by approval of the Sheriff or designee.
    - a. If the extension is not granted, the order will expire.
    - b. Extensions will be logged by entering the date the extension was granted as a Review date in the header.
- C. Special Orders that have expired or been rescinded may be reactivated at the direction of the Sheriff or designee.
1. The Effective Date will be the date of reactivation. The original Effective Date will be moved to Supersedes.
  2. The Revision Number will be updated as with any revised order.
- D. Special orders will be distributed electronically to all affected employees. Employees will acknowledge receipt and review of the order(s) by accessing the document management system via the PBSO Portal Page.

#### **IV. NUMBERED MEMORANDA**

- A. Numbered memoranda are directives used by command staff employees to disseminate information or instructions to further explain or emphasize previously issued general orders, department directives, or organizational component procedures. Information affecting the meaning, procedure or requirements of a general order for terms exceeding one year will require a revision of the order and will not be issued via memorandum.
- B. Numbered memoranda will not be used in place of a general order, special order, rule or regulation, or directive as defined in Section I, II or III.

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- C. The format for any numbered memorandum will:
  - 1. Be sequentially numbered within the originating component (i.e., HR001, HR002, etc.) or, if agency-wide, MEM001, MEM002, etc.
  - 2. Be self-canceling and contain its effective date and expiration date on its face. A numbered memorandum will not exceed one year in effect.
- D. Numbered memorandum will be routed to division commanders for posting/distribution to employees within their component.
  - 1. The commander issuing the memorandum will maintain the memorandum on file or electronically via the agency's document management system.
  - 2. Retention and disposal of such files will be in accordance with the State of Florida General Records Schedule for Law Enforcement Agencies.

## **V. PERSONNEL ORDERS**

- A. The Sheriff or a designee may issue personnel orders to announce new hires, transfers of assignment, promotions, terminations, and other changes in the status or assignment of personnel. The Division Manager of Human Resources (HR) is responsible for placement of personnel orders in applicable personnel files.
- B. Personnel orders will be in an approved preprinted form or an equivalent electronic version
- C. HR will distribute copies of personnel orders to all affected division commanders. The retention and disposal of personnel orders will be in accordance with rules found in the State of Florida General Records Schedule for Law Enforcement Agencies.

## **VI. OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE**

- A. Letters and memoranda are important to the effective operation of the Sheriff's Office. Correspondence must be acted upon promptly and professionally prepared. The use of any authorized Sheriff's Office form, letter, or notice must be reviewed and authorized by the respective division commander.
- B. The sender will retain an official copy of all letters and memoranda. This does not preclude any other employee who has input in or who is affected by the correspondence from maintaining a file copy.
  - 1. Correspondence may be filed alphabetically or chronologically by year, correspondent, subject matter, or in any other manner that allows for ready retrieval.

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2. Files may be electronic, but hard copy reproductions will be required upon demand.
  3. The retention and disposal of such files will be in accordance with the rules found in the State of Florida General Records Schedule for Law Enforcement Agencies.
- C. All incoming correspondence will be routed immediately to the organizational component concerned for timely coordination, action and reply, if required.
- D. Letters are the agency's official means of written communication with outside entities and will be used for all correspondence leaving the agency. They will be prepared on approved letterhead stationery in accepted business letter format.
1. Letters will not be used except by the Sheriff, Chief Deputy and department colonels or civilian equivalents for any form of communication within the agency.
  2. When the subject or content of a letter may be controversial or negative in substance, the proposed draft or subject matter will be reviewed or discussed with the appropriate department colonel or civilian equivalent prior to transmittal.
  3. Sheriff's Office letterhead will not be used for personal or private correspondence, nor can the PBSO mailing addresses be used for purposes of receiving personal mail not connected with official agency business, except where specifically provided by law or agency policy.
- E. Interoffice memoranda (different from numbered memoranda) are used to inform or inquire within the Sheriff's Office and may be prepared by any employee.
1. Action Memoranda submitted to request approval or authorization of a higher authority.
  2. A memorandum directed through the chain-of-command should be addressed to the intended recipient followed with the notation "Via Chain-of-Command."
    - a. The submitting employee will convey the memorandum to his immediate supervisor.
    - b. Each supervisor in the chain-of-command will acknowledge the memorandum on the last page and attach comments on a separate page.
    - c. The memorandum will be forwarded without delay.

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3. Memorandum may be issued crossing organizational lines if the information being transmitted is routine, non-critical, informative, advisory, non-controversial or of no value or interest to the chain-of-command between the sender and the recipient. "Information Only" copies may be distributed at the sender's discretion.

F. Electronic Mail (E-Mail):

1. E-mail may be issued crossing organizational lines if the information being transmitted is routine, non-critical, informative, advisory, non-controversial, or of no value or interest to the chain-of-command between the sender and the recipient. "Information Only" copies may be distributed at the sender's discretion.
2. E-mail messages submitted to request approval or authorization of a higher authority.

## **VII. MANUALS**

- A. Manuals are formal guidebooks or references, separately maintained, which prescribe procedures relating to specific subject areas.
  1. Any employee may propose the development of a manual, or submit changes or additions to existing manuals through his chain-of-command.
  2. Staff Inspections will provide assistance in the development of manuals.
- B. Bureau commanders or division commanders may authorize changes, revisions, or updates to manuals. Manuals remain in effect until rescinded by the issuing or higher authority.
- C. Manuals will be organized by subject matter and include a table of contents and topic index, when appropriate.
- D. Division commanders will distribute manuals, bound or electronically, to affected employees and will send a copy to Staff Inspections.
  1. The division commander will ensure that a written directive receipt, acknowledging receipt and review of the manual, is signed by each employee in his command.
  2. Division commanders are authorized to identify specific components or work areas where it is practical and cost effective to place an appropriate number of manuals for reference by employees who work in that area.

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- a. Such receipts will be maintained with the organizational component issuing the manual.
- 3. Revisions, updates, or amended instructions will be issued as needed.
- E. The DMS may be utilized to create, edit, approve, and distribute manuals using the process outlined for general orders.

## **VIII. BULLETINS**

- A. A bulletin will be issued by any component having information that should be disseminated to other components.
  - 1. A bulletin is used only for transmitting information when a memorandum is not appropriate.
  - 2. The issuing component is responsible for ensuring that the information is kept current.
- B. The general format for a bulletin is the memorandum. The issuing component will ensure that bulletins are sequentially numbered.
- C. The originating component will distribute bulletins to affected employees and submit one copy to Staff Inspections. Distribution can be in printed or electronic format.
- D. The DMS may be utilized to create, edit, approve, and distribute bulletins using the process outlined for general orders.

## **IX. MAINTENANCE OF WRITTEN DIRECTIVE CONTENT**

- A. The issuing authority and/or chain of command with primary responsibility for the function covered by a directive are responsible for revising the content of any directive affecting their operations.
  - 1. Subject matter experts responsible for content edits will be familiar with the elements of all accreditation standards applicable to their function and written directives.
  - 2. No functional unit will institute any change in processes or procedures covered by an accreditation standard without consulting with Staff Inspections (SI) and/or Corrections Standards and Staff Development (SSD).
    - a. Standards manuals are available in the DMS and/or the respective accrediting body's website.



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2. Memoranda will use the format published by the Graphics Unit.
3. All other written directives will be formatted to meet the needs of the functional unit responsible while maintaining a professional appearance.
4. On request, Staff Inspections will assist responsible units with formatting directives.

## **X. DISTRIBUTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

- A. The DMS will be utilized to distribute all written directives that impact all employees or large groups of employees.
  1. Written directives with limited applicability, such as division procedures or manuals, should be distributed via the DMS, but is not required. Copies of written directives not distributed via the DMS must be provided to Staff Inspections to assure compliance with accreditation standards.
  2. The requirements for each written directive published via the DMS (such as signatures, group assignments, expiration dates, etc.) will be set prior to publication.
  3. All written directives will have an effective date.
- B. All documents requiring signature and published via the DMS (General Orders, Special Orders, Bulletins, Plans, Legal Updates, Certificates, courses, etc.) will be given a due date 30 days from the publication or expiration date for the recipient to read, understand and sign-off on the document or acquire the Certificate or course.
  1. Individuals on extended leave or attending advanced training courses of extended duration will have 30 days following their return to regular duty to complete any pending or delinquent documents.
- C. New hires will have 90 days from their start date to read, understand, and sign-off on documents published before their date of hire.
  1. New hires attending an academy and classified as Recruits will have 90 days after completion of the academy and their status changes from Recruit to FTO Trainee or a permanent classification.
- D. Automated notice will be sent via the DMS to individuals who fail to sign for assigned documents before the deadline.
  1. Supervisors are responsible for assuring their personnel review and complete all content received through the DMS.

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2. All supervisors the rank of Sergeant or Unit Manager and above have rights in the DMS to run reports on their personnel to identify those with delinquent content and will do so at least monthly.
  - a. The DMS content of sworn personnel should be reviewed in conjunction with line inspections.
  - b. The DMS content of civilian and specialized unit personnel should be reviewed on a consistent schedule each month.
  - c. Division commanders may designate a specific person or position to generate reports on their personnel in lieu of their subordinate supervisors.
    - 1) If the designee is not a supervisor as noted in 2., a request to grant reporting rights for the designee will be sent to [StaffInspections@pbso.org](mailto:StaffInspections@pbso.org) by the Division commander.
- E. If documents remain unsigned or expired content is not renewed 60 days after the publication, expiration or extension date and depending on rank, the individual's Division commander or higher will be notified by Staff Inspections for possible disciplinary action.

## **XI. RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS**

- A. Unless specifically addressed in this general order, retention and destruction of materials relevant to this general order will follow the guidelines articulated in Florida Statutes and/or the State of Florida General Records Schedule for Local Government Agencies.