

**UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

No. 920

Supersedes: NA

Effective: April 26, 2019

Page: NA Section: NA

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Dated: March 27, 2003

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**DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION AND DIRECTION**

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- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish command responsibility and chain of command authority.
- II. **POLICY:** It is the policy of the Upper Merion Township Police Department to achieve effective direction, coordination, and control of all members and operations by using well defined lines of command and authority.
- III. **CROSS-REF:** Upper Merion Township Police Duty Manual, Sections II and III.  
Policy #PD1-110.01, SERGEANT AND LIEUTENANT PROMOTIONS
- IV. **PROCEDURE:**
- A. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
1. The Chief of Police is the chief executive officer of the Department and the final departmental authority in all matters of policy, operations and discipline. He/she exercises all lawful powers of this office and issues such lawful orders as are necessary to assure the effective performance of the Department. An unbroken line of authority extends from the Chief of Police through the officer in command at each level in the Department.
  2. Through the Chief of Police, the Department is responsible for the enforcement of all laws and ordinances coming within its legal jurisdiction. The Chief of Police is responsible for planning, directing, coordinating, controlling and staffing all activities of the Department, for its continued and efficient operation, for the enforcement of rules and regulations within the Department, for the completion and forwarding of such reports as may be required by competent authority, and for the Department's relations with the citizens of Upper Merion Township, the Township government and other agencies.

3. Subject to direction from higher command, a commanding officer has direct control over all members and employees within his/her command. In addition to the general and individual responsibilities of all members, employees and supervisory officers, a commanding officer is responsible for:
  - a. Command: The direction and control of personnel under his/her command to assure the proper performance of duties and adherence to established rules, regulations, policies and procedures. Providing for continuation of command and/or supervision in his/her absence.
  - b. Loyalty and Esprit De Corps: The development and maintenance of loyalty and esprit de corps to the Department.
4. Sworn police personnel are required to obey any lawful order of a supervisor including any order relayed from a supervisor by an officer of the same or lesser rank. Failure to obey a lawful command shall be deemed insubordination.

**B. ORGANIZATION:**

1. The basic organizational structure of the Upper Merion Police Department is depicted in the Department's Organizational Chart (See Attachment A). This Organizational Chart will be reviewed annually and updated if necessary to reflect lines of authority and communication. Each division within the department is grouped according to its function.
2. It is the ultimate responsibility of the Chief of Police to classify and direct personnel regarding assignments, responsibilities, duties and functions. A job description of every position in the Department is maintained on the Police Computer Network (see Job Descriptions).

**C. CHAIN OF COMMAND:**

1. The Chief of Police has absolute command authority. Lines of authority within each division of the Department shall be based on rank in the following descending order:
  - a. Chief of Police
  - b. Captain of Police
  - c. Lieutenant
  - d. Sergeant
  - e. Corporal
  - f. Acting Corporal
  - g. Senior officer
2. In the absence or incapacitation of the Chief of Police, the Captain of Police shall perform the duties and responsibilities of the Chief of Police unless otherwise delegated by the Chief prior to his/her absence.

3. In the absence or incapacitation of both the Chief of Police and Captain of Police, the senior Lieutenant shall perform the duties and responsibilities of the Chief of Police unless otherwise delegated by the Chief or the Captain prior to their absence. Command delegation shall thereafter follow the list of lieutenants with time in rank as determined by the promotion date to that rank.
4. Shift Supervision:
  - a. Supervision of a given patrol shift shall be delegated to the sergeant whose team is assigned for that shift. In the absence or incapacitation of the team's sergeant, shift supervision shall be delegated in the following order, unless otherwise determined by the Patrol Division Commander:
    - (1) Corporal
    - (2) Acting Corporal (see Policy #1020, CORPOARL, SERGEANT AND LIEUTENANT PROMOTIONS, Section IV-H-10)
    - (3) Senior officer on-duty as determined by date of hire as a police officer.
    - (4) The Sergeant and Corporal will not be scheduled off at the same time without the approval of the Patrol Division Commander.
  - b. In the absence of the Detective Division Lieutenant, supervision of Investigations Division personnel shall be delegated to the Investigations Division Sergeant, or in his/her absence, the Investigations Division Acting Sergeant (see Policy #1020, CORPORAL, SERGEANT AND LIEUTENANT PROMOTIONS, Section IV-H-10). When both the Investigations Division Sergeant and Acting Sergeant are absent, supervision shall be delegated to the senior on-duty detective as determined by date of hire as a police officer.
5. Single operation involving personnel from different functions:
  - a. In joint patrol/detective investigations, the officer initially responding to the call will be in charge until relieved by a detective or supervisor dispatched to the scene. A detective assigned to the scene will be in charge until a supervisor arrives and assumes control. When the Investigations Division Supervisor and a Patrol Supervisor are both on the scene of a joint investigation, control of the crime scene is relinquished when the Investigations Division Supervisor announces that he/she is taking control of the scene.
  - b. In preplanned operations involving personnel from different functions, command authority shall be delegated in accordance with the provisions of the operational plan or directive established for the detail or assignment.

D. EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS:

1. In the event of an emergency, and until the Chief of Police or his/her designee can be notified, respond and assume command, the highest ranking officer on the scene shall be responsible for incident command system (ICS) functions.
2. In the absence of the Chief of Police, unless otherwise designated by the Chief of Police, the senior on-duty or on-call Command Officer shall be notified of the emergency or exceptional situation. Upon notification, the Command Officer shall make a determination whether or not his/her response to the incident is necessary. If the Command Officer responds to the scene, he/she will be responsible for ICS functions until relieved by the Chief of Police.
3. In the absence of a Command Officer, the Shift Supervisor will, upon notification, respond to the scene and perform ICS functions until relieved by a Command Officer.

APPROVED:                     *Thomas Nolan*                      
Chief Thomas Nolan

DATED: 04/26/2019

APPROVED:                     *Jeremy Johnson*                      
Captain Jeremy Johnson

DATED: 04/26/2019

TO BE REVIEWED:      ANNUALLY

DISTRIBUTION:      All police officers  
                            All civilian employees  
                            Township Manager  
                            File

# Attachment A DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

