



GENERAL ORDER ADM-03 DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 20, 2012

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. DEFINITIONS
- III. CANCELLATION

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) to establish certain terms and verbiage to facilitate crystalline communication between its members in both written and oral communications.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Organizational

1. BEAT: A geographical area of the County to which officers are assigned for patrol purposes.
2. BUREAU: The largest functional unit within a Command. A bureau is generally commanded by a Captain.
3. COMMAND The largest functional unit within the Department. A Command is overseen by a Major.
4. DECENTRALIZED TEAM Members who have primary assignments within the agency, but have received specialized training to respond to a specific incident as necessary, i.e. Emergency Services Team, Critical Incident Negotiation Team, etc.
5. DEPARTMENT: The Howard County Department of Police.
6. DETAIL: Members selected from one or more organizational components assigned to a specialized task or function.
7. DISTRICT COMMUNITY RESOURCE OFFICER Assigned to the patrol districts to help address community needs and concerns in each District.
8. DISTRICT STATION: The facility that houses the patrol offices, administrative offices, detectives and other members that are responsible for a specific geographical area.
9. DISTRICT The primary geographic unit into which Howard County is subdivided for the purposes of providing a variety of police services, particularly routine patrol services. A District is generally commanded by a Captain.
10. DIVISION: The primary subdivision of a Bureau. This component is generally commanded by a Lieutenant.
11. HEADQUARTERS: The facility which houses the Chief of Police and his staff.

- 12. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY RESOURCE OFFICER: Assigned to the Police Neighborhood Satellite Offices to assist the community in reducing crime and disorder in those neighborhoods.
- 13. PLATOON: A subdivision of a Patrol District consisting of a commanding officer, generally a Lieutenant, and three or more squads of officers.
- 14. POLICE NEIGHBORHOOD SATELLITE OFFICES: A facility established within a community used by patrol officers to conduct business and to further community relationships.
- 15. SECTION: The primary subdivision of a Division, supervised by a Sergeant or civilian supervisor.
- 16. SHIFT: A scheduled period of time during which members are assigned to work.
- 17. SQUAD: The primary subdivision of a platoon. May also be a group of officers performing related tasks in unison. Generally supervised by a Sergeant.
- 18. SUPERVISORY AREA: A geographical subdivision of the County comprised of one or more beats.
- 19. UNIT: A subdivision of a Section whose members are supervised by the Section Supervisor.

B. Personnel

- 1. ANIMAL HANDLER A civilian employee who is responsible for the care of the shelter, medicating animals, processing animals and assisting in the coordination of the adoption program. An Animal Handler does not have law enforcement powers.
- 2. ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER A civilian employee responsible for conducting investigations into animal abuse and neglect and charging violators of the applicable standards. An Animal Control Officer has specific law enforcement powers.
- 3. AUXILIARY OFFICERS Uniformed civilian volunteers, who are not commissioned police officers. They may be assigned to law enforcement related community service functions and large scale special events and emergencies.
- 4. CADET Uniformed civilian personnel who are assigned to assist members of the public with non-criminal complaints and performing support work for the different organizational components.
- 5. CIVILIAN All personnel other than sworn police officers.
- 6. COMMANDER A commissioned officer having permanent or temporary supervisory responsibility for a Command, Bureau, District, Division or Platoon.
- 7. COMMISSIONED OFFICER An officer holding the rank of Lieutenant or higher.

8. CONTINGENT EMPLOYEE

A member that provides staffing support for unanticipated, unusual or seasonal needs of the Department. These members are generally part time and are non-benefitted.
9. INCIDENT COMMANDER

Sworn Supervisor/Commander responsible for the overall incident operation. This command is a function, not necessarily the right or obligation of the highest-ranking officer on the scene.
10. MEMBER

All people associated with the Department (sworn officers, uniformed civilians, civilian employees and volunteers).
11. MOUNTED PATROL

Comprised of volunteers using personally-owned horses, vehicles, and tack consistent with the Volunteer Mounted Patrol Manual.
12. NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER

An officer holding the rank of Sergeant.
13. OFFICER

All sworn members of the Department.
14. OFFICER IN CHARGE

An officer who has temporary supervisory responsibility for a detail or of a crime scene.
15. PERSONNEL

Members who are on the Departmental payroll.
16. POSITION

The duties and responsibilities, or work, assignable to one employee. A position may be filled or vacant.
17. PRECEDENCE OF RANK

The following is the precedence of rank for officers in descending order:

 - a. Chief of Police
 - b. Major (Deputy Chief)
 - c. Captain
 - d. Lieutenant
 - e. Sergeant
 - f. Corporal
 - g. Police Officer First Class
 - h. Police Officer
 - i. Probationary Police Officer
18. ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENT

A subdivision of the Department, such as a Bureau, Division, Section, Unit, or position that is established and staffed on a full time basis to provide a specific function.
19. RANK

Official grade or position, on a scale classifying officers.
20. SENIORITY

Among officers of the same rank, precedence is based upon date of hire as a sworn HCPD officer.
21. SUPERVISOR

Any personnel having permanent or temporary supervisory responsibility for other members or any officer holding the rank of Sergeant or higher.
22. UNIFORMED CIVILIAN

Any person, paid or volunteer, who wears a uniform that represents the Department, excluding officers.

23. VOLUNTEER The HCPD will utilize the services of citizens based upon their skills, training, and time available to perform volunteer tasks under the direct supervision of designated HCPD employees.

24. WATCH COMMANDER A supervisor who has responsibility for a platoon that works in a specific geographic area.

C. Other Terminology

1. CHAIN OF COMMAND The line of authority which extends from the Chief of Police through a single person at each level of supervision to the level of execution.

2. GENDER In written orders and directives, the use of the masculine gender includes all personnel unless specifically noted otherwise.

3. LAWFUL ORDER Any order, verbal or written, issued by a supervisor which is not in violation of any law, ordinance, or Departmental policy.

4. LINE OF AUTHORITY Direct operating authority delegated by the Chief of Police through each level of supervision until the level of execution is reached. Line authority primarily determines the need, time and place for action.

5. MAY Indicates, in orders or directives that the action is of a discretionary nature.

6. PLURALITY OF WORDS In written orders and directives, the use of the plural includes the singular as the use of the singular includes the plural.

7. SHALL/WILL Indicates, in orders or directives, that the action is mandatory.

8. SHOULD Indicates, in written orders and directives, that the action is advisable.

9. TENSE OF WORDS In written orders and directives, words used in the present tense include the future tense.

10. THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS Reviewed by a single supervisor in each level of the Chain of Command.

III. CANCELLATION

This General Order cancels and replaces General Order ADM-03 dated October 29, 1999.

Authority:



William J. McMahon
Chief of Police