

	MEDFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT	POLICY NO. 4.15a
AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY		
MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED: NONE	ISSUING AUTHORITY: Michelle Guerette Chief of Police	DATE OF ISSUE: 06/25/2023 EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/25/2023 REVISION DATE: 11/03/2025

BACKGROUND:

It is the responsibility of each Department employee to satisfactorily perform assigned work and conform to the Medfield Police Department's written directives as defined by this manual as well as by any verbal orders and instructions given by each employee's supervisor. The intent of this policy is to ensure that officers and employees understand their authority and responsibility and have a clear understanding of the command structure of the department and supervisory authority.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Medfield Police Department that all employees will take the Oath of Office prior to assuming sworn status. All sworn employees will adhere to and abide by the Oath of Office. [1.1.1]

All sworn personnel derive their power and authority as police officers of cities and towns from M.G.L., Chapter 41, Section 98. All sworn special police officers in the Town of Medfield shall derive their power and authority as special police officers from Chapter 81 of the Acts of 2010. Pursuant to Section 2 of Chapter 81 of the Acts of 2010, special police officers have the power to make arrests and to perform other police functions as do regular police officers of the Town of Medfield. All employees have the authority to make decisions and use available resources that are necessary for the successful completion of their assigned duties. In the acceptance of this delegated authority, each

employee also accepts the accompanying accountability for his/her actions (or lack of actions) and obligations. **[1.2.1]**

Employees who are confronted by an extraordinary situation for which there are no guidelines or policies, and who are unsure of the correct course of conduct, are expected to consult with their immediate supervisor, on whom the ultimate accountability falls. In the event that this consultation is impossible, it is expected that each employee will exercise their best judgment in taking the necessary action, while keeping in mind the goals and philosophies of the Department. **[1.2.1] [11.3.1]**

Direction from a supervisor should come via the chain of command as outlined in the department's organizational chart when practical. Each organizational component is under the direct command of only one supervisor at any given time. This supervisor is responsible for directing the efforts of his/her employees and ensuring that they are performing satisfactorily. Supervisors shall be accountable for the activities of employees under their immediate control. **[11.2.2] [11.3.2]**

Each member of the Department shall be accountable to one supervisor at any given time, according to his/her particular duty assignment at that time. If another supervisory officer needs to assign an officer not directly under his/her supervision, he/she shall consult with the officer's supervisor prior to such assignment whenever possible. **[11.2.1]**

PROCEDURES:

The following will be adhered to concerning command authority in the department:

1. All lawful orders of a superior, including orders relayed from a superior by an employee of the same or lesser rank, will be followed. **[12.1.3]**
2. Officers and/or employees who are given a lawful and otherwise proper order which is in conflict with a previous order, rule, or directive shall respectfully inform the superior officer issuing the latter conflicting order. If the superior officer who has issued the conflicting order does not alter or retract it, the order shall stand and the officer and/or employee shall obey it, yet not be held responsible for disobedience of any prior order, rule, or directive. **[12.1.3]**
3. No superior officer shall knowingly issue any order which is in violation of any law or bylaw. No officer is required to obey an order which is contrary to the laws of the United States, statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or by-laws of the Town of Medfield. If an officer believes an order is unlawful, the officer shall respectfully inform the superior officer issuing the order of their belief. If the superior officer who issued the order does not alter or retract it, any officer refusing to obey the order shall be strictly required to justify this action or face disciplinary action. **[12.1.3]**
4. In normal day-to-day operations, including situations involving personnel of different subdivisions, the officer of the highest rank present at any place or occasion, shall command in absence of orders to the contrary. **[12.1.2(c)], [12.1.2(d)]**

Note: Upon the direction of the Chief of Police or her designee, deputies may assume authority and command of a crime scene, or a criminal investigation.

5. The Chief of Police may designate who is to be in charge of the Department in her absence when she is to be out of town, or otherwise unable to command for any length of time. Upon the direction of the Chief of Police or her designee, Unit commanders may designate who is to be in charge of their unit in their absence when they are to be out of town, or otherwise unable to command for any length of time. If the Chief of Police is incapacitated, the Deputy Police Chief will assume command of the department. If the Deputy Police Chief is incapacitated or otherwise unable to assume command, then the officer of the highest rank shall be in charge if there has been no prior authority designation.

[12.1.2(a)]

6. In exceptional situations where personnel from the Metropolitan Law Enforcement Council or other outside agencies are utilized, the Department will follow Incident Command Protocol and the order of precedence will be described in that protocol. In all such circumstances, the Medfield Chief of Police or her designee will retain command. **[12.1.2(b)]**