

Fennimore Police Department Chain of Command		
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PURPOSE AND POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear chain of command for department employees. It shall be the policy of the police department to work within the chain of command for all operational matters and other department related concerns.

DISCUSSION

The successful operation of any agency depends on an effective chain of command. To be a successful team, department employees must understand what their work assignments are and who has the authority to assign those duties. A successful team also knows how to address problems, concerns or suggestions for improvement within the chain of command.

PROCEDURE

Department Organization

The Mayor, as the chief administrative officer of the City, is the primary professional advisor to the Council and head of the management team. The Chief of Police is part of the management team and reports to the Mayor. The Assistant Chief of Police is also a member of the management team and reports to the Chief.

This management team concept is the process by which a recommendation for City action is developed and the decisions implemented. This system represents a means of establishing orderly lines of organization and communication as management personnel unite with the Council to promote effective services for the community.

Police Authority

All police officers shall have power and authority and shall perform such duties as are prescribed by state and federal law, all ordinances of the City and orders, rules and regulations lawfully prescribed by the Mayor or Council. The Chief and each police officer shall possess the powers, enjoy the privileges and be subject to the liabilities conferred and imposed by law, Fennimore Municipal Code § 9.05.

Work Assignments

The Chief of Police shall have full control and direction of all law enforcement activities within the City subject to the approval of the Mayor as provided by the Wisconsin Statutes, Fennimore Municipal Code § 9.02(1).

The Chief of Police shall see that all laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, resolutions and orders of every kind applicable within the City of Fennimore are enforced, Fennimore Municipal Code § 9.04. As such, the Chief has full authority to define duties and assignments within the department to complete these responsibilities.

The Assistant Chief of Police shall serve as second-in-command for the department and is responsible for assisting with the administration and other supervisory functions necessary for the operation of the department. The Assistant Chief has full authority to make command decisions consistent with department expectations and past practices.

Police Officers are responsible for continuing the department's mission during their working hours. Officer duties include meeting expectations as defined by department Performance Assessment Categories and successfully completing duties assigned to them by supervisors. When more than one Officer is on duty, both Officers are equally responsible for handling complaints, calls for services and satisfying shift responsibilities.

During times when both the Chief and Assistant Chief are unavailable for immediate consultation, the Chief may assign an Officer the authority to make command decisions or otherwise problem solve as needed to address emergency or urgent situations until the Chief or Assistant Chief may become meaningfully engaged in the matter.

Members of the Common Council are prohibited from individually issuing any orders, directions or instructions to the Chief of Police or his or her subordinates. In all respects, the Chief of Police shall be solely responsible to the Mayor who may have the advice and services of the Common Council, Fennimore Municipal Code § 9.02(2).

When any Officer receives a directive or request from an individual citizen, business representative or elected or appointed official and the directive or request is outside the scope of normal duty activity, the Officer will document the directive or request in their duty log and not take action on the matter until it has been discussed with the Chief or Assistant Chief.

Professional Development, Change or Workplace Disputes

All Department employees have the obligation to further the professional advisement of the police department through the chain of command. Officers will refer matters requiring administrative attention to the Chief or Assistant Chief for their consideration. If an Officer has any questions, opinions or suggestions about any aspect of his or her job or department operation, then those questions, opinions or suggestions will be directed to the Chief or Assistant Chief.

Generally, if a department employee has a problem or dispute with another employee, then the employee is encouraged to approach the other person first and attempt to resolve the conflict. If that does not resolve the problem, then the employee must address the problem through the Chief or Assistant Chief.

If an employee feels they are the victim of sexual harassment or are being harassed by another person based on one's protected status, then the employee is directed to follow the Harassment Reporting Policy in the City's Employee Handbook.

If an employee has a dispute concerning the interpretation or application of their employment contract, the employee will follow grievance and arbitration procedures set by their employment contract. If an employee has a dispute concerning matters not covered by the grievance and arbitration procedures set by their contract, the grievance procedures in the city's personnel manual will be followed.

The Fennimore Police Department recognizes the right of its employees, as citizens in a democratic society, to speak out on issues of public concern. When those issues are related to the Fennimore Police Department, the employee's expression must be balanced against the interests of the Fennimore Police Department and the function it serves in the community.

DISCLAIMER

This policy is for department use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. Department policy should not be construed as the creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violation of this policy will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions and is not intended for use in courts of civil or criminal jurisdiction.

/s/ Christopher J. French

06/18/2021

Christopher J. French
Chief of Police

Date