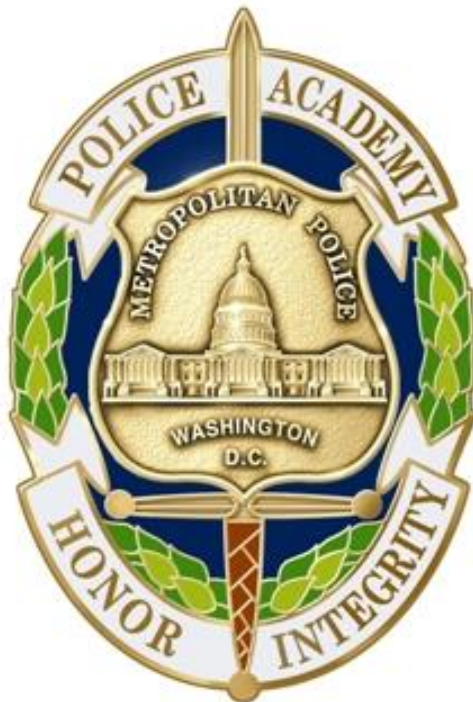


Metropolitan Police Academy



1.3 Chain of Command

1.3.1 Define the concept of chain of command

The **chain of command** is the line of authority and responsibility along which orders are passed within an MPD element and between different units. Orders are transmitted down the chain of command from a higher-ranked police official, such as a lieutenant, to lower-ranked personnel. The recipient of an order either executes the order personally or transmits it further down the chain, as appropriate, until it is received by those expected to execute the order.

In general, police personnel give orders only to those directly below them in the chain of command and receive orders only from those directly above them. Higher rank alone does not entitle a higher-ranked MPD official to give commands to everyone of lower rank. For example, a sergeant assigned to the Academy does not directly command lower-ranked members of patrol and thus is generally expected to approach a sergeant assigned to a patrol unit if he/she requires action by members of that unit.

This does not mean, however, that an official from an outside unit can never give an order to an officer of a different unit—there are instances when that is appropriate, but it is a rare occurrence. For example, a sergeant from the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) cannot approach an officer assigned to the Sixth District and change his/her assignment from “6031” to “Special Beat 603.” If a CID official does give such an order directly to a lower-ranked member of patrol, it would be considered highly unusual and only allowed if there were exigent circumstances such as a lack of time or an inability to confer with the Sixth District commander as the CID official would be seen as subverting the authority of the Sixth District commander. In this Department, the lower-ranked member being ordered may advise that it has to be cleared with his/her chain of command first, which in this example would be with the commander of the Sixth District. While it may be appropriate for the lower-ranked member to respectfully advise the ordering official he/she has received direction differing from the order given, it is important to note that refusing to carry out an order is almost always considered *insubordination*. The only exception is if the order itself is illegal (i.e., the person carrying out the order would be committing a crime).

An MPD member who has difficulty executing a duty or order and appeals for relief directly to a member above their immediate supervisor in the chain of command may be disciplined for failure to follow the chain of command. Similarly, an official is usually expected to give orders only to his or her direct subordinate(s), even if it is to pass an order down to another service member lower in the chain of command.

In every chain of command, the span of control is very important. Span of control can be defined as the number of subordinates directly reporting to a leader/manager. MPD also defines span of control as the number of organizational elements that may be directly managed by one (1) person.

Officers do not give “orders” to other officers or officials but have a duty to act or intervene if the circumstances call for intervention. All members of the department learn about this concept during Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) Training.

1.3.2 Define the rank structure of the Metropolitan Police Department

Sworn members

- The **Chief of Police** is the chief executive officer of the Metropolitan Police Department.

- The **Executive Assistant Chief** is the assistant chief of the Metropolitan Police Department.
- The **Assistant Chief of Police** is the top MPD official of a bureau.
- A **Commander** is a top MPD official at the division level or police district level.
- An **Inspector** reports to a commander or above-ranked official at the division level or district level.
- A **Captain** is a top MPD rank.
- A **Lieutenant** is a middle management MPD rank.
- A **Sergeant** is a first-line supervisor.
- A **Master Patrol Officer** is an experienced and accomplished patrol officer (recognized but no longer an active rank)
- An **Investigator** is the initial promotional rank for investigative personnel.
- A **Detective** has Grade II and Grade I. Each level gaining more experience.
- An **Officer** is rank and file member of MPD.
- A **Probationary Officer** is an officer completing their field training after graduation.
- A **Recruit Officer** is a police officer candidate who is still being trained at the academy.

Professional Staff (non-sworn members)

Professional staff members are referred to by title and may either be supervisory or non-supervisory. Some examples of supervisory professional staff titles include.

- The **Chief Operating Officer** is responsible for a broad range of services, including financial operations, technical services, facilities, etc.
- The **Executive Director** is responsible for a bureau.
- A **Director** is responsible for a division.
- A **Program Manager** may be responsible for a branch.

There are other non-supervisory professional staff members that provide services to the Department. Some examples include body worn camera coordinators, training coordinators, analysts, policy writers, instructors, etc.

1.3.3 Describe the various titles and positions utilized by the Metropolitan Police Department

- **Commanding Officer** – the highest-ranking officer in an element or on-scene.
- **Detective Grade One** – a senior detective with supervisory authority.
- **Detective Grade Two** – a primary investigator of crimes that require follow-up.
- **Detail Position** – a temporary assignment for a sworn or professional staff member.
- **Field Commander/Night Hawk** – acts as the Chief of Police when he/she is not on duty or as a citywide watch commander.
- **Professional Staff Employee** – an MPD employee who is not sworn.
- **Reserve Officer** – a volunteer officer who has police power.
- **Senior Police Officer** – a retired police officer who returns as a temporary District of Columbia employee.
- **Sworn Member** – anyone holding the rank from Officer up to Chief of Police, who is full duty and has the powers of arrest.
- **Transfer** - a permanent change in assignment.
- **Watch Commander** – a sworn official who has ultimate responsibility for all actions taken during his/her watch.

Recruit officers are assigned to the Metropolitan Police Academy Division in the Professional Development Bureau. Upon graduating from the Academy, you will be transferred to a patrol district in either the Patrol Services North or Patrol Services South Bureau.

1.3.4 Outline the basic structure of the department

Pursuant to General Order 101.10, MPD is organized as follows:

- The **Executive Office of the Chief of Police (EOCOP)** is the final authority for all policies, procedures, and activities of the department and its members. The EOCOP oversees all bureaus within the department. The EOCOP provides specialized service to the chief of police in support of the department's mission and vision.
- **Patrol Services North (PSN)** is commanded by an assistant chief who coordinates crime prevention and reduction efforts in the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Districts. In addition to providing professional and effective patrol services, this bureau responds to calls for police service.
Patrol Services South (PSS) is commanded by an assistant chief, who coordinates crime prevention and reduction efforts in the First, Sixth, and Seventh Districts. In addition to providing professional and effective patrol services, this bureau responds to calls for police service.
- The **Investigative Services Bureau (ISB)** is commanded by an assistant chief who works with the community to solve crimes, bring offenders to justice, support the recovery of victims, and protect witnesses. It is also responsible for overseeing security and outreach in the District of Columbia's public schools.
- The **Homeland Security Bureau (HSB)** is commanded by an assistant chief who integrates intelligence and operational functions to ensure that the District of Columbia is well-protected and that the government prevents and is prepared to respond to threats and critical incidents. The bureau has four divisions that support patrol operations in reducing crime and fear of crime by providing specialized patrol and tactical resources, improving information-sharing, processing relevant information, and providing actionable intelligence to authorized personnel.
- The **Youth and Family Engagement Bureau (YFEB)** oversees the School Safety Division and the Youth and Family Services Division. The YFEB also has responsibility for missing persons, internet crime against children, youth crime intervention and prevention, and juvenile processing.
- The **Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB)** is commanded by an assistant chief who acts as the guardian of MPD's reputation. IAB ensures MPD's accountability by conducting comprehensive investigations of alleged misconduct and use of force. The IAB oversees the Internal Affairs Division, the Court Liaison Division, and the Risk Management Division.
- The **Professional Development Bureau (PDB)** manages a wide range of duties and responsibilities related to employee recruiting, hiring, management, and development. The PDB oversees the Recruiting Division, the Metropolitan Police Academy Division, the Human Resource Management Division, the Disciplinary Review Division, and the Medical Services Division.
- The **Technical and Analytical Services Bureau (TASB)** provides support to patrol and investigative operations with innovative, secure, accessible, and resilient technological systems and modernized business processes. The TASB oversees the IT Infrastructure and Engineering Division,

the Enterprise Data Services Division, the Applications Management Division, the Records Division, and the Fleet Services Division.

The following terms have the meanings designated:

	Term	Definition
1.	Branch	A sub-element of an office or division that typically has two or more sections.
2.	Bureau	A major element of the department which manages field operations or provides other essential support functions.
3.	District	A geographic subdivision of Patrol Services (PS).
4.	Division	A sub-element of a bureau or office that typically contains at least two sub-elements that may be branches, sections or units.
5.	Office	An element that typically provides support functions to the entire Department.
6.	Patrol Services	Two elements of the department that manage field operations, Patrol Services North (PSN) and Patrol Services South (PSS).
7.	Police Service Area (PSA)	A geographical subdivision in a district.
8.	Section	A sub-element of an office, division or branch that typically has two or more units or teams.
9.	Team	A sub-element of a district, division, branch or section that performs a specific task or operation, or provides a specific service.
10.	Unit	A sub-element of an office, branch or section typically containing more than one staff person and performing a specialized function.

Field Elements

- A **District** is a geographic subdivision of either the Patrol Services North or Patrol Services South Bureau and is run by a commander.
- A **Sector** is a grouping of two or more PSAs. Every district is currently divided into three sectors, each of which is led by a captain and supported by lieutenants.
- A **Police Service Area (PSA)** is a geographical subdivision in a district. Typically, each sector has two to three PSAs.
- A **Team** is a sub-element of a district or section that performs a specific task or operation, or provides a specific service.
- A **Platoon** is a civil disturbance entity consisting of a minimum of four CDU squads. It is commanded by a lieutenant.
- A **Squad** is a sub-element of a platoon or section that performs a specific field operation.

1.3.5 Explain the concept of positional authority and the source of Department policy and directives

Positional authority refers to the power an individual holds as a result of his or her title or role in an organization; it is solely based on rank, which carries a certain level of meaning within the organization.

According to D.C. Municipal Regulations, the Chief of Police “is authorized to issue directives governing conduct and controlling police activity (Title 6A DCMR § 800.3).” Written directives are the means to document and communicate policies, rules, regulations, and procedures, and are necessary to establish clear limits to the broad discretionary authority of a police officer. MPD policies and directives must comply with all District of Columbia and federal laws.

In rare instances, an order given by a superior will conflict with an MPD policy or directive. So long as the order is not an unlawful one, the lower-ranked officer will call attention to the conflict and, if the superior persists in giving the order, the lower ranking officer must follow it. The higher-ranked officer holds responsibility for the direction given.

If a Member Discovers an Error in the General Orders

Through the chain of command, a member shall advise of any directive that conflicts with another directive or is otherwise in error. Members may submit requests for new directives or for revisions/corrections to current directives. When submitting these types of requests, members will:

- Prepare a request addressed to the director of the Policy and Standards Branch and submit the memorandum through his/her chain of command.
 - The memorandum shall explain the reason(s) for the request.
 - As applicable, a draft of a proposed revision shall be attached, both as a hard and an electronic copy.
- Supervisory personnel shall review the submission to ensure that the information is properly prepared, and submit the completed package to their commanding official. The commanding official shall review all such requests to ensure that they are justified.

1.3.6 Understand the importance of professional staff to the daily operation of the Metropolitan Police Department

During your career with the Metropolitan Police Department, you will work with many professional staff at all levels of the organization whose specialized jobs lend themselves to the smooth day-to-day operation of the Department. At your district, you will interact with a variety of professional staff members, which include administrative staff to more specialized functions such as those who serve as training coordinators, body-worn camera coordinators, and perform other functions.

At headquarters, professional staff are similarly responsible for a wide variety of functions. Examples include supporting the issuance of payroll, performing crime analysis, and serving as lawyers in the Office of the General Counsel. Another example of a professional staff title is Criminal Research Specialist. These individuals support the work of our uniformed officers and detectives by analyzing crime patterns and trends. Supervisory Professional staff may serve in a variety of leadership roles, such as Chief of Staff, Executive Directors, or Directors within the department. It is common for rank structures within our

department to contain a mixture of sworn members and professional staff members and sworn members may report to supervisory professional staff members.

In the Recruiting and Human Resources Management Divisions, professional staff are responsible for onboarding of new officers, conducting background checks, hiring and disciplinary review of employees.

Here at the Academy, we have professional staff instructors, as well as educational design specialists whose jobs are to design and implement the latest training for recruits and officers as they return for their yearly professional development training.

Our Fleet, Property, and Medical Services Divisions are primarily professional staffed whose jobs include keeping our vehicles in top shape and our members properly equipped with uniforms and gear that help us do our job and stay safe.

Without our professional staff, many of the specialized jobs they do would go unfilled due to the lack of experience and training that the positions require. By using professional staff in these capacities, it allows more officers to be deployed to patrol functions and to fill vacancies in specialized units.

SUMMARY

In this lesson, you have learned how the chain of command is important to the proper functioning of MPD. In addition, you learned about the structure of MPD and its governance through general orders and policy directives. A working knowledge of the chain of command and span of control is essential to members of any law enforcement agency.

You should have learned to:

- Define the concept of chain of command.
- Define the rank structure of the Metropolitan Police Department.
- Describe the various titles and positions utilized by the Metropolitan Police Department.
- Diagram the basic structure of the Department.
- Explain the concept of positional authority and identify the sources of department policy and directives.