

Directives System

Table of Contents

Policy Statement	2
Disclaimer	2
Persons Affected	2
Definitions	3
Directives Terms	3
Responsibilities	4
All Sheriff's Office Employees	4
Supervisors/Command Staff	4
Chief Inspector	4
Sheriff	4
Directives in Effect	5
Employee Notification and Actions	5

Policy Statement

The Sheriff's Office maintains a directives system to guide employees in the performance of their duties. The system is composed of all of the processes involved in developing, publishing and maintaining meaningful written guidance for Sheriff's Office employees. All employees are expected to conform to the provisions of the directives contained within this system.

Law enforcement, corrections and emergency management work is not always predictable and circumstances may arise which warrant departure from these guidelines. Employees should view written directives as objective standards, and use the reasonable discretion with which they are entrusted to deviate from these guidelines when necessary after considering Sheriff's Office shared values and the totality of the circumstances.

Disclaimer

Sheriff's Office directives are not intended to create an employment contract, nor any employment rights or entitlements. They are for the internal use of the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office and shall not be construed to create a higher standard or duty of care for civil or criminal liability against the County, its officials or employees. Violations of any provision of any directive shall only form the basis for Sheriff's Office administrative action, training or discipline. The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office reserves the right to revise any directive content in whole or in part.

In the process of issuing directives, the Sheriff will take into account the rights of employees as set out in applicable collective bargaining agreements and law.

Persons Affected

All Sheriff's Office employees and volunteers.

Definitions

Directive – A written, standing guideline issued by the Sheriff or other authorized person to all Sheriff's Office employees or a subset thereof. Sheriff's Office directives include:

- **Administrative Directive** - A document issued to provide guidance or clarification for command staff personnel.
- **Policy** - A predetermined course of action established as a guide toward accepted business strategies and objectives.¹
- **Procedure** - A method by which a policy can be accomplished; it provides the instructions necessary to carry out a policy statement.²
- **Special Order** - A directive used to make urgently needed adjustments to Sheriff's Office practices before a policy or procedure can be developed or revised, or to put in writing an order (e.g., promotion, special operation).

PowerDMS - A Software-As-A-Service (SAAS) system licensed by Innovative Data Solutions of Tampa, Florida, intended to be used by the Sheriff's Office as a repository for all agency directives and online training.

Directives Terms

The following terms as used in Sheriff's Office directives have the indicated meanings, unless it is apparent from the content of a directive that they have a different meaning:

May - Indicates a permissive, discretionary or conditional action.

Shall - Indicates a mandatory action.

Should - Indicates a generally required or expected action, absent a rational basis for failing to conform.

Will - Equivalent to *shall*.

¹ Page, S. B. (2002). *Establishing a System of Policies and Procedures*, p. 2.

² *Ibid*.

Responsibilities

All Sheriff's Office Employees

All Sheriff's Office employees shall review and complete all training assignments on Sheriff's Office new or revised directives in accordance with this policy, and notify a supervisor if they have difficulty doing so.

In addition, employees are expected to lend their expertise to the development of agency directives when assigned. Such assignments will be coordinated with members of each employee's chain of command. Employees will work directly with the Chief Inspector on such projects unless otherwise directed.

Supervisors/Command Staff

Supervisors and command staff members shall:

- Schedule time for employees to read directives and complete associated training activities as necessary and appropriate upon request.
- Ensure that the appropriate resources are tapped to solve any problems employees have with accessing agency directives and notify the Chief Inspector if they are unable to resolve such problems in a timely manner.

Chief Inspector

The Chief Inspector is responsible for establishing and maintaining the directives system. This includes but is not limited to:

- Developing, or supervising the development of, directives content.
- Setting a consistent format for all agency directives.
- Ensuring stakeholders have an opportunity to review and comment on directives prior to publication.
- Ensuring the Sheriff or his or her designee approves the final version of a directive before publication.
- Publishing directives to applicable employees and tracking employee receipts of such directives.
- Ensuring that employees receive initial and ongoing training when appropriate given the subject matter of each directive.
- Ensuring all employees can consistently access all applicable agency directives.
- Maintaining a record of changes to agency directives.
- Maintaining this policy.

Sheriff

The Sheriff retains the ultimate authority for approving and issuing directives.

Directives in Effect

As of the date of this policy, the following Sheriff's Office publications constitute official Sheriff's Office directives and remain in effect as they exist on the Sheriff's Office's Whatcom County intranet (InsideWhatcom) pages [REDACTED]

- Policies, Procedures and Special Orders listed under "Directives System"
- Rules and Regulations Manual
- Operations Manual (Bureau of Law Enforcement and Investigative Services)
- Policy and Procedures Manual (Bureau of Custody and Corrections)
- Special Response Team Manual

These directives will be maintained in this location until they are incorporated into PowerDMS.

Employee Notification and Actions

Employees will normally receive notification of new or revised directives via PowerDMS, which automatically sends notifications to their county email addresses. As such, employees shall:

1. Check their county email accounts at least once every work day.
2. When notified, log into their PowerDMS accounts and determine if they have been assigned to review a new or revised directive.
3. Read, electronically sign, and comply with all new or revised directives as soon as possible.

Employees will complete online training courses associated with a directive as soon as practicable and shall work with their supervisors to schedule time to do so if necessary.