


NORTHAMPTON POLICE DEPARTMENT		
Administration & Operations Manual		
Policy: Direction And Supervision		AOM: A-103
Massachusetts Police Accreditation Standards Referenced: [12.1.3], [12.1.2], [12.1.2.a], [12.1.2.c], [12.1.2.b], [11.3.1], [11.3.2]		Issuing Authority <hr/> John D. Cartledge Chief of Police
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I. Introductory Discussion

This directive establishes and delineates the authority of department personnel to direct the resources of the organization toward the accomplishment of its goals and objectives and provides policy with regard to the following:

1. The assignment of authority to command.
2. Compliance with proper command authority.
3. The establishment of a protocol and order of precedence for command authority in the event of the absence of the Chief of Police.
4. The establishment of a protocol for command authority that clearly establishes superior and subordinate relationships in situations where more than one ranking officer is involved.

II. Obedience to Orders [12.1.3]

An order is a command or request, written or oral, given by a superior directly, or relayed from a superior by an officer or employee of the same or lesser rank as the person who is receiving the order.

All members and employees of the Department shall obey all lawful orders as set forth in Section 4.0 of *AOM P100 Rules & Regulations*.

III. Command Protocol [12.1.2]

Command protocol is the determination of the highest level of command authority. Command protocol in the Northampton Police Department shall be established as follows:

1. The Chief of Police is the Chief Executive Officer and is designated as having responsibility for the management, direction, and control of the operations and administration of the Department. In the case of an absence or incapacitation for an extended period of time, the Mayor may appoint an “acting” Chief of Police. [12.1.2,a]
 - a. During other short-term absences, the most senior Captain shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer. [12.1.2,a]
2. The Chief of Police may assign ultimate command responsibility in any operation or situation. In these situations, the employee shall exercise the level of authority as prescribed and limited by the Chief of Police.
3. During normal day-to-day operations and absent a specific assignment or delegation of command authority by the Chief of Police to the contrary, command authority shall rest with the Department member holding the highest rank. [12.1.2,d]
4. In cases where there are two or more Department members present or available to make a decision, both of whom share the highest rank, command authority shall rest with the member having the greater length of service within that rank.
 - a. If both members have the same length of service within that rank, command authority shall rest with the member who has the greatest length of service with the department as a permanent sworn officer.
5. At the scene of any crime, accident, or other police incident where supervisory responsibility is not clearly delegated by department policy, or as a result of police operations involving personnel of different unit assignments, the highest ranking officer present shall assume command and direction of police personnel, so as to provide the most orderly and efficient accomplishment of the police task. [12.1.2,c]

- a. The first responding officer of any crime, accident, or other police incident, shall assume command of the scene until the arrival of a superior officer or of the arrival of the officer assigned by proper authority to take command of the situation.
 - b. When a detective is assigned to a crime scene, they shall be in charge of that scene and shall be responsible for protecting the scene and its evidence in accordance with proper policies and procedures. That detective shall only allow admittance to the scene on a necessity basis.
6. In situations where an employee is working out of their normal classification, command authority shall be commensurate with the assignment as set forth below:
- a. Any employee assigned as the officer-in-charge shall have the command authority equivalent to a Sergeant.
 - b. Any employee assigned as the Shift or Bureau Commander shall have the command authority equivalent to a Lieutenant.
 - c. Any employee assigned as acting Division Commander shall have command authority equivalent to that of a Captain.
7. During exceptional or emergency circumstances, an employee assigned as the leader of a team or special unit shall have command authority over the members of that team during actual operation or assignment, and for the purpose of achieving the specific function or objective assigned by proper authority. [12.1.2,b]
8. During field training, a Field Training Officer (FTO) shall have command authority over a police officer trainee assigned to them.

IV. Authority and Responsibility

- A. Department personnel shall be provided with the authority to effectively complete all police functions. Personnel may not be given responsibility for a function without the commensurate authority to carry out the assignment. [11.3.1]

Superior officers shall delegate the necessary authority to allow employees to carry out delegated responsibilities.

- B. All employees shall be accountable for the use of authority delegated to their position. [11.3.1]
- C. A superior officer may delegate responsibility and authority to a subordinate for a specific task or duty. However, that superior officer shall be accountable for the activities of the employees under their immediate control, and they may not delegate the ultimate responsibility for the proper accomplishment of required tasks or objectives. [11.3.2]