

	SAN MARCOS POLICE DEPARTMENT	
	Policy 1.1 Mission, Values, and Written Directive System	
	Effective Date: April 11, 2019	Replaces: GO 100
	Approved:	
	 _____ Chief of Police	
Reference: 1.04		

I. POLICY

Law enforcement agencies provide essential services to foster safe communities through crime reduction and deterrence. Administrators of these law enforcement agencies are obligated to train, supervise, and guide personnel in performing the myriad tasks that are necessary for creating safe communities.

At the same time, these administrators must seek to improve employee confidence and competence in performing tasks while reducing vulnerability to liability. To meet these obligations, agencies must manage themselves according to written directives. A manual of policies and procedures guides the day-to-day legal and ethical functioning of a law enforcement agency.

To that end, this manual furnishes a blueprint for the performance of this agency’s activities in accordance with established state and national standards. Providing all members of the department with an understanding of the department’s mission and its values provides guidance for decision making when situations are not covered by direct policy or procedure.

II. PURPOSE

This document outlines the organization of the department, its Policy and Procedure Manual, and its authority. It also defines three kinds of statements that appear in these documents -- policy, rules, and procedures -- and states the department’s mission and core values.

III. AGENCY MISSION AND VALUES

A. Mission

The mission of the San Marcos Police Department is to effectively and efficiently provide for the protection of lives and property, preserve the public peace, and provide needed community services with the highest level of professionalism and ethical standards.

B. Core Values

1. Integrity: Doing what is right regardless of the circumstances is the foundation of our organization.
2. Teamwork: Professional collaboration based on respect, trust and accountability to achieve success for the organization, customers, and community.
3. Professionalism: Choosing daily to be held to the highest standards of excellence and demonstrating passion and commitment to continuous improvement.

4. Customer Experience: Consistently treating everyone the way we want to be treated and providing effective solutions in a courteous, respectful manner.
5. Innovation: Fostering an environment receptive to new ideas by encouraging creativity, inclusiveness, adaptability, and resourcefulness.

C. Values Statement

The San Marcos Police Department is committed to the concept of shared responsibility, in partnership with its community, to identify and solve community problems, to maintain the public safety, and to promote a sense of confidence and security among its citizens, while remaining astute to the principles and craft of traditional policing.

The employees of the San Marcos Police Department take great pride in professionalism. We pursue a working environment in which honesty, integrity, open communications and compassion are of our character and culture.

The mission of the San Marcos Police Department is dynamic and ever changing. In an effort to best serve our community, to provide a safe living environment and high quality of life for our citizens, we always strive to utilize our limited resources in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Our community and our mission have never been more complex than they are today. The pace of change requires a continuing commitment to the training, education and the professional development of our employees. We recognize that through a commitment to the highest professional standards, both in the selection and development of our personnel, that we can at least meet with the pace of change, instill pride in our community, and accomplish our dutiful obligations in a safe and professional manner. With diligence and devotion, we are committed to the attainment of excellence, an ongoing profession unto itself.

At no time in our history has the availability of technological tools played a more significant role in our ability to enhance our services to the public. We continue to evaluate and consider new applications for innovation in our duties, responsibilities and conventional methodology. We procure and assimilate cost effective advancements in technology to augment our service delivery and communication within our community.

Effective police service is always considerate of both the human and humane realities of our world. The San Marcos Police Department instills in its employees and encourages the use of professional and responsible discretion, guided by effective policy and practice. Individual initiative, enthusiasm and the value measured use of police discretion is rewarded.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Policy: A policy is a statement of the department's philosophy on a given issue.
 - 1. Policy consists of principles and values that guide the performance of department employees.
 - 2. Further, policy is based upon ethics, experience, the law, and the needs of the community.
 - 3. Each section of the manual will begin with an agency policy statement
 - 4. Only the Chief of Police determines policy.
- B. Rule: A rule is a specific prohibition or requirement governing the behavior of employees.
 - 1. Rules permit little, if any, deviation. The violation of a rule normally results in discipline.
 - 2. Rules appear in the Policy and Procedure Manual as well as other departmental documents.
- C. Procedure: A procedure defines the acceptable method of performing an operation or activity. It differs from policy in that it directs employees' actions in performing specific tasks in a prescribed manner within the guidelines of policy.
 - 1. Failure to follow a procedure may or may not result in disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances.
 - 2. Procedures constitute the agency-approved guide to performing tasks.
 - 3. Employees may depart from procedures only when, in their professional judgment, the situation warrants.
 - 4. Employees must be prepared to justify their actions if they decide not to follow the defined procedure.
- D. Memorandum: A memorandum provides useful, specific information to employees and may constitute a directive affecting specific behavior for a specific event or period of time, and is usually self-canceling.

NOTE: Memoranda are not part of this manual; however, memoranda may be incorporated into future editions of the policy manual. Memoranda may be issued by the Chief of Police or by other personnel or agencies. Employees are advised that they may not alter components of this manual based on memoranda unless the memo was issued by the chief of police or a designee.

V. WRITTEN DIRECTIVES (TBP 1.04)

- A. Departmental Policy Manual and Standard Operating Procedures
 - 1. The policy manual contains policy statements, rules, and procedures as defined above, and is a written directive governing organizational matters.
 - 2. A standard operating procedure (SOP) primarily contains procedures, and is a written directive governing operational matters and routine daily tasks, such as how to respond to alarms, how to book a prisoner, etc.
 - a. Because they contain many procedural statements, SOPs permit some discretion. While SOPs are the preferred method of accomplishing a task,

the agency recognizes that an employee may depart from procedures if unusual circumstances warrant, and supervisors approve. Employees must justify their actions and document any departure from a standard operating procedure.

- b. While created by various offices within the department, the chief of police approves all SOPs.
- B. No policy, rule, regulation, procedure, or memorandum is valid unless signed by the chief of police or a designee.
- C. Within the context of any directive, the use of the word "shall" or "will" denotes an action or behavior that is mandatory and unequivocal. The words "may," "can," or "should" denote an action or behavior that is discretionary.
- D. Any employee of the department may suggest or recommend changes to the chief of police concerning the Policy Manual or an SOP by forwarding the suggestion through the chain of command or advisory panel.
- E. The chief of police or a designee will completely review the policy manual and the standard operating procedures at least biennially to ensure continued compliance with Texas law and operations. Revisions may be made at any time. Once a revision is approved and published, each employee shall be deemed to be on notice with regards to the current version.
NOTE: The office of the chief of police is responsible for distribution of all material to the employees of the department. A system for ascertaining that each employee has received the material must be set up and maintained. It must include a method for determining that each employee has received the information.

VI. COMPLIANCE WITH DIRECTIVES

- A. All employees of this department shall read, adhere to, and are held accountable for all directives, policies, procedures, rules, and instructional training material that they have received and signed for.
- B. All employees are responsible for adherence to all written directives that they have signed for and that affect the employee and the employee's work status.
- C. All employees are responsible for maintenance of all directives that are distributed to that employee. Each employee of the department shall electronically sign a statement acknowledging that the member has received, read, understands, and agrees to abide by the directive supplied to them in the appropriate manual(s), including revisions. If an employee does not understand the content of an order or directive, or believes that an order or directive is illegal or in conflict with other orders or directives, he or she should immediately notify a supervisor who shall provide instruction or training as necessary.
- D. Copies of the statements of receipt (see above) shall be maintained in the electronic directive file.
- E. All employees shall comply with the provisions of these directives and with the City Employee Handbook. If an issue is not addressed in the Employee Handbook, these directives shall apply. In the event a conflict exists between these directives and the

Employee Handbook, the Employee Handbook shall control unless the Department Policy Manual is more restrictive.

- F. The policies in this manual and the standard operating procedures (SOPs) apply to all sworn officers and non-sworn employees of the police department both on and off duty.