

	PALACIOS POLICE DEPARTMENT	
	Policy 1.1 Mission, Values, and Written Directive System	
	Effective Date: 01/04/2021	Replaces: 02/07/2006
	Approved: 	Milton Rivera, Chief of Police
	Reference: TBP 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 Palacios Police Department is to improve the quality of life for the people of our community.

B. Core Values

Integrity: The Palacios Police Department is built upon a foundation of ethical and professional conduct. We are committed to the highest level of moral principles and ethics. All members of the department will adhere to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, which is a part of this manual.

Honesty: We will be truthful and trustworthy at all times.

Fairness: We are committed to equal application of the law to offenders and members of the public as well as the equal application of rules and regulations to all members of the department.

Courage: We are dedicated to meeting all challenges with the courage needed to accomplish our mission.

Compassion: We understand our role as community caretakers, and temper our application of the law with compassion and empathy.

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.
 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.

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 member 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.

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 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 written 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.