
	ITHACA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE GENERAL ORDER	Distribution	General Order Number
		ALL PERSONNEL	2.03
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Order Title: UNITY OF COMMAND/SPAN OF CONTROL		Accreditation Standard:	Section
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		Section Title	
		ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT	
Rescinds:		 John Joly, Acting Chief of Police	

This General Order is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. This General Order should not be construed as creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this General Order will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish a written directive which provides for employee unity of command, where each employee is accountable to only one supervisor at any given time. This General Order also establishes the number of employees under the immediate control of a supervisor.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Ithaca Police Department (“Department”) that each employee shall be accountable to only one supervisor at any given time. Furthermore, an excessive number of employees should not be placed under the immediate control of any one supervisor at any given time. This shall apply to all levels of the Department’s organizational structure, notwithstanding emergencies. These limits may be general in nature but should ensure that normal day-to-day operations are properly directed and controlled.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Employee Unity of Command

To ensure that employees are aware of what is expected of them, and to promote efficiency and responsibility, employees will be accountable to only one supervisor at any given time. Within each established chain-of-command, the appropriate supervisor is responsible and accountable for the performance of employees under his/her control. There may be occasions that arise, however, requiring a supervisor to issue an order to an employee outside the supervisor's immediate responsibility. Nothing in this section of this General Order will prevent this. The organizational

structure, with formal lines of authority, is covered in General Order 2.01 – *Organizational Structure* and in the Organizational Chart.

B. Organizational Component Unity of Command

1. Introduction

All Officers of the Department are under the direct command of only one supervisor under the provisions of General Order 2.01. Whenever two or more officers of the same rank are on duty and supervising the same area of responsibility within the Department, the chain of command will be determined according to the time and rank in grade, except when otherwise designated by language of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Time in grade is determined by the length of time within a rank as determined by the appointment date to that specific rank. . Such order of time and rank in grade shall be recorded in the Department's Personnel Roster and updated by the Ithaca Police Chief's Office, as required.

2. Command Delegation Protocol

- a. Executive Command Staff: In the absence or incapacitation of the Chief of Police, command delegation shall thereafter follow the provisions outlined in General Order 2.01. If it is anticipated that the Chief will have an extended absence, an "Acting Chief" will be designated, in writing.
- b. Shift Supervisor: Refers to the supervisor whose squad is working under his or her supervision.
- c. Special Detail or Assignment Command: In cases where special details or assignments are implemented, command authority shall be delegated in accordance with the provisions of the Plan or Special Order established for that event.
- d. Overlap Assignment Supervision: Shift Command shall include all personnel scheduled for a given shift, or a portion thereof, who will be assigned to general patrol operational activities in fulfillment of the patrol shift's responsibilities.

3. Lines of Authority Between Components

- a. Supervisors must occasionally give commands, orders, or direction to personnel who are outside of their normal chain of command. In such cases the affected personnel shall obey and comply with any such commands, orders, or direction so long as they are legal.

- b. Supervisors, who for legitimate reasons issue such commands, orders, or direction to personnel outside their normal chain of command, shall make every reasonable attempt to inform the appropriate supervisor of the affected personnel as soon as practical.

4. Command Protocol - Routine Situations

- a. Control of Incident: At the scene of any police incident, the first arriving officer, or designee, shall take control of the scene and operations, until the arrival of a supervisor.
- b. Control of the Crime Scene: The first arriving officer, or designee, shall take control of the incident until the arrival of a supervisor. The officer shall have the authority to direct and oversee the protection and processing of a minor crime scene, unless relieved by a Supervisor or a Command Staff member.

5. Command Protocol – Major Incidents

- a. Single Command at Major Incidents: At “major incidents” to which patrol officers initially respond, such as hostage/barricaded subject situations, crowd-control situations, or other large-scale emergencies, a patrol supervisor will be designated to assume and maintain immediate control. At such incidents, the following protocols shall apply:
 - (1) The first arriving officer, or designee, shall take control of the incident until the arrival of a supervisor.
 - (2) At such time, the designated patrol supervisor will maintain control of the incident, and take appropriate action for all non-tactical aspects, such as outer perimeter maintenance and/or traffic control.
 - (3) Overall control will be assumed by the Shift Supervisor who, upon arrival, shall assume the duties and responsibilities as the Incident Commander of the entire event, until relieved by the Chief of Police or designee.
 - (4) Upon arrival, command of tactical aspects of the operation will be assumed by the Chief of Police or designee.
- b. An exception to the above includes incidents involving a police shooting/injury, which will be handled according to Department policy on Officer Involved Shooting Incidents.
- c. Unified Command – Incident Command System:
 - (1) The Ithaca Police Department supports and uses the Incident Command System (ICS). The fundamental principle of ICS is

that of “unified command” at certain large-scale incidents requiring multi-agency coordination. Most incidents, to which the Department responds, will not fall within the “unified command” ICS protocol.

- (2) However, on those occasions when a unified ICS is implemented, the Department’s representative shall be the Chief of Police, or designee. The duties of this Incident Commander are to:
 - (a) Work with other agency commanders at the command post;
 - (b) Identify “principal hazards” which concern law enforcement;
 - (c) Determine priority of law enforcement hazards;
 - (d) Ensure that legal responsibilities are not abdicated or ignored; and
 - (e) Develop overall law enforcement objectives.
- (3) The duties of supervisors shall depend on the nature, extent, and severity of the incident. In most cases, their duties will be to develop and implement specific tactical plans in response to the ICS’s stated objectives.
- (4) It is further stipulated that ultimate operational or tactical control will remain with the Incident Commander, unless relieved or delegated to another Supervisor. For operations initiated by Units other than Patrol, the ranking on-duty supervisor of the specialized unit will assume control, until determined otherwise by the Chief of Police or designee.

6. Span of Control

- a. Police Supervisors are given specific areas of assignment over which they are in command at all times. Supervisors will not have under their direct control an excessive number of employees as determined by the Chief of Police, which may adversely affect the effective direction, coordination, and control of the Department.
- b. Span of control is dependent upon the complexity of the responsibilities, duties, and tasks associated with the position, individual competency and reliability, and the experience of the immediate subordinates. Spontaneously occurring incidents, and special circumstances, such as disasters, special events, etc. may require temporary deviation from the recommended ratio. Once the situation is under control, staffing proportions should return to normal. The span of control shall be as

follows:

- (1) First-line supervisor should not normally exceed ten (10) employees.
 - (2) Division or Unit Commander should not normally exceed ten (10) employees.
 - (3) Administrative or non-enforcement assignments should be based upon the complexity/variety of the tasks of subordinates, and the potential for a supervisor to adequately oversee the number of employees involved.
- c. Whenever staffing requirements are anticipated to exceed the recommended span of control for an upcoming event or situation, affected supervisors shall make notification through the chain-of-command to their immediate supervisor who will decide if the increased staffing is appropriate.
 - d. Normal day-to-day supervisory responsibilities are shown on the departmental Organizational Chart. Employees should refer to this chart for clarification of a supervisor's span of control.