

Bowie City Police Department - General Orders



TITLE: DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION		NUMBER: 213
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AUTHORITY Chief John K. Nesky	ACCREDITATIONS STANDARDS 12.1.4	TOTAL PAGES 4
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I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for the recording, storage, and distribution of messages and related correspondence.

II. POLICY

The Department will ensure that all employees receive and return messages in a prompt and efficient manner. The Department will also ensure coordination, cooperation and support the exchange of information (communication) among all Department functions and personnel for the purpose of coordinating activities.

III. MAILBOXES

A mailbox, in the Department's Mail Room, has been provided to each Departmental employee. It is to be used for incoming interdepartmental messages, incoming mail, and other Departmental-related correspondence. The mailbox is not to be used for storage of any kind.

IV. MESSAGE AND MAIL DISTRIBUTION

A. Employees answering telephones will attempt to transfer incoming callers to the person that they are attempting to contact. If they are unable to do so, and the caller desires, they will promptly transfer the individual to the members assigned Departmental Voicemail. If the message is urgent or emergency in nature, every attempt possible will be made to locate the employee immediately.

B. The Administrative personnel will promptly place all incoming mail in the appropriate mail slot as it is received.

V. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

A. It will be the responsibility of every employee, upon reporting for work, to check their Voicemail, email, and their mailboxes for messages and other mail.

B. Before attending Roll Call, Squad Supervisors will check their Squad's mailboxes located in the Department's Mail Room to ensure that officers have collected their messages and other mail.

C. Employees are to ensure that messages are returned in a prompt and courteous manner. Whenever possible, telephone messages will be returned the day they are received.

D. Employees who will be off for more than five days shall change their greeting on their voice mail to indicate the date they will return from leave.

E. Employees shall delete saved messages from the voice mail system as soon as reasonably practical. A large amount of saved voice mails can over load the system.

VI. ELECTRONIC MAIL

A. Employees with electronic mail (e-mail) shall check their e-mail daily.

B. Employees are to ensure that e-mail messages are responded to in a prompt and courteous manner. Whenever possible, e-mails will be returned the day they are received.

C. Employees shall delete saved e-mails from the e-mail system as soon as practical. A large amount of saved e-mails can overload the server and prevent new e-mail messages from being stored.

D. Before a department or City wide email is sent out acting as a policy or procedure members shall forward the message up the chain of command. Once approved all emails sent Department or City wide shall be put out by a Sergeant or the member shall reference there was supervisor approval before sending email by starting email off with:

“By the authority of (name of supervisor) I am sending the below information”.

E. Departmental personnel will follow the City of Bowie’s Sensitive information handling procedure which addresses receiving and handling of “sensitive information” and/or “sensitive homeland security information”. These terms include:

- a. **Law Enforcement Sensitive (LES):** Information that could adversely affect ongoing investigations, create safety hazards for officers, divulge sources of information and/or compromise their identities
 - b. **For Official Use Only (FOUO) or Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU):** Information which warrants a degree of protection and administrative control that meets the criteria for exemption from public disclosure under the Privacy Act, and state and federal Freedom of Information Acts
 - c. Any other documentation or information provided to you in the course of your work with the City of Bowie
2. Keep confidential all “sensitive information” and/or “sensitive homeland security information” provided by the City of Bowie Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and to protect its confidentiality. **“Sensitive information” and/or “Sensitive homeland security information”, or any other intelligence product shall not be disseminated by the recipient without express permission from the City Manager or his/her designee.** It shall not be distributed via commercial ISP or webmail services (i.e., Yahoo or Gmail).
 3. Unauthorized disclosure of “sensitive information” and/or “sensitive homeland security information” by me could cause damage or irreparable injury to future or ongoing investigations and operations. I understand that I am obligated to comply with the City of Bowie standard operating procedure regarding the authorized disclosure of such information

VII. INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

Methods and procedures which can enhance interdepartmental communication, coordination and cooperation include:

A. Command Staff Meetings:

1. Normally held on a weekly basis;
2. Chaired by the Chief of Police or his/her designee;
3. All three divisions are represented by Commanders or their designees, to ensure coordination, cooperation and communication; and,

B. General Supervisor Meetings:

1. Held on an as needed basis as called by the Chief of Police or his/her designee;
2. Chaired by the Chief of Police or his/her designee;
3. All supervisors from the rank of Sergeant and above are encouraged to attend;
4. A round table discussion will be held at the end of each meeting to ensure coordination, cooperation and communication between all three division; and,

C. Utilization of both formal and informal memorandums

1. Memorandums shall be passed up or down the Chain of Command.
2. When a memorandum is passed down the Chain of Command it shall be a written directive.

VIII. AUTHORIZATION FOR EXTERNAL / INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

A. Official Departmental correspondence (including faxes and e mail) is designed to enhance Departmental communication and to conduct Department related business. No form of misuse or abuse will be permitted.

B. External correspondence representative of the Department in any official capacity, is generally sent by the Chief of Police or his designee.

C. All matters stating the policy of the Department's position on any topic will be issued only under the signature of the Chief of Police or his designee.

D. The following persons are authorized, by the Chief of Police, to use Departmental letterhead, email, or phone for external correspondence under their own signature:

1. Deputy Chiefs;
2. All Division Commanders;
3. Any person acting in the capacity of any Division Commander; and

4. Designated Civilian Supervisors.

The Chief of Police may extend or withdraw this privilege at any time, as he deems appropriate.

- E. Members shall be held accountable for the content of their correspondence, including faxes and e-mails. Supervisors and Commanders are responsible for determining that all correspondence control procedures are being followed. Confidential and law enforcement sensitive documents shall not be disseminated.