General Order

Houston Police Department

ISSUE DATE:	NO.
May 9, 2019	100-07

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 100-07, dated January 10, 2012

SUBJECT: STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

POLICY

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) shall be followed by all commands, divisions, offices, and units performing like tasks and functions in order to ensure uniformity of police services. All Command Staff members shall develop and issue SOPs for all functions performed under their direct command. All employees are responsible for knowing, understanding, and following the SOPs applicable to their assignment.

This General Order applies to all employees.

DEFINITIONS

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Written directives for a command, office, division, or unit. SOPs carry the same authority as the General Orders.

Written Directive. Any department approved written document used to articulate to employees certain expectations and restrictions to their duties, performance, and conduct.

1 DEVELOPING, COMPILING, AND ISSUING SOPS

Command Staff members shall adhere to all of the following when developing, compiling, and issuing SOPs:

a. All SOPs shall be developed in compliance with the SOP Guidelines and related resources available on the HPD Intranet Portal.

b. Division and unit level SOPs require review and approval by the concerned assistant chief.

c. Command and office level SOPs require review and approval by the Executive Staff member assigned to the concerned command or office.

d. Command Staff members shall ensure the Office of Technology Services has the current electronic version of their respective SOPs for placement on the HPD Intranet Portal, unless a commander determines the SOPs for his command or division should not be on the Portal.

e. Command Staff members shall ensure the Risk Management Division has the most current electronic version of their respective SOPs.

SOP Review and Update

In November of each year ending in an odd number, all Command Staff members shall review and, if necessary, update the SOPs under their direct command to ensure consistency with

laws, ordinances, policies, and responsibilities. However, an SOP can be updated prior to the odd-numbered-year review, if needed. See section 2, *Policy Conflicts*, for additional requirements.

Any new or revised SOPs require approval as stated above.

2 POLICY CONFLICTS

Laws and ordinances always take precedence over department policy. A *written directive* supersedes any prior conflicting *written directive*, unless stated otherwise.

Each Command Staff member shall keep apprised of new laws, ordinances, and policies affecting their areas of responsibility. If a change affects an SOP, the Command Staff member shall revise the concerned SOP.

3 SOP ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Within two days after transferring to or assuming a new assignment, each employee shall read the current SOPs applicable to the employee's assignment. Supervisors shall ensure that each employee under their direct supervision is shown how to locate the SOPs applicable to the employee's assignment on the HPD Intranet Portal or the division's server. If after reading the applicable SOPs an employee has any issues, concerns, or questions, the employee shall meet with his supervisor to address these matters. Each employee shall sign an *Acknowledgment of Receipt and Review of Standard Operating Procedures* form, which is available on the HPD Intranet Portal.

The original *Acknowledgment* form shall be kept by the originating command, office, or division in accordance with General Order 800-12, **Records Retention**.

4 SOP RECORDS

It is the responsibility of each command, office, or division producing an SOP to retain all of its current and historical SOPs in accordance with General Order 800-12, **Records Retention**.

SOPs related to evacuations carry a retention period of three years. All other SOPs carry a retention period of "until superseded plus five years." The retention schedule for each command, office, or division shall include an entry for SOPs.

Each command, office, or division is responsible for responding to subpoenas and open records requests to produce their respective current or historical SOPs.

Art Acevedo
Chief of Police