


<p style="text-align: center;">GENERAL ORDER</p> 	<p>Effective: 12-28-2022</p>	<p># 03-01</p>
	<p>Section: Management & Supervision</p>	<p>Replaces or Modifies: General Order 7</p>
	<p>Title: Chain of Command and Supervision</p> <p>Issued by: Chief Deputy Mattie Provost</p>	

I. Purpose:

To set standards concerning the chain of command and supervision within the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (FBCSO).

II. Policy Statement:

All FBCSO Supervisory personnel are accountable for the actions of subordinates and insuring that the policies of the FBCSO are followed. All employees of the FBCSO are subject to the lawful direction and orders of higher ranking personnel. The Chain of Command is instituted to ensure that supervisory personnel are afforded the greatest opportunity to effectively perform their duties at the lowest appropriate level of authority needed for any particular situation.

III. Details and Procedures:

A. Supervisors are persons occupying a position which carries an expectation to oversee activities of subordinate personnel and/or functions. This includes but is not limited to positions whose Job Description details supervisory duties.

B. Chain of Command

1. The Chain of Command is the hierarchy of supervisory authority within the FBCSO. The Chain of Command is as follows (1 being the highest authority):
 - a. Sheriff
 - b. Chief Deputy
 - c. Assistant Chief Deputy
 - d. Major
 - e. Captain
 - f. Lieutenant
 - g. Sergeant
 - h. Investigator (while this is not a full time supervisory position it is expected that persons in this rank will provide guidance and instruction to lower ranking personnel in certain technical matters)
 - i. Non Peace Officer Supervisory Personnel
2. Each employee will be assigned a direct supervisor. This is where that employee's chain of command commences. Employees are expected to follow their chain of command concerning communication with higher authority with the following exceptions:
 - a. The communication is personal in nature and is not meant to address operational issues within the FBCSO, or
 - b. The communication is requested or otherwise authorized by a higher ranking authority, or
 - c. The matter involves a complaint of sexual harassment (in these cases the affected

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- employee may make direct communication with the Chief Deputy or Sheriff and in a situation where the Chief Deputy or Sheriff is the subject of the complaint may make direct communication with the Fort Bend County Director of Human Resources), or
- d. The communication is necessary due to an emergency situation, or
 - e. The employee's direct supervisor is not available and no other supervisor of equal rank (of the direct supervisor) within the employee's assignment area is able to address the employee's need for communication.

C. Supervisory Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the functions of the FBCSO that are entrusted by Law and Policy are carried out in an efficient and lawful manner.
2. Supervisors may issue orders to subordinate personnel in order to fulfill his/her duties as long as the orders are lawful and within policy. Orders may include delegation of certain specified authority on an as needed basis. In giving orders, supervisors will use tact and remain professional (this is not to limit types of orders given during situations which by their nature require immediate action and therefore lesser degree of tact). If a supervisor delegates a task, this does not serve to eliminate the supervisor's ultimate accountability for the successful completion of the task.
 - a. Delegation of authority may include designation of someone as "Acting" in a particular higher position. This form of delegation may only be made by a Bureau Commander or higher authority. This type of action is generally of a short duration (less than 15 days) and the affected employee will not have any change to his/her pay or benefits due to this temporary action.
 - b. In cases where there is a need to designate someone as "Acting" in a particular higher position for a period longer than 14 days or in cases where law would require a temporary change to pay or benefits, these designations may only be ordered by the Chief Deputy or Sheriff.
3. Supervisors shall not be relieved of responsibility in circumstances where the supervisor is not physically present unless the totality of circumstances shows that the supervisor was attentive to his/her duties and the absence was in keeping with normal operational procedures.
4. Supervisors shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that subordinates perform their duties completely, accurately, competently, professionally, and within policy.
5. Supervisors shall strive to create and maintain high morale through proper display of enthusiasm to the work being performed, proper respect for higher authority, and professional demeanor towards subordinates.
6. Supervisors shall obtain and maintain an excellent working knowledge of laws and policies related to their assignment areas.
7. Supervisors shall provide those under his/her command regular interaction, positive feedback, instruction, constructive criticism, and disciplinary action – all as warranted.
8. Supervisors are to regularly evaluate subordinates' work product in a fair, impersonal, and objective manner. When conducting written performance evaluations of subordinates, supervisors shall do so in a fair and accurate manner.
9. Supervisors shall identify and address subordinates concerning poor performance or violation of policy. Supervisors shall document their findings and report to higher authority in compliance with policy on these types of actions. Supervisors are expected to intervene and take appropriate immediate corrective action on minor infractions and/or non recurring poor performance. In cases of serious ongoing policy violations supervisors are to immediately take action if necessary to ensure the safety of employees / the public and report

- this to higher authority.
10. Supervisors will maintain professional relationships with subordinates.
 - a. Supervisors shall strive to always maintain dignity and give instructions and direction in a manner that enhances the authority of their position through professional demeanor, action, and words.
 - b. Supervisors who are married to or start / maintain a dating, romantic, or cohabitating relationship with an employee of the FBCSO shall immediately report this to the Chief's Office. This same reporting provision applies to a supervisor whose parent (including foster, step, and in-law); children (including adoptive, foster, or step); brother or sister; grandparent or grandchild; aunt or uncle; or niece or nephew is or becomes an employee of the FBCSO. Reporting will be done in compliance with the process established by the Chief Deputy.
 - c. Whenever possible persons in such relationships (2 preceding) will not be in the same direct chain of command and a supervisor will not have a person in such a relationship reporting directly to him/her (to accomplish this, movement of personnel that is in the best interests of the efficient operation of the FBCSO may be enacted including but not limited to lateral transfers). Supervisory personnel in this type of relationship are responsible for ensuring that any such relationship does not violate policies on sexual harassment and/or showing favoritism due to the relationship.
 11. Non peace officer supervisors will generally only have responsibility and authority over those employees assigned to them for direct supervision at any given time in accordance with guidance from the Division Commanders or higher authority.
 12. Supervisors shall also perform any specific supervisory duties found in other General Orders, Bureau Manuals, and/or Divisional SOPs.

D. Employee duties concerning supervision

1. Employees are expected to obey all lawful orders given by supervisory personnel above the employee [see II.A. of this General Order for hierarchy of supervisory authority] (supervisory personnel includes but is not limited to those persons who are acting in a supervisory capacity by virtue of delegated authority).
 - a. Employees receiving orders or commands which are in conflict with policy or with a previously issued order/command, shall respectfully address this conflict with the issuing supervisor. If the order is lawful, the employee shall follow the direction of the last order received.
 - (1.). The last supervisor who commands or orders an employee in this type of a situation will assume responsibility for the action taken by the subordinate employee regarding the order. The employee will not be held accountable for disobeying the first order if they are ordered by another supervisor to take immediate action.
 - (2.) Supervisors shall listen to subordinates who bring conflicting orders/commands to their attention and shall consider this information when making their decision.
 - (3.) If the order is deemed unlawful the affected employee shall immediately notify a higher ranking officer.
 - (4.) Orders that deviate from existing written or verbal orders may be issued in emergency situations (orders issued in emergency situations that are lawful and reasonable shall be executed immediately).
2. Employees are expected to address supervisory personnel by their official title (examples: Sheriff, Chief, Major, Captain, etc...). At the discretion of a supervisor this requirement may be waived, especially in non public and informal situations. Non peace officer supervisory personnel may be addressed without the formality of title; however, as with all communication

it should be in a professional manner.

3. Employees shall refer to GO #02-01 (Core Standards of Conduct) concerning statements made about supervisory personnel and decisions