

DEKALB POLICE DEPARTMENT

Subject: **Departmental Correspondence**

Effective Since: 8-21-03

Revision Effective: 1-1-19

Reference Material: NA

ILEAP Standards Covered: NA

Policy #: **102.3**

Originally Issued As: General Order # 14 of 9-1-77

FTO Training Task: # 4

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PURPOSE: It is the purpose of this policy to provide guidelines for written correspondence within the department and for correspondence being sent outside the department.

POLICY: It is the policy of the department to submit written correspondence in a professional manner, following the chain of command, and for official use only.

DEFINITION:

Written correspondence: Any written communication within the department in memo form on department letterhead or otherwise; any written communication to persons outside the agency on department letterhead or otherwise.

Memo: Abbreviation for memorandum; any official written communication.

PROCEDURE:

I. Correspondence Within the Department

A. Correspondence of an official nature or including a formal order or request should be put into memo form and forwarded to the designated recipient.

B. Memo format: the department utilizes standard memo format, to follow this format as a heading:

TO: (Name)

FROM: (Name)

RE: (Regarding, or in reference to the topic)

DATE: (Sending date)

1. For correspondence within the agency, department letterhead is not necessary.
2. The memo should be electronically prepared whenever possible.
3. On official electronic copies, the sender should initial his name at the top, and/or sign the memo in handwriting.
4. If sending the memo to a superior, follow the chain of command.
 - a. The intermediate supervisor should initial and date at the bottom of the memo to indicate that proper chain of command was followed.
 - b. For example, if a patrol officer is sending a memo to a Commander, it should be sent through the patrol officer's Sergeant. The Sergeant would initial and date the memo at the bottom and forward it to the Commander.
 - c. The intermediate supervisor may make suggestions for improving the format or content of the memo, and to ensure its professionalism.
5. If sending the memo to more than one person, put all their names in the TO: line, or add a CC: line, indicating to whom copies were sent.
- C. Correspondence of an informal or unofficial nature need not be put in memo form.
- D. Correspondence sent electronically is subject to the procedures listed in Computer Use & Electronics Messaging, Policy 301.3.
- E. Unless exempted for allowable reasons under state statute, departmental correspondence is potentially subject to FOIA release.

II. Correspondence Outside the Department

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- A. Correspondence of an official nature to a recipient outside the department should be put in business letter format prepared on department letterhead.
1. Communication outside the department should be electronically prepared whenever possible.
 2. Letters should be concise and factually accurate.
 3. Letters should be clear and utilize correct grammatical spelling and rules.
 4. The spirit of cooperation, courtesy, and professionalism should pervade every written contact outside the department.
 5. Letters to citizens or other persons outside the agency may be subject to review by a supervisor.
 6. Letters directed to be written on behalf of the Chief of Police should follow this format in closing:

(Chief's name)

Chief of Police

By: (author's name)

Title or Rank

7. Department letterhead is for official use only. Any questions as to its use should be forwarded to a supervisor for approval.

Policy originally issued 8-21-03; this revision becomes effective on 1-1-19 by authority of the Chief of Police .

NOTE: This policy and procedure summarizes the department's position on this specific matter. This policy is for general direction and guidance primarily designed for use by the department's members. This policy is for internal use only and does not create or enlarge an officer's liability in any way. This policy shall not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of an internal departmental complaint and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.