

**PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT
MANUAL OF GENERAL ORDERS**

General Order: 4.03	Effective: 11/16/2020	Supersedes: 01/11/2018	Number of Pages: 3
----------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------

**OFFICE REGULATIONS: CORRESPONDENCE WITHIN
DEPARTMENT/COUNTY**

I. Methods of Correspondence

- A. Inter-departmental correspondence submitted to the Division Chiefs, Deputy Chief, or Chief of Police will be made via the approved, electronic correspondence system. The content of the correspondence should be provided within the free-text field of the electronic system. However, a memorandum may be attached within the system if the submitting member believes it to be more appropriate for the given content or is directed by higher authority. A statement concerning the purpose of the correspondence and reference to the attached memorandum will be included in the system’s free-text field.

- B. All other inter-departmental and inter-County correspondence will be made via memorandum as outlined below.

II. Formatting Memorandums

- A. All memorandums will be made on letterhead formatted consistently with County guidelines as outlined below.

- B. Memorandums will be arranged in the full-blocked (justified) style utilizing the Open Sans typeface with a font size of 10. All lines typically begin at the left margin. Nothing is indented (except for displayed quotations, tables, and similar material). Margins will be the same as provided in the previous section, General Order [4.02 Office Regulations: Correspondence with Outside Agencies](#) .

- C. The date will be in line with the left heading (Chief of Police) and two lines below.

- D. Two lines below the date will be the word **“TO”**: (all caps with a colon after the last letter). Two tabbed spaces (or one inch) to the right of this will be, in proper upper and lower case, the name (*first name, middle initial, last name*) and the title of the individual to whom the memorandum is directed.

- E. Two lines below the **“TO”**: will be the word **“FROM”**: (all caps with a colon after the last letter). Two tabbed spaces (or one inch) to the right of this will be, in proper upper and lower case, the name (*first name, middle initial, last name*) and title of the sender. The sender’s handwritten initials will be immediately to the right upon completion/approval.

- F. Two lines below the “**FROM**” will be the word “**RE**”: (all caps with a colon after the last letter). Two tabbed spaces (or one inch) to the right of this will be, in proper upper and lower case, the topic or subject of the memorandum.
- G. The first paragraph will be located two lines below the reference line and will set forth clearly and concisely the purpose of the memorandum.
- H. The first paragraph and following paragraphs will not be indented. Sentences within paragraphs will be single-spaced. Paragraphs will be separated by two lines.
- I. Subsequent paragraphs should be devoted to the necessary explanation and amplification of the first paragraph.
- J. No salutation or complimentary close will be used.
- K. Reference initials, distribution, and enclosure/attachments will be marked under the proper headings on the left margin two lines below the text.
- L. Under normal circumstances, only one subject will be covered in each letter.

III. Endorsements

- A. All inter-departmental correspondence submitted to the Chief of Police, or designee, shall be submitted through the chain-of-command for endorsement, unless otherwise directed.
 - 1. Endorsement will begin with the immediate supervisor of the individual submitting the request.
 - 2. For correspondence submitted via the electronic system, endorsements will be included in the field provided for such use.
 - 3. For memorandums submitted outside the electronic correspondence system, each endorsement will be made on the bottom of the same memo on which the request is written and will be in the following manner:
 - a. The Sergeant/First Sergeant’s or immediate supervisor’s endorsement will be designated as Endorsement #1 and may say approved or disapproved. However, if the case merits remarks, such remarks will be made.
 - b. Immediately under the Sergeant/First Sergeant’s or immediate supervisor’s endorsement will appear Endorsement #2, the Lieutenant’s or next level supervisor’s endorsement. The Lieutenant or next level supervisor will be governed by the same guidelines that apply to the first level supervisor(s).
 - c. Immediately under the Lieutenant or next level supervisor’s endorsement will appear Endorsement #3, which is the Captain’s or third level supervisor’s endorsement. The same guidelines for the first two endorsements apply here as well.

- d. Upon reaching the Office of the Chief of Police, the request should have all necessary endorsements.
 - e. All endorsements should be typed or legibly hand-written and include the current date (*Example:* Endorsement #1 – October 1, 2012, and two lines below that FROM:_____). Any remarks or comments should start two lines down from the FROM line. Each endorsement will be initialed.
 - f. If all endorsements cannot be made on the first page, a second page will be typed using the same format as a second page of a memo, i.e., Page Two, FROM: _____, RE: _____.
- B. Whenever a delay in excess of ten (10) days is necessary in forwarding a reply to a letter or other communication, receipt of the communication will be acknowledged immediately giving the approximate date on which the reply will be forwarded.
- C. Correspondence from the Chief of Police or a Division Commander will be answered as soon as practical after receipt by a member. Temporary replies will suffice until desired information is obtained.
- D. All communications involving departmental matters and issues, as in any large and complex organization, shall be handled promptly, properly, and professionally. In the preparation of any correspondence, considerable care must be taken in the choice of words, the construction of sentences, and the arrangement of paragraphs. Words used to express an idea should be carefully selected and so used to convey clearly the exact meaning intended by the writer. Sentences should be logically arranged in such a manner that the development of thought may be easily followed and the principal points readily recognized.