
Organizational Structure and Responsibility

200.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The organizational structure of this Department is designed to create an efficient means to accomplish our mission and goals and to provide for the best possible service to the public.

200.2 DEFINITIONS

Bureau - A branch of the Department

District - A distinct geographical area of the city designated for a patrol assignment

Division - A specific function within a bureau of the Department

Precinct - An area of the city marked out for policing responsibility

Squad - A small group of personnel assigned to a particular task (e.g., patrol shift)

Unit - A group of personnel assigned to a component within a division within specialize skills (e.g., Major Crimes Unit, Children's Justice Center, Logistics, etc.)

200.3 THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

The Chief of Police is responsible for administering and managing the Vancouver Police Department. The Department is divided into two bureaus which are as follows:

- Operation Bureau
- Support Bureau

The Professional Standards Unit reports directly to the Office of the Chief for personnel investigations, and to the Administration Division Commander for auditing internal processes.

200.4 BUREAUS

200.4.1 OPERATIONS BUREAU

The Operations Bureau is commanded by an Assistant Chief whose primary responsibility is to provide general management direction and control for that bureau. The Operations Bureau consists of two precincts (West and East).

Each Precinct is commanded by a Commander, and is divided into two districts. The precincts provide Uniformed Patrol shifts, Neighborhood Police Officers, School Resource Officers, a Neighborhood Response Team, Police Service Technicians and Crime Analysts for law enforcement services.

Each district is managed by a Lieutenant, and divided into multiple squads based on Patrol shifts.

Each squad is supervised by a Sergeant, and each squad consists of multiple officers who are responsible for the police service for their assigned area (i.e., beat/district).

Vancouver Police Department

Vancouver PD Policy Manual

Organizational Structure and Responsibility

200.4.2 SUPPORT BUREAU

The Support Bureau is commanded by an Assistant Chief whose primary responsibility is to provide general management direction and control for that bureau.

The Support Bureau consists of the three divisions (Administration, Investigations, and Records).

The Administration Division is commanded by a Commander, and is divided into several units consisting of Admin/Logistics, Finance, Backgrounds and Recruiting, Case Management, Training, Property and Evidence, and Professional Standards Unit for auditing.

The Investigations Division is commanded by a Commander, and is divided into two sections consisting of Special Operations and Investigations.

Special Operations is managed by a Lieutenant, and consists of Special Weapons and Tactics Team, Homeland Security, K9, and Traffic Unit.

Investigations is managed by a Lieutenant, and consists of the Major Crimes Unit, Digital Evidence Cybercrimes Unit, Domestic Violence Unit, Children's Justice Center, Safe Streets Gang Task Force, and Drug Task Force.

The Records Division is managed by a civilian manager.

200.5 CHAIN OF COMMAND PROTOCOL

The Chief of Police has the authority to designate which assistant chief follows him in order of succession of command. When the Chief of Police is absent or otherwise unavailable, and no decision has been made, the succession of command is as follows:

1. Senior Assistant Chief of Police
2. Next Senior Assistant Chief of Police
3. Command officers in descending order of rank and seniority of rank

Major incidents or emergencies will normally be under the direction of the Chief of Police or the Chief's designee.

The chain of command will be followed whenever possible by each member of the Department.

Employees will strive to operate within the chain of command and to keep supervisors informed as to their activities.

When two or more officers from this Department are dispatched to, or are present at any activity, the primary officer assigned to the respond will assume control of the situation until it is concluded or until properly relieved by a more senior officer.

The arrival of a more senior or superior officer will not be considered as an implicit assumption of command unless such assumption is communicated by the senior or superior officers. A superior officer present at an incident, who does not assume command, is not relieved of the responsibility for the proper handling of the incident.

Organizational Structure and Responsibility

The presence of a sergeant may be requested by any officer at the scene of an incident. Upon arrival, the sergeant will evaluate the scene and assume commands deemed necessary. The sergeant may request the presence of a command-level officer.

200.6 UNITY OF COMMAND

To ensure unity of command, clearly defined lines of authority have been drawn to ensure each employee is accountable to only one supervisor at any given time. Also, each organizational component is under the direct command of only one supervisor.

Whenever a senior employee gives an order to any subordinate employee not attached to their assignment, that senior employee must exercise care that such an order does not unnecessarily conflict with those of the commanding officer of that precinct or division to which the member is assigned.

Whenever orders, so given, require the employee receiving the order to leave their regular assigned post or duty, the senior employee giving such order will, as soon as practicable, inform such subordinate's commanding officer of the action taken.

When more than one supervisor is working and there exists potential for an employee receive direction from more than one supervisor, the employee will follow the guidelines set forth in section 200.7 below.

In all matters relating to policy and procedures, rules and regulations, employees will strive to resolve them with their immediate supervisor prior to consulting the next higher rank.

Note: An employee's direct supervisor is the supervisor that the employee is working for on any given day of work.

In situations involving personnel of different assignments engaged in a single incident, the ranking supervisor present from the Department's component responsible for the incident shall be deemed to have supervisory control.

When an incident or emergency involves more than one precinct/division, and/or more than one district/unit, the overall command will be assigned to the commander, or their designee, of the precinct/division initiating the Department's action.

Nothing in this procedure is designed to inhibit the Department's open door policy or inhibit employee suggestions or feedback. Employees responsible for a specified function or functions will have input in the formulation of procedures designed to accomplish those functions and Departmental goals.

200.7 ORDERS

A member who has been given an order and subsequently given a second and conflicting order shall call this fact to the attention of the person giving the second order. The superior giving the second order has the authority to direct the sequence that the orders shall be accomplished. The right to appeal exists only after the orders have been carried out.