

Chief of Police John Stressman

Ethics and Standards

Quality of service, conduct of our employees—officers and staff—and community perception are all serious issues to the Mason Police Department. Since the start of my administration in 2004, I have stressed accountability for our actions, no matter the consequence. One of my priorities was to implement a citizen complaint process, which was immediately put into effect. The process is modeled after policies recommended by the International Associations of Chiefs of Police, the Michigan Municipal League’s Law Enforcement Action Forum, and member agencies of the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Association. We have developed excellent procedures for the citizen complaint and investigative process, and the disciplinary process.

The Department may also initiate its own investigations based on internal reviews of an incident. This most generally results from reviewing reports and when internal procedural errors are suspected, or when an incident occurs which we believe will cause some scrutiny of our actions. Whatever the reason for an investigation, the purpose is to insure community confidence in the conduct of the Mason Police Department in all facets of operation.

- Internal investigations: Usually ordered when the possible outcome could result in severe disciplinary action—up to termination. The Department received one citizen complaint leading to an internal, and one which was initiated administratively. The citizen-generated complaint resulted in the officer’s actions being exonerated. The administratively-generated internal was sustained, and corrective action taken.

Generated Administratively		1
Sustained w/Corrective Action	1	
Citizen Complaint		1
Exonerated	1	<u> </u>
	Total	2

- Administrative Reviews: As with Internals, can be generated either through a citizen complaint or administratively. These are for possible infractions of a minor nature which usually would result in some form of reprimand or training enhancement. In 2007, the Department conducted 18 Administrative Reviews—4 were generated administratively, and 14 resulted from citizen complaints.

Generated Administratively		4
Corrective Action Taken	4	
Citizen Complaint		14
Resolved by Supervisor contact	4	
Upheld Officer Actions	6	
Sustained, with Employee corrective Action	2	
Sustained, with procedural corrective actions	<u>2</u>	
	Total	<u>18</u>

Overview

As I stated in my letter, the Department has met all its goals for 2007. Although some are still a work in progress, we were able to implement everything from the Visionair report management system to a personnel evaluation process, being just where we planned starting into 2008.

You will see, as you continue through this report, the “big ticket” items which were implemented: the RMS and the Digital Recording System for all the patrol cars. And some, not so large and of less note, are the new-look uniforms with the new shoulder patches. Other goals met were:

- Publishing the new Department Operations Manual. It is completely revised and up to date, particularly on the high risk topics—use of force, vehicle operations, arrest and detention, search and seizure, and handling mentally ill subjects—areas where the City and the Department are exposed to the most risk. The official manual is now on the department intranet and each employee has been issued a disk for their own use. Any changes and updates are posted online and new disks will be published regularly. All employees are notified of updates and are instructed as to implementation and procedures.
- A personnel evaluation system was developed and training conducted with affected employees. The process begins January 1, 2008 and will be reviewed at the end of the year. The main purpose is obviously to identify areas of strengths and weakness to help the employee be as effective as possible in their duties. Supervisors are to meet regularly with the employees and keep them apprised of issues. Nothing should appear on the evaluation as a surprise to the employee.
- Training has been increased significantly this year but I fear the actual number of hours is artificially high. We spent many hours preparing for technology implementation which resulted in more training than we would normally provide. We have developed a training policy identifying specific topics to be addressed annually – legal updates, use of force, firearms, and a number of others – some of which will be tested on throughout the year. To compliment the implementation of the RMS, we have just completed a report writing training session for all officers and supervisors. This is very important as our documents are a reflection on the whole department as well as insuring accuracy in recording incidents and data.
- A Civil infractions Bureau was implemented and City ordinances created for enforcement of former misdemeanors as civil infractions (non-criminal offenses). Civil infractions allow officers to use discretion when enforcing certain violations which would normally result in a criminal record upon conviction and have a negative impact on a one time offender who may otherwise not be prone to criminal behavior.