

## Agency Accreditation

### 208.1 POLICY

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office (SMCSO) achieved the prestigious Law Enforcement Accreditation award from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) in July 2007. It is the policy of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office to continue this legacy and remain an accredited law enforcement agency. The agency fully subscribes to professional law enforcement standards and practices, and participates in the accreditation process at an international level.

### 208.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish and maintain an accreditation management system that provides authority for the administration of the accreditation process, and the delegation of responsibilities to ensure an effective accreditation plan.

### 208.3 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all SMCSO law enforcement personnel (sworn and professional staff). This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

### 208.4 DEFINITIONS

**Accreditation** – A certification process in which an agency or institution meets a body of professional standards.

**CALEA** – Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. This is the international law enforcement accrediting body.

**CRLEAA** – Chesapeake Region Law Enforcement Accreditation Alliance. A regional group of law enforcement professionals from Maryland, the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and Delaware.

**Mock Assessment** – A stringent, but voluntary, quality control review of an agency by knowledgeable practitioners who act in the role of assessors. Mock assessments involve assessors from outside agencies and allied members of CRLEAA.

**On-Site Assessment** – The official review of an agency by a team of trained and certified assessors appointed by the accrediting organization.

**Self-Assessment Phase** - A process involving a thorough examination of the agency and all components, by the agency accreditation office to determine whether it complies with all applicable standards. The agency prepares forms, develops proofs of compliance (documentation), and assembles the material into files to be reviewed by assessors.

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### **208.5 ACCREDITATION PROGRAM**

The agency is an active, contractual participant in the international accreditation process through CALEA.

The Standards for Law Enforcement Agencies is the cornerstone publication of CALEA.

- (a) The standards reflect the Commission's view of the best professional requirements and practices for law enforcement agencies.
- (b) The applicability of CALEA standards are based on the agency's size, functions and mission.
- (c) The Standards Manual is available for inspection, review, and consultation through the Standards module of PowerDMS.

### **208.6 ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF ACCREDITATION MANAGER**

Duties and responsibilities of the Accreditation Manager include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Act as liaison to CALEA and its regional alliance CRLEAA;
- (b) Coordinate and facilitate annual off-site compliance reviews and quadrennial on-site visits by CALEA staff;
- (c) Maintain and update information contained in the accreditation-related databases and reporting systems; and maintain master and archive Accreditation files;
- (d) Assign, direct, and coordinate related agency activities to achieve compliance with accreditation standards, to include policy/procedure review and the administration of the PowerDMS system;
- (e) Ensure post-accreditation annual reports are completed and submitted to CALEA.

Due to the complex, changing and continuous nature of the accreditation process, it is necessary to assign accountability, responsibility and a system of review to ensure continued compliance with accreditation standards. The Accreditation Manager is responsible for:

- (a) Ensuring that the policies and procedures of the Sheriff's Office meet or exceed the minimum requirements set forth by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA).
- (b) Ensuring that the accreditation standard files are current and demonstrate the Sheriff's Office continuing compliance with applicable standards.

By authority of the Sheriff, the Accreditation Manager is permitted to operate outside the normal chain of command to discharge his/her responsibility of ensuring the success of the accreditation process and the continued compliance with all standards. The Accreditation Manager shall have direct access to all employees whose expertise or assistance is required for the successful operation of the accreditation process.

All employees will cooperate with the Accreditation Manager in the agency's effort to maintain accreditation status, and to achieve re-accreditation. Reports, documentation, and other requested proofs of compliance or comments regarding draft directives made by the Accreditation

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Manager shall be considered as a direct order from the Sheriff. The Accreditation Manager must report, by memorandum to the Assistant Sheriff, the failure of any employee to cooperate in the accreditation process. The Assistant Sheriff may determine a method of resolving the matter or any other action that is deemed appropriate.

### Training:

- (a) The role of the Accreditation Manager is very specialized and requires specific knowledge of the accreditation process. Department employee(s) assigned to the position of Accreditation Manager shall receive specialized accreditation manager training within one year of being appointed to the position. Attendance at a CALEA conference, at least once per year, is recommended for continuing education and updating of needed knowledge and skills.
- (b) The Accreditation Manager will ensure that all newly hired law enforcement sworn/professional staff personnel receive training on accreditation and the accreditation process within thirty days of being hired or during Field Training.

The Accreditation Manager shall keep all personnel updated on the accreditation and on-site process through periodic publishing of the Accredigram.

## **208.7 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Responsibilities:

- (a) The Accreditation Manager will ensure the Sheriff/Assistant Sheriff is regularly updated and briefed on accreditation related activities and dynamics.
- (b) Periodically, the Accreditation Manager will request reports, documentation or other required proofs of compliance from the Division Commanders or supervisors responsible for the involved areas of specialty. The Accreditation Manager will define the specific nature of those proofs of compliance required, and the assigned personnel will fulfill the request with the best example of agency operations within the time period stated.
- (c) Employees will submit all necessary biennial, annual, semiannual, quarterly, monthly, weekly, and daily reports, documentation, or other proofs of compliance as required by SMCSO policy and Accreditation standards in a timely manner. Employees encountering difficulties in meeting scheduled due dates for submitting proofs of compliance must notify the Accreditation Manager prior to the due date and request an extension via the chain of command when required.
- (d) Division Commanders are responsible for ensuring the continued compliance with all applicable standards by employees under their command.
- (e) The Accreditation Manager will coordinate a law enforcement policy/procedure review to be conducted annually, August through October, ensuring all policies and procedures are current and CALEA compliant.