



Kern County Sheriff's Office
Policies and Procedures

TITLE: CORRESPONDENCE POLICY			NO: J-0100
APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner			
EFFECTIVE: August 1, 1990	REVIEWED: 06/01/2018	REVISED: 11/25/09	UPDATED: 06/01/2018

POLICY

All Sheriff's Office correspondence shall be written in a clear, concise manner, consistent with the applicable report formats and guidelines prescribed and reflecting the highest possible quality in organization, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

All correspondence sent outside the Sheriff's Office to the private sector or other agencies must be sent under the Sheriff-Coroner's signature. It must be submitted through the chain of command and approved by the Sheriff-Coroner for signature, unless prior authorization has been given to correspond in his or her name.

In the event prior authorization has been given, the form of the "address" and "salutation" on such correspondence shall be as follows:

Address the correspondence to the other department head or corporate executive in charge, then attention the individual you are actually writing to.

Make the closing salutation from the Sheriff-Coroner, by yourself, with your rank and place of assignment.

Example:

Address of correspondence:

Jack Jones, County Counsel
Attention: Jim Brown, Deputy County Counsel
Somewhere County
123 Fourth Street
Any town, California 90000

Signature area of correspondence:

Sincerely,

(NAME OF SHERIFF), Sheriff-Coroner

By: Clarence Communicator, Commander
Such and Such Division

All staff reports (i.e. reports assigned to a specific person for the purpose of responding to a problem or issue) shall incorporate the principle of “completed staff work,” which requires a person, to whom a task has been delegated, to complete and document the delegated work to such extent that the only thing left for the decision-maker to do is to approve or disapprove the recommendation. Staff reports that only point out weaknesses or merely suggest needed actions are not completed staff work and are not acceptable.

The writer of the staff report shall document the efforts made to have the report reviewed by or acted upon by those individuals representing work units or other entities likely to be affected by any proposed changes. Such efforts are to be documented by attaching a Staff Report Routing Sheet as a cover sheet clearly identifying the parties contacted. Their input and recommendations shall be attached to the report as an addendum. If necessary, the writer of the staff report shall use the summary section of his/her staff report to elaborate on the efforts made to distribute the report to other parties.

Any memorandum that exceeds one page in length shall contain a brief introductory summary section, synopsisizing the gist of the subject matter addressed in the text of the memo. Such action will enable those people in this agency, who are required to digest numerous memos daily, to quickly evaluate the issues in reference and to prioritize and organize their work.

It should be remembered that the purpose of written correspondence is to communicate information from the writer to the reader, recognizing that successful communication cannot be achieved unless a document is written so that others are able to read and understand it.

All staff reports, submitted via the chain of command to superior officers for further action, shall be written consistent with the following format as applicable:

Executive Summary Section

The staff report should begin with a brief statement of the problem or issue and what can be done about it. This summary should re-state the main points of the report in general, non-technical language, leaving out details. The length of the executive summary section should range between one paragraph and one page.

Problem/Issue Identification Section

This section of a staff report is extremely critical to the success of the reader’s ability to grasp the issues involved and to arrive at an informed decision. The writer of a staff report should strive to identify the true nature and scope of the problem by attempting to answer such questions as:

- Determining the Facts
 - What are the known facts of this situation?
 - What is the background of this situation?
 - Who has the problem? How long has it existed? Who cares? So, what? What are the consequences of the problem?
- Forecast Future Impacts
 - What will happen if no action is taken in response to the identified problem?

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- What are the parameters or factors which will continue to exist and influence the issue?

The Problem/Issue Identification section of the report should clearly define the problem and be accompanied by an analysis of relevant factors, supported by specific examples, details, or testimony. It should clarify the nature of the problem and explain why it exists. Generally, the reader should be able to leave this section of the report clearly understanding the issues involved and the consequences of taking no action.

Alternatives Analysis Section

Whenever the seriousness or complexity of a problem warrants the development of alternative solutions, the staff report should contain an Alternative Analysis Section, containing a discussion of different courses of action and their consequences, taking into account the comments and positions of other staff members or entities affected by each proposed Sheriff’s Office response to the problem.

Recommended Solution Section

This section of the report should clearly detail the writer’s final recommended solution to the problem. Such conclusions should be written in a manner enabling the decision maker to approve or disapprove the recommended solution.

In addition to describing the action that should be taken to solve the problem, the writer should include a discussion of the budgetary impact of the proposed solution when appropriate and an action plan, detailing the procedural steps that will be required in order to implement the recommended plan if approved.

Such an action plan might include attaching such additional documents as proposed enabling orders, directives, or policy manual sections for use by Administrator in the event it is decided to enact the recommended solution. (Added 4/87)

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