

Rockville City Police Department

GENERAL ORDER



Subject DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES		Procedure G.O. # 2 - 5
Authorizing Signature 	Effective: 08-27-2012 Revised: 11-16-2020 Revised: 02-05-2021 Revised: 12-03-2025 Revised: 09-28-2026	Total Pages 4

I. POLICY

All personnel are expected to comply with the Department's rules, General Orders, special orders, standard operating procedures, and all other applicable City policies. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that personnel under their command comply with all lawful orders, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations, setting a positive example whenever possible.

Formal discipline involving a sworn police officer shall be administered in accordance with the Maryland Police Accountability Act, the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix, and applicable Department policy. The Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix applies to all matters that may result in discipline of a police officer, including internally initiated disciplinary matters. Sworn police officers subject to discipline shall be afforded the applicable trial board process and other procedural rights provided by Maryland law.

Formal disciplinary actions will be applied fairly and consistently, while allowing for non-disciplinary corrective measures when appropriate. For additional guidance regarding offenses and penalties, personnel should refer to General Order 2-5a, Disciplinary Matrix.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish a fair, consistent, and transparent disciplinary system to:

1. Protect the integrity of the Department and its personnel.
2. Provide procedures for addressing violations of departmental rules, General Orders, special orders, and standard operating procedures.
3. Inform personnel of their rights during the disciplinary process, including applicable rights to review, a trial board, and appeal.
4. Promote good morale, professionalism, and training as key components of effective discipline.

This directive ensures that discipline is applied consistently while allowing for corrective measures such as counseling or remedial training when appropriate.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Counseling

Non-disciplinary corrective action intended to improve performance. Documentation may be maintained but is not typically part of the permanent personnel file.

B. Dismissal

Permanent removal from employment.

C. Personnel

Within the context of this order, the term “personnel” or “employee” refers to all employees of the Rockville City Police Department, unless a more direct distinction is made.

D. Discipline

Formal disciplinary action imposed upon an employee for a violation of law, Department policy, rule, regulation, General Order, or other applicable directive. For sworn police officers, discipline shall be administered in accordance with applicable Maryland law and the Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix.

E. Formal Written Counseling (FWC)

A form of counseling given to employees who have violated an agency's policy. Formal Written Counseling, the least severe form of disciplinary action, serves as a warning for violations. Further violations of the same or similar conduct may result in more severe discipline. A copy of the Formal Written Counseling shall be placed in the officer's disciplinary file.

F. Letter of Reprimand (LOR)

A formal letter to an officer from the agency which details the officer's wrongful actions and states their actions have been deemed inappropriate or unacceptable. Further violations of the same or similar conduct may result in more severe discipline. A copy of the letter shall be placed in the officer's disciplinary file.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Grievances

1. Grievances for sworn personnel shall be handled in accordance with General Order 2-7, *Grievances*.

2. Grievances for civilian personnel shall be handled in accordance with the City of Rockville Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, Sections 160-00 and 160-10.

B. Remedial Training

1. Certain performance or conduct concerns may not warrant formal discipline but may require retraining or counseling to improve employee performance. Such measures are intended to be constructive and positive.
2. Training may be used in conjunction with other forms of discipline.
3. Supervisors should recognize situations where additional training is a more appropriate corrective measure than initiating formal disciplinary action.

C. Remedial Action Form

1. The Remedial Action Form (RAF) allows supervisors or the Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) to document non-disciplinary counseling or corrective action related to minor performance or conduct concerns.
2. An RAF may be used when a supervisor determines that non-disciplinary counseling or corrective action is appropriate. An RAF is not discipline and shall not be used to impose or document formal disciplinary action. When formal discipline is warranted, the matter shall be handled in accordance with the Department's disciplinary procedures, the Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix, and applicable Maryland law.
3. The form shall be completed in an original and one copy. The original shall be retained by the supervisor as part of the supervisor's files for one year and then destroyed. One copy shall be provided to the involved employee. The employee shall be given an opportunity to review the form, provide written comments concerning the matter, and sign the form.

D. Formal Written Counseling and Letter of Reprimand

1. Formal Written Counseling (FWC) and a Letter of Reprimand (LOR) are forms of formal disciplinary action and shall be administered in accordance with the Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix, applicable Maryland law, and Department policy.
2. Formal Written Counseling shall be documented using the Department's Formal Written Counseling form. A Letter of Reprimand shall be documented in writing and issued to the involved officer.
3. An FWC or LOR shall not be documented using a Remedial Action Form (RAF). The RAF is reserved for non-disciplinary counseling or corrective action as provided in Section IV.C of this General Order.

4. A copy of any Formal Written Counseling or Letter of Reprimand issued to an officer shall be provided to the officer and maintained in the officer's disciplinary file.
5. Formal Written Counseling and Letters of Reprimand involving sworn police officers are disciplinary actions and are subject to the applicable disciplinary procedures and rights provided by Maryland law, including the trial board process when applicable.

E. Formal Discipline

1. Only the Chief of Police, or designee, has the authority to impose discipline or suspend an officer from duty, with or without pay.
2. Formal discipline of a sworn police officer may result from a complaint made by a member of the public or from an internally initiated matter. Although the investigative and review procedures may differ depending on the source and nature of the allegation, formal discipline shall be administered in accordance with the Maryland Police Accountability Act, the Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix, and applicable Department policy.
3. Complaints and allegations of misconduct shall be received, reviewed, and investigated in accordance with General Order 2-6, Internal Affairs.
4. The rights of both the involved officer and the complainant shall be protected throughout all stages of the review and investigation process.
5. All members are expected to fulfill their duties and responsibilities consistent with their rank during any investigation of misconduct.
6. Members must cooperate fully and truthfully with any authorized internal investigation.
7. Command and supervisory personnel shall initiate or report investigations when a violation is alleged, observed, or otherwise brought to their attention. Alleged violations outside their authority shall be promptly referred through the chain of command.
8. Untruthfulness is considered a serious offense. Any employee found to have been untruthful during an investigation or in the performance of official duties may be subject to formal discipline in accordance with applicable law, the Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix, Department policy, and applicable City personnel procedures.

F. Dismissal

1. The Department treats dismissal of employees as a serious matter. Before taking such action, the Chief of Police shall review all facts and circumstances. If dismissal is warranted, the officer or employee will be informed of the reason for the dismissal, the effective date, and the status of fringe and retirement benefits.

2. A sworn officer shall be terminated if convicted of a felony. The Chief of Police may also terminate an officer for other serious legal outcomes, including probation before judgment for a felony or conviction of a misdemeanor committed in the performance of duties, second-degree assault, or a misdemeanor involving dishonesty.
3. All formal disciplinary actions, including dismissals, shall be documented and maintained in accordance with applicable Maryland law, City and Department policy, and established records retention requirements.

V. DISCIPLINARY REVIEW AND APPEAL PROCESS

- A. Civilian employees may file an appeal in accordance with the City of Rockville's grievance procedures.
- B. In accordance with the Maryland Police Accountability Act and Maryland Code, Public Safety § 3-106, the Department shall maintain a trial board process to adjudicate all matters for which a police officer is subject to discipline. The trial board process applies to disciplinary matters arising from complaints made by members of the public as well as internally initiated disciplinary matters.
- C. Sworn police officers shall be afforded the trial board process and rights of review or appeal applicable to disciplinary matters under the Maryland Police Accountability Act.

VI. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

- A. All disciplinary records and internal investigation records shall be securely maintained by the Office of the Chief of Police and the Office of Professional Responsibility in accordance with applicable records-retention requirements.
- B. Information pertaining to disciplinary matters and internal investigations shall be maintained and disclosed in accordance with applicable Maryland law, Department policy, and established records management procedures.