

**MISSISSIPPI BOARD ON LAW ENFORCEMENT
OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING**

MISSISSIPPI LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCREDITATION COMMISSION



ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

FIFTH EDITION

2026



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Acknowledgements and contact information appear at the back of this manual.

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DISCLAIMER

This program includes voluntary standards for law enforcement agencies within the State of Mississippi. The standards have been developed and approved by the Mississippi Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission. The standards are not intended as a substitute or replacement for any legal requirement that may apply to agencies involved in law enforcement services in the State of Mississippi. The Mississippi Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission recognizes that federal, state and local law, collective bargaining agreements, administrative regulations and local ordinances take precedence over these standards.

NOTE

Nothing in this manual establishes a mandatory policy or procedure. The standards adopted by the Commission describe *what* an agency should address, not *how* the agency must address it. Policy development remains the responsibility and the prerogative of each agency's chief executive.

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation is the ongoing process whereby agencies evaluate policy and procedure against established criteria and have compliance with those criteria verified by an independent and authoritative body. The criteria, or standards, are policy development guidelines that represent a level of quality service delivery. The true indicator of compliance, however, lies with an evaluation by trained, independent professional peers. The establishment of meaningful, professional standards and the independent verification of compliance with them are, therefore, the two fundamentals of an accreditation program.

The Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police and the Mississippi Sheriffs' Association pursued the concept and development of a voluntary statewide law enforcement accreditation program for Mississippi. Their efforts resulted in the addition of a staff position within the Public Safety Planning Division under the Peace Officer Standards and Training Section with the direction to begin work on the accreditation program. As a result, the Mississippi Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (MSLEAC) was established, consisting of commissioners appointed by the Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police, the Mississippi Sheriffs' Association, the Municipal and County Associations, and the Mississippi Department of Public Safety. Personnel from the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training staff provide support services to the Commission. The Commission is tasked with developing and maintaining a formal accreditation process specific to the needs of Mississippi law enforcement agencies. This mandate required the development of a comprehensive set of professional standards.

The attitudes, training and actions of personnel of Mississippi's law enforcement agencies best reflect compliance with the standards contained in this program. Policy and procedure based on accreditation will not insure a crime-free environment for citizens, nor will it ensure an absence of litigation against law enforcement agencies and executives. However, effective and comprehensive leadership through professionally based policy development is directly influenced by a law enforcement program that is comprehensive, obtainable and based on standards that reflect professional service delivery. In developing this program, the Commission recognized the somewhat limited financial and manpower resources of a great many law enforcement agencies and developed standards that would not place overwhelming demands on those resources.

The standards developed are the basis of an accreditation program that affects every component of the agencies involved. Through the dedication to service and professionalism evidenced by the attainment of accredited status, law enforcement agencies can positively affect the communities they serve.

The development of department policy is the most significant duty of Chiefs of Police and Sheriffs throughout the state. Therefore, this manual contains no mandatory policies and procedures. The standards developed by the Commission are only guidelines for what should be done, not how it should be done.

Policies on many topics may be very similar among most agencies. On the other hand, policies dealing with other topics may vary greatly. Policy development that complies with the program standards, however, remains dependent on the judgment of the chief executive of the law enforcement agency.

This manual represents many hours of tireless effort by a large number of Mississippi law enforcement executives. All of the standards applicable to the program have been reviewed and approved by the Mississippi Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission. The Commission is responsible for continuing oversight, review and updating of the program standards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Questions about the accreditation program, the standards, or any stage of the process should be directed to the BLEOST accreditation staff. Complete contact information appears under **Contact Information** on page 29.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual has been designed to guide agencies through the process of accreditation. While this book may offer specific instruction, how an agency accomplishes the end result — standards compliance — is up to each individual agency.

The first two chapters are a review of the initial steps necessary to implement the program, including the accreditation application, notification of personnel, and file organization. The next chapter addresses the heart of the process — standards compliance — from what the standards are through how to record compliance. From there, the manual focuses on the on-site assessment by preparing the agency for a mock assessment to test readiness, and then goes on to explain the official on-site assessment process. Finally, a chapter is included on maintaining accreditation status.

The members of the Commission and staff have worked diligently to insure a useful, easy-to-follow plan to ensure success for each agency's endeavor for accreditation. We wish you the greatest success.

QUICK REFERENCE

Chapters 1 – 2 · Getting started: application, notification, and file organization.

Chapters 3 – 4 · The standards, and how to manage and prove compliance with them.

Chapters 5 – 6 · Preparing for and hosting the mock and official on-site assessments.

Chapter 7 · Maintaining accredited status after the award.

Glossary and Index · Defined terms and a subject index to the whole manual.

CHAPTER

1

INITIAL STEPS

The Chief, Sheriff or agency chief executive makes the decision to pursue accredited status.

The Chief, Sheriff or agency chief executive (hereafter referred to as Chief/Sheriff) may decide to proceed with the accreditation process for several reasons. It is important that the Chief/Sheriff is aware of the complexity of the process and willing to be supportive of the agency's Accreditation Manager (AM). Without the Chief/Sheriff making it clear to all members of the organization that accreditation is a priority, it will be extremely difficult for the AM to get the job done. The Chief/Sheriff should review all of the program materials, prepare for routine update meetings with the AM, and think about space and time accommodations.

Designate an Accreditation Manager

Initially the Chief/Sheriff needs to designate an Accreditation Manager. There are several factors to consider when choosing an AM. The Chief/Sheriff should appoint an individual who:

- Has an interest in doing the job
- Is computer literate
- Is organized and efficient in their present job tasks
- Is capable of writing clearly and concisely
- Is capable of formulating drafts of agency policy statements
- Is capable of dealing effectively with all levels of agency management
- Is willing to work the long hours that accreditation activities demand
- Is innovative and willing to change

Expect Agency Change

Let there be no doubt: accreditation *will* change your agency. The AM is a key change agent. The Chief/Sheriff should also be aware that accreditation is a task in which the entire agency participates. The Chief/Sheriff and command staff will need to participate in the process regularly.

Accreditation Manager Training

The AM will receive training or technical assistance from staff or Commission members. Formal training classes will be offered on a regular basis. To prepare, it is recommended that the AM review and study the materials provided. The MSLEAC staff is available by phone and email to answer any questions as they arise.

A presentation by MSLEAC members or staff will be available to agency command staff and other personnel. This presentation is a great way to clearly present the program details and allow an opportunity for questions to be asked and answered.

Submit a Letter of Intent

Complete the Letter of Intent. This is simply a formal notice to the Commission that the agency has clearly reviewed the program process, requirements, and goals with appropriate agency personnel and jurisdictional authorities, and is now requesting Commission consideration — both man hours and financial — to further the accreditation endeavor. This is not binding, and the agency is free to discontinue the process at any time.

FORMAL NOTICE

“The Letter of Intent is not a binding contract and can be abandoned at any time by either party.”

The Letter of Intent should be signed by both the Chief/Sheriff and the appropriate governmental or jurisdictional representative. Agencies may want to consider using a public meeting to sign and recognize this step. By doing so, the public can be made aware of the commitment by the agency, as well as receive positive publicity.

Upon receipt, the Letter of Intent is forwarded for review to the Commission for consideration at their next meeting.

Formal Application for Accreditation

Part of the introductory kit, shipped to the applying agency after the Letter of Intent is received and reviewed, is a formal application with questionnaire. Agencies wishing to participate must complete the application and questionnaire and return the executed documents, along with full payment of the accreditation fee, to the Commission.

Accreditation Fees

The accreditation fees are based on the cost of printing applications, manuals, standards, and the Accredited Agency Certificate. Full payment of the fee must be received with the completed accreditation application. The following fee has been established for both accreditation and re-accreditation:

ACCREDITATION / RE-ACCREDITATION FEE

\$300.00

Payable in full with the completed application.

Notify Agency Personnel

A memo to the staff from the Chief/Sheriff is a “must do” step in the initial accreditation process. The Chief/Sheriff should advise all agency personnel what accreditation means to the agency, generate enthusiasm for the process, and advise of the steps needed to complete the process. In addition, the AM’s authority when dealing with accreditation issues and timelines should be addressed and recognized.

Designate Clerical Support Staff

Accreditation is information intensive. Creation and dissemination of agency policy lies at the heart of the process. The level of clerical support for the Accreditation Manager is dependent on his or her own clerical and organizational abilities, in addition to the resources available within the agency. Of course, some Accreditation Managers prefer to produce the documents themselves.

Schedule Personnel Briefings

Hold regular briefings on accreditation status. The AM will also serve as an information liaison. As part of the initial process, it is recommended that the AM coordinate with the Chief/Sheriff to hold regular briefings on accreditation activities. The Chief/Sheriff may also want to schedule time at regular command staff meetings for the AM to bring staff personnel up to date on progress and address problem areas. Agencies may find it useful to use the staff briefings to formalize the process of assigning agency command staff policy review areas and other duties designed to assist the AM.

CALEA Accreditation

The MSLEAC accreditation program is not in competition with the national accreditation body, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Incorporated (CALEA). We are merely offering an affordable method of professionalizing police departments and sheriff's departments that is tailored to meet the needs of their jurisdiction and to help them better serve and protect their constituents.

Mississippi agencies that are currently accredited by CALEA will not be required to build a separate set of files for the Mississippi program.

CHAPTER

2

ORGANIZATION

While we can explain most of the necessary paper supplies needed to begin, the way you organize them is up to you.

A computer workspace, along with a file cabinet dedicated to the task, is necessary. A review of other programs has revealed that color-coded files seem to be the easiest and most accepted method of identification — red for Administration, blue for Operations, and so on.

Folder Organization

In order to streamline the assessment process, you need to set up your files in a consistent manner. Each folder should be labeled with the standard number and title on the tab, along with the cover. On the inside cover of the folder, the standard applicable to that folder should be copied and placed in the folder. Documentation should then be filed in the order listed on the Standard Compliance Form. The Standard Compliance Form should lay loose in the folder and be the second piece of paper in the file.

If there are bulleted items in the standard, these items should be separated by a page titled with the bullet number. If you choose to highlight relevant text within documents, please be consistent with the highlight method.

Setting up the folders is the easy part; now you can begin filling them. Each folder should have a label, a copy of the applicable standard, related policy, a completed Standard Compliance Form (SCF), and proof of compliance in a format capable of filing.

Organization Tips

Tips from others who have completed this process include:

- Place the standard number for every proof of compliance at a consistent location on all items. This will help identify loose paper, especially if a pile of folders accidentally is knocked to the floor. It will also speed the filing process.
- Many Managers use a separation sheet for each proof for bulleted items. The proofs of compliance are arranged so that the assessor can read the standard statement and immediately tab to bullet “c” if desired.
- Be creative when necessary. Compliance is demonstrated not only in written materials, but also via videotape, recorded materials, interview and demonstration.

NOTE

The Accreditation Manager should make every effort to visit other accredited agencies. The information gathered will prove invaluable.

Schedule Briefings for All Staff

Schedule briefings for officers and clerical staff. Personnel should be briefed regularly on the progress toward accreditation status.

CHAPTER

3

STANDARDS

The standards adopted by MSLEAC should serve as a blueprint for agency policy.

They are not, however, the only resource the agency should explore. Mississippi law enforcement agencies have an excellent reputation regarding the sharing of information, especially in the area of policy development. Law enforcement agencies that have a long-term commitment to accreditation efforts can serve as a tremendous resource for those departments just starting the process. New Accreditation Managers seeking advice should never hesitate to contact other agencies involved in the process, or the staff of the Commission.

The standards for the Law Enforcement Accreditation Program are based upon a compilation of best-practice law enforcement standards from other state accreditation programs. The standards reflect the best professional practices in each area of police management, administration, operations, and support services. The standards prescribe *what* agencies should be doing, but not *how* they should be doing it. That decision is left up to the individual agency and its Chief or Sheriff.

Standard Categories

The standards address (1) life, health and safety issues, (2) legal and other critical requirements, and (3) conditions that reduce major risk and high liability exposures.

Accreditation standards address a variety of issues, some of which include:

- Use of force, authority and jurisdiction
- Recruitment, selection, and promotion of personnel
- Training, discipline and internal affairs
- Patrol and criminal investigations
- Victim and witness assistance
- Traffic operations
- Prisoner transportation and holding facilities
- Records and communications
- Collection and preservation of evidence
- Property and evidence control

Naturally, all policies developed for the program standards must be developed in conformance with applicable Mississippi law and regulations. During the standards review and development process for state accreditation, each standard was evaluated by the Commission. Through this process, those standards which are most relevant and applicable to law enforcement in the State of Mississippi were specifically chosen and included in the Mississippi accreditation program. These standards, as well as other potential additions to the program, will be under constant review and consideration by the Commission. The applicable program standards are identified in a separate index.

Numbering System

The standards are numbered according to their placement within the section and subsection to which they apply. For example, in a standard numbered **46.1.4**, the **46** refers to the section — Unusual Occurrences and Special Operations. The **1** refers to the subsection within that section — Special Operations. The **4** refers to the chronological order of the standard within this subsection.

Components of the Standard

Standard statement. Each standard is identified by its specific number — in Figure 1 below, standard 1.14. The standard statement can be several sentences long and will describe the crux of the requirement. In some cases the standard statement also contains several bullets (a, b, c, and so on). Such bullets indicate specific points that must be addressed in the agency’s directive — its policy statement — for compliance.

FIGURE 1 · A STANDARD WITH BULLETS

1.14 At least annually, all agency personnel authorized to carry lethal weapons will demonstrate proficiency with each issued or approved lethal weapon.

- a. Proficiency training must be conducted by a certified weapons instructor.
- b. Proficiency training must be documented.
- c. The agency must have procedures for remedial training for those employees who are unable to demonstrate proficiency.
- d. The agency must have procedures for removing from enforcement duties employees who are unable to demonstrate proficiency with their primary weapon.

Discussion: The intent of bullet (c) is to ensure that remedial measures are provided. An employee failing to demonstrate proficiency with a weapon is not returned to duty with that weapon until such time as proficiency is demonstrated and documented.

Discussion. Following the standard statement is a narrative discussion. These discussions were developed to more fully define the intent of the particular standard. However, for assessment purposes, you are only required to comply with the standard statement.

Multiple components within a standard. The standard statement may contain more than one requirement. Each item within a standard will require proof of compliance.

Standards Containing the Word “If”

Some standards are “if” standards. See Figure 2. For instance, if the law enforcement agency does not allow extra-duty employment, the agency is not required to develop a detailed policy regarding conditions of employment as stated in Standard 3.12. However, the agency must develop a written policy statement — a directive — regarding the prohibition of such employment.

FIGURE 2 · AN “IF” STANDARD

3.12 If the agency allows off-duty or extra-duty employment, the agency shall have a written directive governing the types of off-duty and extra-duty employment in which agency personnel may engage, and the process for approval.

Discussion: Agencies may want to consider expressing the prohibition of certain types of off-duty or extra-duty employment in general terms, such as prescribing off-duty or extra-duty employment that, in the opinion of the agency, would constitute a conflict of interest or would tend to bring discredit to the agency. Alternatively, the prohibition could be quite specific, such as by focusing on specific jobs or locations.

Standards Not Applicable to the Agency

If your agency does not offer a service or function as required in a standard, then that standard does not apply to you and may be marked N/A. For example, if your agency does not have holding cells for prisoners, then your agency would simply mark N/A in the appropriate place on the Standard Compliance Form (SCF). A folder still needs to be created for each standard, whether applicable or not, but the SCF can simply be marked N/A.

Waiver from Standard Compliance

There are rare occasions when an agency may qualify for and receive a waiver. Waivers are available to agencies when it is impossible to comply with a specific standard. Examples include conflict with collective bargaining agreements or local ordinance.

A request to waive standard compliance must be made and approved via the Standard Compliance Waiver Form. This form is provided with the introductory materials, and a copy is provided in the resource section of this manual. Please allow 90 days for approval.

CHAPTER

4

MANAGING, CONTROLLING AND PROVING COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS

Create and implement a tracking system.

Create and Implement a Tracking System

The AM will need to create a tracking system that will provide quick reference to the status of each folder. Some Managers use a large white board, others a spreadsheet. This should be convenient and easy to use. A status board makes it easy for the Chief or Sheriff and other interested parties to visualize the agency's progress.

Self-Assessment

The self-assessment should begin as an exercise in comparison. Once the filing system is organized, the AM starts comparing current agency policy to the accreditation standards. Most Managers quickly come to the conclusion that the agency is closer to compliance than anticipated. Law enforcement adapts to the ebb and flow of legislative changes, and agencies adopt policy that is consistent with the law.

As the Accreditation Manager compares what must be covered for accreditation purposes, he or she will probably find that some fine-tuning is necessary. One of the biggest mistakes committed by new Accreditation Managers is in rushing the job. There is a generous two-year time limitation on the MSLEAC process. The Manager may want to address high-liability areas first in order to get any necessary changes in agency policy into the hands of those it affects as quickly as possible. Property and evidence control, arrest procedures, and similar functions are some of these high-liability areas.

Cross-Compliance and Reference

When comparing agency policy to the standards, the Manager will need to be mindful of cross-compliance and reference. Is there a separate policy on this — or any — one element? If so, the AM will need the separate policy in the compliance folder, or may opt to submit a draft combining the two.

Compile Supportive Documentation

There are several ways to prove compliance on just about every standard. Accreditation Managers are not bound by conventional wisdom when it comes to proving compliance with standards. The Standard Compliance Form (SCF) designates four types of proofs of compliance: written directive, other documentation, interviews, and observation.

Written directive. A policy of the department issued by the Chief/Sheriff or designee as an order, generally codified in the General Operating Manual.

Written documentation. Examples of written documents include, but are not limited to, lesson plans, memos, emails, state law sections, or judicial policies and law. Agency policy is usually considered a written directive and will most often be the first item the Manager has available to prove compliance.

Other documentation. May include photographs, video, log sheets, agency forms, training rosters, evidence bags or any number of items. The key element in this category is that the proof does not require specific action be taken, but is an instrument of the person taking the action.

Interviews. Interviews will be conducted by the assessment team. The Manager may want to list individuals on the SCF who are most knowledgeable about the agency action in a specific area. For example, the director of personnel for the jurisdiction may be listed as a potential interview to prove compliance with certain personnel standards. The lead dispatcher may be listed as the best source of information on dispatch responsibilities during high-speed pursuits. Listing the names of individuals does not insure that the assessment team will interview the person. However, if the team does choose to interview the suggested person or persons, the Manager has already supplied them with the name — and the proper spelling — of the interviewee. This makes the assessor's job easier, and that makes the assessment go faster.

Observation. This is the final category on the SCF. This type of proof is the easiest for the assessor and probably the least utilized. There are several standards where simply observing the action or a piece of equipment is proof that the agency is in compliance with the standard. Standards addressing markings on agency vehicles, alternate sources of power for communications equipment, or instructions for citizen complaints are examples of observation compliance.

Accreditation Managers should also be aware that the best assessors do not settle for a single proof of compliance unless it is overwhelming in nature. The wise Manager will list proofs in at least two categories, and in some cases, all four categories. The more ways a Manager can show the agency is truly doing what they say they are doing, the better. The assessors will be looking to find compliance with the first few items they look at in the folder. Having additional proofs will never hurt, but not having enough is a common shortcoming.

Train Agency Personnel in Policy Changes

Whenever appropriate, the Manager should utilize the briefing schedules set up early in the process. The Manager may want to have other agency personnel present the changes — including the Chief/Sheriff or other high-ranking officer — or may simply coordinate with shift commanders. The important point is that agency personnel know about the newly adopted policy as soon as possible. Any new policy should include a training component for those it affects, and the AM should remember that the assessment team may desire to interview agency rank and file on the particular issue addressed.

CHAPTER

5

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE MOCK ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

Utilization of a mock assessment is strongly recommended.

Preparation

The AM should plan to observe or participate in a mock assessment. Although this process is not a part of the Commission's formal program, peers will often assist agencies in obtaining accredited status by role-playing this most important test. When the agency has completed the self-assessment phase, it should arrange on its own for a mock assessment. Mock assessments are not required, but when conducted properly can be the most helpful strategy to prepare for the actual Commission evaluation. Mock assessments are a tremendous classroom for people who are assessing an agency. When asked to participate on a mock team, the AM is assisting his or her own agency at least as much as the agency being assessed. Whenever possible, Accreditation Managers should participate on mock teams. Please bear in mind that all costs for a mock assessment are borne by the agency, although colleagues may be willing to do the mock for little or no cost.

Generally, the mock assessment will be evaluated by local assessors, thereby keeping the cost at a minimum and avoiding any conflicts later with assessor availability. An assessor who performs a mock assessment will not normally be utilized on the final assessment of the agency involved in the mock. Plan to receive a written evaluation for record-keeping purposes.

The AM should conduct a thorough review of all folders. Setting up a final review of all agency folders prior to holding a mock assessment will give the Manager one last opportunity to fill any gaps and correct last-minute compliance. How thorough the review must be is dependent upon many factors; however, giving one last check never hurts.

Schedule and Host a Mock Assessment

MSLEAC does not arrange for mock assessments. However, staff personnel will assist in identifying potential assessors from the Commission pool. The AM is responsible for organizing a team, making all the arrangements for the team, determining what is to be looked at, and time scheduling. The more comprehensive the mock, the more likely the actual assessment will be successful. Mock assessments are not required, but are considered critical to a successful on-site assessment. Agencies are expected to conduct internal mock assessments as part of preparations for assessment.

Review Mock Team Findings

Review the mock team findings and amend folders as appropriate. The mock team will probably make suggestions as to compliance, format or arrangements in their final report to the agency. They may make recommendations in all of these areas and others, too. The AM must not take the team's recommendations personally. The entire mock team format is designed to identify discrepancies now, so that it will be easier when the true test comes. The Manager should review all mock team comments and weigh the relevance of each item. In one case, additional proofs may be suggested for a particular folder. In another case, rewording may be suggested. In rare cases, a complete rewriting of policy may be recommended. The agency has the option of accepting or not accepting the mock team recommendations. The Commission does not consider mock team findings when determining accredited status. One strategy on contested items may be to contact several other Managers or assessors prior to making any changes suggested by the mock team. When appropriate, make the changes.

Retrain Employees

Whenever a substantive change in policy is made, the retraining of affected personnel is necessary.

Make the decision as to whether to hold a second mock assessment. Mock assessments are relatively inexpensive and provide the agency with a professional evaluation without risk. Some agencies have been known to have more than two mock assessments prior to the initial full-fledged assessment. Two mock assessments are recommended for all agencies prior to their initial evaluation by the Commission team.

CHAPTER

6

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

Your professional treatment of the assessment team starts here.

Scheduling

Contact the Commission staff when you feel you are prepared for the on-site assessment to arrange dates. The Commission will need a minimum of four weeks to arrange for a team. Remember, the assessor must make personal and professional arrangements in order to come to your department. The Commission staff will provide an assessment schedule.

Assessor Selection List

The Commission staff will submit to the agency an Assessor Selection List (ASL) containing the names and departments of potential assessment team members. The agency has the option, but not the obligation, of striking one name off the list. The Chief/Sheriff and the AM should conduct a review of the ASL. The Commission will not question the striking of a name. The reviewed list, with any strikes, must then be forwarded back to the Commission for team selection. The Commission staff will make every effort to ensure a balanced team is formed. The agency will be notified of the final team composition as soon as possible.

The agency is responsible only for the costs of mileage (if a private vehicle is used), meals, and any hotel accommodations for assessors. However, to avoid bearing these costs twice, it is prudent to take the extra time to coordinate a mock assessment to avoid the necessity of a repeat on-site full assessment.

Time Schedule

You can expect to follow this schedule for the on-site assessment:

- **Day One** — Team arrives; team meeting and planning.
- **Day Two** — File review; static display and agency tour; ride-along; interviews; public call-in session.
- **Day Three** — File review concludes; team prepares report; team holds exit interview with the Chief/Sheriff and the Accreditation Manager.

On-Site Protocol

The Accreditation Manager has now reached the critical stage of the process: the actual site visit. Preparation for the team should be a well-orchestrated and efficient procedure. The following list does not represent all of the preparations the Manager may arrange, but is fairly comprehensive.

- Make a personal phone call to team members about two weeks prior to the visit.
- Send an information packet to each member containing a letter of welcome from the Chief/Sheriff, a map to the hotel (if necessary), pertinent phone numbers (including the AM's cell number), an explanation of meal arrangements, a proposed itinerary, and information on the jurisdiction such as history and demographics.
- Discuss arrangements with the team leader as soon as possible. Arrange for the best possible accommodations. Individual rooms are a must. Check with team members for special considerations such as dietary restrictions, smoking or non-smoking preferences, or disabled access.
- Lodging should be reasonably near the agency headquarters.
- Make any hotel accommodations well in advance of the arrival date, and recheck the status of the reservations a minimum of two days prior to arrival. The hotel should have restaurant facilities.
- Arrange with the hotel management for rooms away from main traffic corridors and in an area of the hotel away from distractions.
- Make the hotel manager aware of the importance of the team.
- Advise the hotel manager that the team may want to secure their weapons in the hotel safe.

Meal Schedules

Meal arrangements should be discussed with the team leader.

While On-Site

The team will be in the jurisdiction for two to three days. The Manager should have the itinerary arranged with the team leader as much as possible. The Chief/Sheriff or his designee and the AM should meet the team at the hotel prior to the first evening's meal. Arrange for the static display and agency tour to be conducted early in the assessment.

Public Telephone Call-In Session

The agency and the assessors work together to schedule and publicize a telephone number for the use of the public to make comments to the assessors about the agency and its accreditation application. The telephone number should be widely publicized in the community prior to the arrival of the assessment team.

Initial Tour and Static Display

The static display and agency tour provide the team with many proofs of compliance by observation and interview. Some agencies have given the team a list of those standards that are at least partially complied with through the static display or agency tour. The Manager should provide the team a list of personnel assigned to the static display. The agency tour should include the property room and communications component. These areas may take some time to inspect. The property room personnel will likely be asked a number of questions and also asked to pull items under agency care. Communications personnel may be asked to follow a request for service through their system. Arrangements for the static display are at agency discretion; however, if the agency is arranging an outdoor display, it is prudent to also arrange an alternate indoor site.

The Assessment Room

The actual assessment room is a critical area. The accreditation files should be easily accessible, and all agency procedure or operational manuals available. A copy machine and telephone should also be available.

Team Leader

The team leader will be the contact person for the team. The team leader shall moderate all discussions regarding compliance issues. The AM will be expected to be available to discuss issues anytime the team is working. More than one assessor may need information at any given time, so available help for the AM should be arranged, if not assigned.

Agency Access

Members of the team may want to attend shift change, ride along with officers, or interview members of the agency not scheduled for interview. This means the entire agency needs to be prepared for these possibilities. The team is trained to weigh all responses to queries. The Manager should arrange to attend shift change prior to the assessment and brief the department members on who is coming and what to expect.

Post-Assessment

The team will conduct an exit interview with the Chief/Sheriff and AM prior to departure. At this meeting, the agency will be advised of the final recommendation the team will give the Commission. If the team finds the agency in compliance with all applicable standards, the team leader will inform the Chief/Sheriff that the agency will be recommended for accredited status. If the agency failed to meet standards, the Commission can grant up to a ninety (90) day extension.

If there are disputed compliance issues, the agency has the option of presenting their case to the Commission. The Manager and Chief/Sheriff should appear before the Commission at the next scheduled meeting and present their interpretation of the issue. The Commission members will rule on the item, and if this issue is the deciding factor as to total compliance, will either grant or deny accredited status at this time.

Commission Review

MSLEAC will advise the agency of the date and time of the next Commission meeting. The Chief/Sheriff and AM will be invited to appear before the Commission to hear the final report delivered by the team leader. This is not mandatory. The Chief/Sheriff and AM will also be given an opportunity to speak on the accreditation program in general and the assessment in particular. Commission members will have questions for the agency representatives regarding particular phases of the process and any troublesome areas the agency experienced. This open forum is highlighted by the vote on accredited status.

CHAPTER

7

NOW WHAT?

You have done it — congratulations! Now enjoy these benefits.

Term of Accreditation

The MSLEAC period for accredited status is three years. In the third year, the agency must arrange for an on-site team visit using the same guidelines as the original assessment.

Accredited Agency Logo

MSLEAC staff will provide the Manager with camera-ready copies of the official Accredited Agency seal. This logo may be displayed on agency vehicles, letterhead, web pages or in any other official manner.

Certificate Presentation

Presentations can be held in almost any venue. The AM should contact program staff with the date, time and place of the presentation. The AM should send an invitation to the Commission, staff and assessment team. Some agencies also invite mock team members and other individuals who have assisted them in obtaining the first stage of accreditation.

Annual Reports

MSLEAC requires annual reports on accreditation activities every year. The annual report form is provided to you by program staff. It calls for copies of several quarterly and annual agency reports addressed by particular standards. Program staff should receive these reports within 30 days of your accreditation anniversary date.

Post-Assessment File Maintenance

File maintenance is an ongoing endeavor. The Accreditation Manager should plan on reviewing each file on a regular basis and constantly be watching for proofs of compliance that can be used when MSLEAC sends the re-accreditation team to the agency in three years. The agency should never be without an Accreditation Manager. This will help to insure that all new policies and procedures adopted by the department are in compliance with the applicable MSLEAC standards. This in turn makes re-accreditation much easier.

Final Thoughts

Remember, assistance is available to you from the MSLEAC staff and many other law enforcement agencies throughout the state. That assistance is only a phone call away.

As this accreditation program evolves in Mississippi, the process will be revised and streamlined to better serve your needs. We want you to succeed in your law enforcement agency accreditation endeavors. Please contact the staff with any suggestions you may have on improving the program.

CONGRATULATIONS

MSLEAC congratulates you for your vision to improve and enhance law enforcement services in your agency, your community, and the State of Mississippi.

GLOSSARY

Accreditation Manager. The person designated by the chief executive officer of the law enforcement agency to administer and oversee the accreditation program for the agency.

Arrest. Per *Black's Law Dictionary*: to deprive a person of his or her liberty by legal authority.

Biannually. Occurring twice a year.

Biennially. Occurring every two years.

Bimonthly. Occurring once every two months.

Bullet. An itemized listing of multiple components within a standard statement, in alphabetized form, containing multiple mandates. Each bullet must stand alone when establishing compliance with the standard, with the proofs of compliance identified by every specific alphabetized requirement.

Chain of command. Formal lines of communication going downward or upward within the organizational hierarchy of the law enforcement agency through each successive level of command.

Chief executive officer. The duly authorized and designated top administrator of the law enforcement agency. The chief executive officer (CEO), or the Chief/Sheriff, is the highest-ranking executive for the law enforcement agency who possesses ultimate command authority for the operation of the agency.

Civilian. A non-sworn person who has no arrest or police powers, employed or working for the law enforcement agency.

Compliance folder. A file folder identified by a standard number which contains, in order, the standard statement, compliance form, directive proofs of compliance, and documentary proofs of compliance.

Custody. Legal or physical control of a person in the keeping or care of the law enforcement agency.

Detainee. A person in the legal custody of the law enforcement agency, through arrest and custody, usually in a holding cell area within the agency.

Evidence. Materials or things discovered or retrieved from a crime scene or other law enforcement incident.

Extra-duty employment. The secondary, outside-the-agency employment of a law enforcement officer where the actual or potential use of law enforcement powers is expected or possible.

Field training. A program for recruit officers designed to enable them to apply classroom knowledge in closely supervised on-the-job situations.

Holding cell areas. A place commonly used for the temporary detention of prisoners for processing and awaiting arraignment. Holding cell areas are specifically used to securely house prisoners within the location of the law enforcement agency.

Narrative. The narrative located below the standard statement, which serves as a guide regarding the intent of the standard. It is solely for clarification and is not a binding part of the standard.

Patrol. The utilization of law enforcement agency personnel to provide the many and varied services to the public.

Personnel. All sworn and non-sworn members employed and working on behalf of the law enforcement agency.

Pursuit. An active attempt by law enforcement officers operating a law enforcement vehicle to apprehend the occupants of a motor vehicle when the driver of the vehicle is resisting the apprehension by ignoring audible or visual signals to stop by the pursuing officer, or by evasive tactics.

Restraining devices. Law enforcement equipment designed to restrict the mobility or movement of a prisoner, such as handcuffs, flex-cuffs, ankle chains, or other such devices.

Selection. The agency procedures for choosing employees based on a known and established system.

Standard. A recognized, measurable, and necessary professional requirement setting criteria for a specific process, function, service or procedure for law enforcement agency compliance. It establishes necessary provisions requiring adherence to the standard statement.

Standard Compliance Form. A Commission-produced form, to be completed by the agency, which lists each required specific numerical standard to document compliance with the standard.

Sworn law enforcement officer. An employee of the agency who has the power and authority of the State of Mississippi, the political subdivision, or any other specified statutory entity to possess and exercise the powers of arrest or other law enforcement duties as specified by law or ordinance.

Temporary holding area. A location within the law enforcement agency which is used for a brief period of time to process, question, arraign, or test individuals who are in the custody or care of the law enforcement agency. These areas would only be used for a brief time until the processing is completed, prior to the release of the person or until the person appears before a member of the judiciary.

Written directive. Any written document used to guide or affect the performance or conduct of agency personnel. The term includes policies, procedures, rules and regulations, general orders, special orders, memoranda, and instructional materials.

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NOTES

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The Mississippi Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission gratefully acknowledges the founding members whose service established this program.

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Contact Information

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