

## Chain of Command

## Section 1.1

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a fluid and effective system of communication, performance, and accountability among all City officials and employees at every level within the City's organizational structure.

### POLICY

This policy consists of rules intended to advance the City's goals of providing efficient and high quality services to its residents and providing a safe and productive work environment for all employees. Instructions flow downward along the chain of command and accountability flows upward. Adhering to the chain of command will result in a more effective decision-making process and greater efficiency in the City.

This policy establishes general rules for communication and delegation of work within the City, but does not supplant other laws and rules that specifically prescribe the legal responsibilities of City officials and employees. Those include, among others, the California Constitution, various provisions of the California Government Code (including the Brown Act and the Political Reform Act), the California Labor Code, federal laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment, and provisions of the City's own Municipal Code.

City staff is organized in a hierarchical structure with the direction and control of work occurring through several layers of supervision and management in many cases. The City Manager is the highest level within the staffing structure and reports directly to the City Council. The City Council communicates administrative direction solely through the City Manager. When an elected official or employee attempts to direct another employee not within their chain of command, the management structure is undermined and detrimental impacts may result. In many cases, such actions can cause misuse or inefficient use of employee time and/or City resources and result in duplicative, untimely, and/or unfinished work. In some cases, such actions may place an employee in the difficult position of either disregarding their assigned work and chain of command or appearing to disregard the direction of an elected official or other employee. In other cases, such actions may cause or create the potential for financial and/or legal liability for the City.

For the reasons above, it is imperative that all City officials and employees issue and receive work direction consistent with their chain of command and scope of authority, which shall be accomplished by adherence to the following rules:

1. City Council, Commission, and Committee members shall communicate administrative direction and all requests for work or research solely through the City Manager and/or their designee(s).
2. The City Manager shall communicate administrative direction and all requests for work or research solely through Department Directors and/or their designees.
3. Department Directors shall communicate administrative direction in a manner consistent with the chain of command within the organizational structure of their respective department. City employees are directed in their everyday tasks by their immediate supervisor in accordance with approved work plans.

4. City officials and employees shall refrain from making any attempts to reorganize the work priorities of any employee outside their chain of command or influence the manner by which any such employee performs their assigned functions or duties. However, City officials and employees may ask routine questions of or request routine information from staff outside their chain of command.
5. Employees shall refrain from taking direction or work assignments from City officials and employees outside their chain of command, and shall promptly inform their immediate supervisor and/or Department Director of any such attempts.
6. Any concerns by City Council, Commission, and Committee members regarding the performance or behavior of a City employee shall be expressed discreetly to the City Manager and/or to the employee's Department Director.
7. Any concerns by the City Manager or Department Directors regarding the performance or behavior of a City employee outside their chain of command shall be expressed discreetly to the employee's Department Director.
8. Any concerns by a City employee regarding the performance or behavior of another City employee shall be promptly reported to their immediate supervisor. In any case where the performance or behavior of the employee's immediate supervisor is the concern, the employee shall report their concern to the next authority in their chain of command.
9. Any issues regarding the performance or behavior of a City employee shall be addressed in accordance with the City's personnel policies and procedures, in a manner that protects the employee's rights and protects the City's authority to properly discipline its employees.

Any violations of this Policy should be reported to the City Manager, appropriate Department Director, and/or the Human Resources/Risk Management Director. Upon receipt of any reported violations, the City Manager shall determine an appropriate course of action.

The goal in enforcement of this policy is corrective, rather than punitive, and a progressive approach to curing violations shall be employed, beginning with informal methods whenever appropriate, and proceeding to more formal methods as necessary.