

December 20, 2024

By Electronic Mail

Geoffrey D. Noble
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Re: MSP Policy Changes Initiated as a Result of Certification and Accreditation

Dear Colonel Noble:

As part of its statutory mandate, the Office of the Inspector General's Division of State Police Oversight (DSPO) is charged with monitoring the Massachusetts State Police's (MSP) efforts to achieve certification or accreditation by a state or national law enforcement accrediting agency and ensuring continued compliance with the necessary requirements to maintain those designations. *See* M.G.L. c. 22C, § 73. DSPO is also required to monitor policy changes the MSP institutes as a result of these efforts.

Certification and accreditation play a vital role in ensuring the effectiveness, professionalism and accountability of law enforcement agencies. Indeed, these processes provide a framework for law enforcement agencies to meet and maintain specific standards, reinforcing the public's trust in their abilities and commitment to upholding the law.

DSPO found that the MSP achieved certification and full accreditation from the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC) on February 28, 2022, and December 21, 2022, respectively. MPAC awarded this status to MSP through February of 2026.

Since the time MSP attained full accreditation, DSPO began reviewing the multitude of policy changes instituted through the accreditation process. In terms of scale, DSPO found that at the time of the MSP's application for initial certification and the beginning of the work toward accreditation, MSP operated under 148 policies codified in 615 pages and organized into 10 articles. At the time of accreditation, DSPO found that the MSP operated under 154 policies codified in 768 pages, organized under the same articles.

The MSP made significant changes to policies in its 1) Use of Force, 2) Detainees and 3) Investigations articles as a result of the certification and accreditation process. In 2023, DSPO reviewed MSP's changes to policies in its Use of Force articles due to the certification and accreditation process. These changes included:

- A requirement that members utilize verbal warnings before using force
- A prohibition on the use of chokeholds on detainees

- A prohibition on obstructing the airway or blood flow of detainees
- Limitations on the positioning of detainees in custody
- An obligation to provide medical assistance
- A requirement to terminate force when objectively reasonable
- Instruction and requirements on the use of de-escalation tactics
- A duty to intervene
- A duty to report (no retaliation)

In 2024, DSPO analyzed MSP's training curricula and lesson plans for trainees at the State Police Academy (SPA) and current members of the MSP. From this analysis, DSPO found that MSP's curricula and lessons plans reflected all Use of Force policy changes instituted as a result of MSP's certification and accreditation awards. This year, DSPO also monitored the multitude of changes to MSP's written Detainee policies which, for example, include¹:

- Increased protocols and detailed procedures regarding the transport and transfer of detainees
- Protocols for transporting, securing and monitoring of detainees at medical facilities
- Step by step instructions for the booking process
- Detailed procedures and requirement regarding search of detainees and custodial inventory of detainee property
- Routine 24-hour monitoring and face-to-face checks on detainees every 30 minutes
- Protocols regarding suicide threats and prevention
- Detailed procedures and guidance regarding medical care, first aid and medical emergencies
- Detailed procedures regarding release of detainees

DSPO found that all of MSP's written Detainee policies reflected the standards and requirements set forth by MPAC.

¹ DSPO is aware that while these policies and procedures are now in writing, many may have been part of standard operating procedures prior to codification. DSPO did not conduct a historical review of the MSP's policies, practices and standard operating procedures.

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We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with the MSP in furtherance of DSPO's statutory mandate to monitor policy changes initiated as a result of the MSP's efforts to achieve and maintain certification and accreditation.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey S. Shapiro, Esq., CIG
Inspector General

Sincerely,



David B. Andrews
Director
Division of State Police Oversight

cc (by email):

Kate R. Cook, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Terrence M. Reidy, Secretary, EOPSS
Lt. Col. Mark Cyr, Massachusetts State Police
Susanne M. O'Neil, General Counsel, OIG
Nataliya Urciuoli, Senior Executive Assistant, OIG