

November 2, 2023

*By Electronic Mail*

Colonel John E. Mawn Jr.  
Massachusetts State Police  
480 Worcester Road  
Framingham, MA 01702  
john.mawn@pol.state.ma.us

**Re: MSP Certification and Accreditation**

Dear Colonel Mawn:

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. 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, those 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 was pleased to find that the MSP achieved certification and full accreditation from the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC) on February 28, 2022, and December 21, 2022, respectively.

Since the 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, the 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 Use of Force, Detainees and Investigations articles as a result of the certification and accreditation process.<sup>1</sup> In the past year, DSPO focused its attention on the MSP's use of force changes, which include:

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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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- 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 addition to these changes, the MSP established a policy review committee to annually ensure that all MSP policies reflect and maintain current accreditation standards.

It is clear from DSPO's ongoing review that the MSP is fully committed to maintaining the highest standards and upholding the best practices of its profession. 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  
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. John D. Pinkham, Massachusetts State Police  
Susanne M. O'Neil, General Counsel, OIG  
Nataliya Urciuoli, Executive Assistant, OIG