



Town of Lexington

Police Department

Subject: Citizen Survey	
Effective Date: 09-01-2011	Review Date: Annually
By Order of: Mark J. Corr, Chief of Police	

Policy & Procedure

18A

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The Lexington Police Department policy **Goals and Mission** (1A) begins with the following language:

“The mission of the Lexington Police Department is to enforce the laws of society, maintain order in the community, protect life and property, and to assist the public-at-large. This must be done in a manner consistent with the rights and dignity of all persons as provided for by law and under the constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Consistent with this mission statement, the Department shall prepare on an annual basis organizational goals and objectives. These goals and objectives shall represent the organization's purpose and direction, as well as providing standards by which to measure the performance of the Department.

Formalized agency goals and objectives shall define the Department's functional role in the community. Formalization will also provide Department members with an awareness of actions and attitudes expected of them and thus allowing them to act without hesitation in harmony with agency policies. The annual reexamination of the goals and objectives will allow the Department to be responsive to the changing needs and concerns of the community.

Attainment of the goals and objectives shall be accomplished through the joint efforts of every Department member. Written policy and procedure will provide guidelines to ensure the uniformity of action. Whenever possible, policies shall also identify the parameters within which members may exercise personal discretion.”

In order to “...proper define the Department’s functional role in the community” better, the Lexington Police will seek feedback from the community to gauge public perceptions and experiences with officers. One key tool in obtaining this information will be a Citizen Survey.

PROCEDURES

A. Frequency

1. As funding permits, the survey will be conducted at regular intervals to provide consistent feedback. Preferably, a survey will be conducted at intervals not to exceed five years.
2. The Chief of Police may decide at any point to seek feedback using a survey tool.

B. Format

1. Questions

- a. Delivery of service, interaction with officers, perception of crime and safety in and around neighborhoods should be included as well as other information deemed appropriate.
- b. When a survey is prepared it should resemble previously distributed questions so that the returned information can be compared with prior surveys.
- c. Questions will be reviewed prior to a mailing so they can be updated (i.e. add or eliminate questions regarding programs that have been created or cancelled since the last survey).

2. The sampling will be from a cross-section of residents.

- a. Coordinating with the Town Clerk’s Office, a “Head of Household” list can be obtained and used to allow random selection.
- b. The same number of surveys should be distributed each time.
- c. Reminder(s) should be sent to households mailed the surveys to ensure the largest return possible.
- d. The process will allow surveys to be returned anonymously, this will encourage honest responses identifying strengths and weaknesses in the Department that may then be addressed.

C. Objectivity

1. The Department may collaborate with other organizations to accomplish the survey and to help maintain the anonymity and integrity of the survey results.

2. Research centers and schools that engage in surveys and data collection should be used to remove the Department from any involvement in data collation and tabulation. The use of qualified statistical personnel can help maintain the objectivity of the survey and subsequent reports.

D. Limited Surveys

1. Smaller surveys may be conducted to target specific services provided by the Department.
2. These surveys may use different media or social forums to collect data.

- E.** All surveys will be considered a public document. They may be subject to redaction to protect the identity of individuals or when free text answers may be grossly inappropriate, disclose confidential material and/or information harmful to public safety.