

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Bureau of Police

VENTNOR CITY, N.J.

## GENERAL ORDER

<b>ORDER NUMBER:</b> 2014-10	<b>ISSUE DATE:</b> September 14, 2020	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> Immediately	<b>DISTRIBUTION DATE:</b> All personnel
<b>SUBJECT:</b> Early Warning System			
<b>STATUS:</b> Revised		<b>SUPERSEDES ORDER:</b> GO 2014-10. Dated February 1, 2019	
<b>NJSACOP STANDARD(S):</b> 2.2.3			

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this general order is to establish a personnel early warning system.

**POLICY:** It is the policy of this department to implement and utilize Guardian Tracking® Software as an early warning system for tracking and reviewing incidents of risk and provide timely intervention consistent with Attorney General Guidelines. This general order is in accordance with the New Jersey Attorney General's Law Enforcement Directive No. 2018-3.

## PROCEDURE:

### I. EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

- A. The Early Warning System is designed to detect patterns and trends before the conduct escalates into more serious problems. As such, employees must understand that the early warning system is not identical to the disciplinary process. Although it is possible that disciplinary action may be taken as the result of evidence that rules and regulations were violated, this is not the sole or even primary intent of the system. The primary intent of an early warning system is to address potential problems through the use of appropriate management and supervisory strategies before formal discipline is warranted.
- B. Many different measures of employee performance (actions or behaviors) can be regularly examined for patterns or practices that may indicate potential problems. These performance measures shall include, but are not limited to, the following documented indicators:
1. Internal affairs complaints against an employee, whether initiated by another employee or by a member of the public;
  2. Civil actions filed against the officer;
  3. Criminal investigations of or criminal complaints against an employee;
  4. Any use of force by the officer that is formally determined or adjudicated (for example, by internal affairs or a grand jury) to have been excessive, unjustified, or unreasonable;
  5. Domestic violence investigations in which the employee is an alleged subject;
  6. An arrest of the employee, including on a driving under the influence charge;
  7. Sexual harassment claims against an employee;
  8. Vehicular collisions involving the officer that are formally determined to have been the fault of the officer;
  9. A positive drug test by the officer;
  10. Cases or arrests by the officer that are rejected or dismissed by a court;
  11. Cases in which evidence obtained by an officer is suppressed by a court;
  12. Insubordination by the officer;
  13. Neglect of duty by the officer;
  14. Unexcused absences by the employee where there exists a pattern of unexcused absences defined by the agency.
  15. Vehicular pursuits.

- C. Generally, three (3) instances of questionable conduct or performance indicators (as listed in section B, above) within a 12-month period would initiate the early warning system process. If one incident triggers multiple performance indicators, that incident shall not be double or triple counted, but instead shall count as only one performance indicator.
  - 1. For the purpose of calculating the number of indicators within any twelve-month period, the event/incident date of the instance(s) of a performance indicator(s) shall be used for the calculation, even if the actual reporting or discovery of same is delayed.
- D. The Ventnor Police Department will develop a tracking system for municipal cases that meet the criteria set forth in items #4, #10 and #11. The Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office will track the indictable cases and/or investigations that meet the criteria set forth in #4, #10, and #11 and make formal notifications to Atlantic County Law Enforcement agencies via the Chief of County Detectives or the Prosecutor's Office Professional Standards and Accountability Unit Commander.
- E. In addition to the above performance measures and in accordance with the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office Directive 6-91 (updated July 3, 2013), the following performance measure shall be monitored:
  - 1. If an officer is the subject of three (3) internal affairs complaints within a 12-month period, the Chief of Police shall direct a qualified supervising officer to complete a review of the incidents in question.
    - a. The supervisor who is assigned the review will examine all of the information related to the incidents. The purpose of this review will be to determine if there is a need to change policy or procedure, a need for additional training, a need for additional or modified equipment, a need for a performance intervention, or if there are any indications that disciplinary action is warranted.
    - b. The supervisor's review shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police for review and whatever action they deem appropriate.
    - c. Results of the review will be recorded in the Guardian Tracking® Software and reported to the Prosecutor's Office Internal Affairs Unit via written memorandum no later than 30 days after completion of the review.

## **II. ADMINISTRATION OF EARLY WARNING SYSTEM**

- A. The early warning system is primarily the responsibility of the internal affairs unit; but any supervisor may initiate the early warning process based upon their own observations. Emphasis should be placed on anticipating employee problems before it results in improper performance or conduct.
- B. Internal affairs shall be alerted by the Guardian Tracking® Software if an employee has the emergence of a pattern, practices or trend of inappropriate behavior or misconduct. In addition, the internal affairs supervisor shall query the Guardian Tracking® Software and review an individual employee's history any time a new complaint is received.

1. Using this information and their experience, internal affairs investigators may be able to identify employees who may need remedial/corrective intervention even before such is indicated by the Guardian Tracking® Software.
- C. If Guardian Tracking indicates the emergence of a pattern, practices or trend of inappropriate behavior or misconduct, the internal affairs supervisor shall consult with the employee's supervisor and/or division commander.
- D. The internal affairs supervisor and the employee's supervisor and/or division commander shall review the information provided by internal affairs along with any other relevant information from department records for the purpose of initiating a course of intervention designed to correct/interrupt the emerging pattern, practice or trend.
1. If the Guardian Tracking® Software has returned an incorrect identification or "false positive," that conclusion should be documented.
  2. If the Guardian Tracking® Software reveals that an employee has violated department rules and regulations or general orders, the supervisor in consultation with the internal affairs unit should proceed with an internal investigation and possible disciplinary action.
  3. If the Guardian Tracking® Software reveals that the employee has engaged in conduct which indicates a lack of understanding or inability to comply with accepted procedures, the supervisor shall consult with the internal affairs unit to determine the appropriate course of remedial/corrective intervention.
- E. At least every six (6) months, internal affair's personnel shall audit the agency's tracking system and records to assess the accuracy and efficacy of the tracking system.

### **III. SUPERVISORS**

- A. An employee's first line supervisor is usually the first member of the department to encounter and document specific incidents that affect an employee. It is essential for the supervisor to speak with the employee, document these incidents and report findings to their division commander and if warranted, the internal affairs supervisor. The success of this program relies heavily on the first line supervisor's participation and involvement.
- B. If a supervisor has initiated remedial/corrective intervention, the internal affairs unit shall be formally notified of such efforts through the Guardian Tracking® Software. The incident narrative placed in the Guardian Tracking® Software may serve as adequate documentation.
- C. Guardian Tracking® Software
1. Guardian Tracking® Software allows supervisors the ability to document routine performance in one centralized location during the course of an evaluation period. As incidents are entered, Guardian Tracking® Software will monitor the frequency of specific incidents to determine if early intervention is warranted.

2. Supervisors will not document routine performance in any other format. All performance documentation will be entered into the Guardian Tracking® Software.
3. Supervisors will have access to make entries and view all employees under their chain of command.
4. Supervisory personnel, who identify deficiencies with other personnel outside of their chain of command, will submit the notice in the Guardian Tracking® Software to the employee's direct supervisor indicating the nature of the deficiency.
  - a. This process does not relieve supervisors of the obligation to take immediate action to correct serious infractions that may result in liability, injury, and/or disrepute.
5. Supervisory personnel who identify and wish to document positive performance conduct on other personnel, outside of their chain of command, will submit the nature of the performance directly to the employee involved. Supervisors within the chain of command will, by default, have access to this newly created documentation.

#### **IV. DIVISION COMMANDERS**

- A. In addition to the regular data audits conducted by internal affairs, the division commanders shall periodically audit an individual employee's history. Using this information and their experience, the division commander may be able to identify employees who may need remedial/corrective intervention even before such is indicated by the Guardian Tracking® Software.
- B. When under early warning system monitoring, the employee's division commander and supervisor shall meet with the employee to discuss the situation in depth to:
  1. Identify problems or potential problems;
  2. Determine short and long-term goals for improvement;
  3. Come to a consensus commitment on a plan for long-term improved performance;
  4. Advise of the monitoring process and the repercussions of future sustained transgressions.
- C. Generally, personnel should expect to remain under intensive monitoring and supervision for at least three (3) months when an early warning flag is triggered or until the supervisor concludes that the employee's behavior has been remediated (whichever is longer).

- D. Supervisor/Employee Meeting
  - 1. All supervisor/employee meetings shall be thoroughly documented in the Guardian Tracking® Software, which will automatically be forwarded to the Chief of Police or his designee. The affected employee and supervisor shall meet on a regular basis, minimally monthly, to discuss progress towards the agreed upon goals and objectives.
  - 2. All regular monthly progress/status reports shall be submitted via the Guardian Tracking® Software.
  - 3. An additional six (6) months of documented monitoring is required following removal from the early warning system. Monthly monitoring reports from the direct supervisor are required.
- E. Any statement made by the officer in connection with the early warning system review process may not be used against them in any disciplinary or other proceeding.

**V. REMEDIAL/CORRECTIVE INTERVENTION**

- A. Supervisory or command personnel may initiate remedial/corrective intervention to correct behavior. Remedial/corrective intervention may include, but is not limited to:
  - 1. Training;
  - 2. Retraining;
  - 3. Counseling;
  - 4. Intensive supervision;
  - 5. Fitness for duty examination;
  - 6. Professional Counseling, when warranted, if available;
  - 7. Peer counseling.
- B. Internal disciplinary action, remedial/corrective intervention, and fitness for duty examinations are not mutually exclusive and should be jointly pursued if and when appropriate.
- C. When remedial/corrective intervention has been undertaken, the Chief of Police shall ensure that such actions are documented in writing. No entry should be made in the employee's personnel file, unless the action results in a sustained investigation. If the remedial/corrective intervention is a training program, attendance and successful completion of that program should be noted in the employee's training record.
- D. All reports shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police through the Guardian Tracking® Software for review. These reports have the same confidential status as Internal Affairs documents and are subject to the same disclosure and retention regulations

and guidelines.

## **VI. NOTIFICATION TO SUBSEQUENT LAW ENFORCEMENT EMPLOYER**

- A. If any officer who is or has been subject to an Early Warning System review process applies to or accepts employment at a different law enforcement agency than the one where he or she underwent the Early Warning System review process, it is the responsibility of the prior or current employing law enforcement agency to notify the subsequent employing law enforcement agency of the officer's Early Warning System review process history and outcomes. Upon request, the prior or current employing agency shall share the officer's Early Warning System review process files with the subsequent employing agency.

## **VII. NOTIFICATION TO COUNTY PROSECUTOR**

- A. Upon initiation of the Early Warning System review process, the Chief of Police or a designee shall confidentially report to the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office via the Chief of County Detectives on Prosecutor's Office reporting form FM-01261-18. The initial notice shall identify the subject officer, the nature of the triggering performance indicators, and the planned remedial program. Upon completion of the Early Warning System review process, the Chief of Police shall make a confidential follow-up report, FM-01261-18, will be forwarded to the Chief of County Detectives with the outcome of the Early Warning System review, including any remedial measures taken on behalf of the subject officer.
1. The new reporting form is self-explanatory and allows for initial and follow-up reporting to be completed on the same form. All reporting will be completed by emailing the forms to the Chief of County Detectives at [IA@acpo.org](mailto:IA@acpo.org).
- B. On January 5th of the calendar year, the Chief of Police or a designee shall report, in writing, to the County Prosecutor the total number of Early Warning reviews that were undertaken for the previous year.

## **VIII. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

- A. The Early Warning System policy shall be made available to the public upon request and shall be posted on the agency website. However, all written reports created or submitted that identify specific officers are confidential and are not subject to public disclosure.

By order of,

*Douglas H. Biagi*

**Chief of Police**

# Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office

## Early Warning System Review Reporting

Reporting Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Reporting: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Reporting: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Nature of Triggering Performance Indicators** Internal Affairs Complaint Insubordination Court Dismissals Neglect of Duty Civil Action(s) Filed Unexcused Absences Criminal Investigation of or criminal complaint(s) against officer Positive Drug Test Use of FORCE (deemed excessive, unjustified or unreasonable, if applicable) Domestic Invest. (Target) Officer arrested (included DUI arrest and/or refusal charge) Evidenced Suppressed Sexual Harassment claim against officer Vehicular collision / Fault of officer, if applicable Other or indicators as determined by the agency's chief or executive (explain):**II. Planned Remedial Action** Training or re-training Fitness for Duty Examination Counseling Employee Assistance Pro. Referral Intensive Supervision Other appropriate remedial or corrective action (explain):



**Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office**  
Early Warning System Review Reporting

ACPO FM-01260-18

**III. Completion of Early Warning System Review Process**

Outcome of review, include any remedial measures taken on behalf of subject officer (explain):

**IV. Additional Notes**