



## **What it Means to Be an Accredited Police Department**

C. E. Sharrett, Jr.

Chief of Police

City of Plantation Police Department

### **Overview**

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Accreditation standards assure the citizens that the police department meets specific criteria set forth by national and state Commissions. Our department is a professional organization that strives to attract, process and hire only the most qualified personnel, and it has adopted accreditation standards to ensure that our service continues to excel.

The accreditation process is designed to increase citizen and employee confidence in the agency by establishing goals, objectives, policies, practices and a mission statement. These directives are continually reviewed to ensure that we are up to date on procedural changes and changes in the law. Thus, the accreditation process allows for an ongoing self-assessment component to ensure that our agency practices what it preaches.

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) has established standards designed to increase law enforcement capabilities, prevent and control crime and reduce liability. The effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of law enforcement services is also addressed in the standards.

Standards set by the Commission are designed to increase the cooperation and coordination with other law enforcement agencies and also within the criminal justice system.

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Larry L. Massey, Jr.

Chief of Police

City of Plantation Police Department

## The Benefits

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**Stronger defense against lawsuits and citizen complaints.** The practice of the standards set forth by the Commission will assist in the prevention of lawsuits and citizen complaints. Many agencies report a decline in legal actions against them once they become accredited.

**Controlled liability insurance costs.** Accredited status makes it easier for agencies to purchase police liability insurance; allows agencies to increase the limit of their insurance coverage easier; and in many cases results in lower premiums.

**Support from government officials.** Accreditation requires the ongoing cooperation, participation, and support from city officials. Accreditation status is designed to earmark the agency's commitment to excellence in leadership, resource management and service delivery. Thus, government officials are more confident with the C.E.O. and with the agency's ability to meet its community's needs and to operate more efficiently.

**Greater accountability within the agency.** Accreditation standards give the Chief Executive Officer a proven management system of written directives, sound training, clearly defined lines of authority and routine reports that support decision-making and resource allocation.

**Recognition of excellence.** Accreditation is a coveted award that symbolizes professionalism, excellence and competence. It requires written directives to inform employees about policies, training to ensure employees' safety and processes to safeguard employees' as well as citizens' rights. The community can take pride in their department, knowing it represents the very best in law enforcement.

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## **Questions & Answers**

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### **Q. How is the Commission funded?**

A. Fees are collected from law enforcement agencies seeking accreditation.

### **Q. Is accreditation mandatory?**

A. No. Agencies are not obligated to become accredited. This is a voluntary process.

### **Q. What areas do the standards cover?**

A. The standards enforcement cover nine major law topics:

- ?? Law Enforcement Role, Responsibilities and Relationships
- ?? Organization, Management and Administration
- ?? The Personnel Structure
- ?? The Personnel Process
- ?? Law Enforcement Operations
- ?? Operations Support
- ?? Traffic Operations
- ?? Prisoner and Court-Related Activities
- ?? Auxiliary and Technical Services

### **Q. How do agencies maintain accreditation status?**

A. The period of accreditation status is three (3) years. During this time, agencies wishing to pursue re-accreditation status must submit annual reports that document continuing compliance with applicable standards. Re-accreditation occurs at the end of the three years, pending another successful on-site assessment and hearing before the Commission.