

**METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT – CITY OF ST. LOUIS
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE
SPECIAL ORDER**

Date Issued: June 28, 2004 **Order No.:** SO 1-03
Effective Date: June 28, 2004 **Expiration:** Indefinite

Reference:

CALEA Standards: 1.2.7

Cancelled Publications:

Subject: DISCRETION

To: ALL BUREAUS, DISTRICTS AND DIVISIONS

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for exercising discretion.

By Order of:



JOSEPH MOKWA
Colonel
Chief of Police

**METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT – CITY OF ST. LOUIS
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Subject: **USE OF DISCRETION BY OFFICERS**

To: **ALL BUREAUS, DISTRICTS AND DIVISIONS**

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for exercising discretion. **(1.2.7)**

- A. A police officer will responsibly use the discretion vested in the position and exercise it within the law. The principle of reasonableness will guide the officer’s determinations and the officer will consider all circumstances in determining whether any police action will be taken.

- B. Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional policing competence, will do much to preserve good relationships and retain the confidence of the public. There can be difficulty in choosing between conflicting courses of action. It is important to remember that a timely word of advice rather than arrest – which may be correct in some circumstances – can be a more effective means of achieving a desired end.

- C. Policies and procedures are developed and implemented to provide guidance for Department members when performing their duties and responsibilities. However, policies and procedures cannot be written which will encompass all possible situations. The exercise of discretion must be reasonable and members will be expected to justify their actions. The actions of members which unreasonably deviate from policies and procedures will be subject to administrative review.

- D. It is expected that unusual circumstances will require actions not covered by Department directives. Many times matters must be left to the judgment of the individual members. Intelligence and sound judgment will be necessary in the exercise of discretion in these instances.

- E. Officers should seek out guidance from supervisors when questions arise as to the appropriateness of any police action.