



Alexandria Police Department
Directive 3.7



OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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3.7.01 POLICY/PURPOSE

It is the Department’s policy to adhere to the highest standards of professionalism in handling official correspondence and documents received by or created within the Department.

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures for all employees to follow while forwarding and/or preparing official correspondence; and provide commanders with a central reference source when questions related to official correspondence arise.

3.7.02 DEFINITION

Official Correspondence:

- A. Any written communication relating to official business received by the Department, addressed to any employee of this agency, is official correspondence.
- B. Any document or report prepared by a department employee for official purposes and use within the department or dissemination outside the department.

3.7.03 PROCEDURE**A. Forwarding Communications to Higher Commands:**

Any employee receiving a written communication addressed to a higher level of command will forward such communication without delay. An employee receiving a communication from a subordinate directed to a higher level of command will endorse it, indicate their approval or disapproval, include any pertinent comments, and forward it to the next level of command.

B. Proper Forwarding of Correspondence Addressed to Chief of Police:

Although it remains the policy of the department to make every attempt to resolve issues at the lowest possible level, supervisors and commanders are reminded that all memoranda and letters addressed to the Chief of Police - whether approved or disapproved at some level within the chain of command - are to be forwarded to the Chief without delay. Letters and memoranda addressed and forwarded to the Chief of Police shall contain endorsements from officials who reviewed and/or acted on a particular request. Members of the department who prepare and submit letters or memoranda through the chain of command to the Chief of Police may, at their discretion, also forward a courtesy copy of their correspondence to the Office of the Chief. In all cases, personnel submitting letters or memoranda to the Chief of Police shall be notified of final action taken by either the Office of the Chief or an appropriate official within the submitting member's chain of command.

C. Preparing Official Correspondence:

Employees preparing documents, reports, or any other written matter that are expected to leave the department, or which will form the basis of a permanent record, are expected to ensure the following:

1. All official correspondence shall be formatted according to the guidelines set forth Appendix C, Basic Correspondence Guide of the City of Alexandria Style, and Graphic Standard Manual. (See appendix A.)
2. Information contained in the correspondence is accurate, complete and reflects the latest information.
3. Correspondence is free from spelling, punctuation, grammatical errors, and inappropriate gender-specific language.
4. If other persons or activities in the department or within city government are mentioned in the correspondence, those persons have been contacted or consulted about the final content of the correspondence, and their input is accurately conveyed.
5. Proper routing procedures are followed to ensure accurate tracking of correspondence assignments.

6. Assignments are submitted in accordance with any due dates established, keeping in mind the need for the final reviewer to review the document, make necessary changes, return it to the originator for correction, and have it submitted through channels for signature.
7. Employees will not use department letterhead for private correspondence or send correspondence out of the department over their signatures without the permission of the Chief of Police.
8. The Chief of Police may authorize others to sign certain documents on his or her behalf. Whenever such persons sign the police chief's name, they will affix their initials immediately below the signature.

3.7.04 RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The City Council Liaison** will maintain a correspondence tracking system for most correspondence assignments that originated outside the department, ensuring that all personnel within the organization are aware of the importance of adhering to established due dates, and that each assignment remains on schedule to meet the due dates. Upon being made aware of the possibility that a due date will be missed, he or she will take the necessary action to arrange an extension. Only in unusual cases will a second extension be granted, and it then becomes critical for all personnel to cooperate to meet that due date.
- B. Commanders** who receive correspondence directly from the public will give it such attention as may be immediately required when the matter comes within the purview of their duties. Employees of the department below the level of commander who receive correspondence directly from the public will submit it to their commander or supervisor.

Commanders will ensure that any assigned correspondence is completed by the due date. If this is not possible, the commander will contact the appropriate staff person to arrange for an extension. Any correspondence needing correction will be returned.

BY AUTHORITY OF:

Michael L. Brown
Chief of Police

Appendix C: Basic Correspondence

Format and Procedures for City Manager and Mayor Correspondence

Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that all letters submitted for signature comply with the following format and procedures.

Format

For information about fonts and letter formatting, see the attached letter sample with instructions.

Inside Addresses

In the letter, the recipient's name and address should appear as follows. **DO NOT** use abbreviations. Use the two-letter state abbreviation **on the envelope address**.

Mr. John Smith
301 King Street, Room 3400
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Salutations

1. If the City Manager knows the recipient of the letter personally, the person's first name should be used in the salutation (for example, Dear John). If the City Manager does not personally know the recipient, the person's last name should be used in the salutation (for example, "Mr. Smith").
2. Use "Sincerely" for the closing. [**NOTE: NEED** the same information for the Mayor]
3. For letters with more than one page, the top margin should be set at 1.00". The Header from Top setting should be 0.5" and appear as follows:

Name of Addressee	Ms. Fran Drescher
Date	April 1, 2011
Page Number	Page 2

4. Press "Enter" one time between the header and the first line of text.

Letter Submission Procedures

- Letters should be submitted on the appropriate letterhead.
- Use a green Post-It tape flag to mark the signature block on the letter.
- Correspondence for the City Manager's signature should be accompanied by a green signature slip that indicates review by the City Attorney and the Office of Management and Budget, if applicable.
- Correspondence for the Mayor's signature should be accompanied by a yellow signature slip that indicates that the letter has been approved by the Department Head and the City Manager.

- Submit your letters via email in a Microsoft Word file; this allows the CMO/Mayor's Office staff to make minor changes, if necessary.
- If major revisions are required, the letter will be returned to the department that submitted it. The revised version of the letter must be returned to the City Manager's Office/City Clerk's Office within 24 hours.
- When the letter is signed, a hard copy and electronic copy will be returned to the department.

**City of Alexandria
Letter Sample with
Instructions**

Margins:

*Top: 2.75" (for shorter letters, use 3.25")
Bottom: 0.75"
Left & Right: 1.00" (for shorter letters, use 1.25")

Times New Roman
(TNR), 12 pt.

Date of Letter

Press Enter 4x

Address

Press Enter 3x

Subject or Re: A means of stating what the letter is about (not required). Indent at 0.5" tab and again at 1.0."

Press Enter 2x

Salutation

Press Enter 2x

Body:

Left justification, TNR, 12 pt.

Closing

Press Enter 4x

Writer's Name
Writer's Title

Press Enter 2x

Enclosure (if applicable)

Press Enter 2x

cc: (if applicable)

*For letters of more than one page, use of top margin of 1.00" for subsequent pages.

December 13, 2010

Mr. Michael A. Estes, P.E.
Local Assistance Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Re: Revenue Sharing Program
Fiscal Year 2012
City of Alexandria

Dear Mr. Estes:

The City of Alexandria, Virginia, indicates by this letter its official intent to participate in the "Revenue Sharing Program" for Fiscal Year 2012. Upon award, the City intends to provide \$570,000 for this program, pending City Council final appropriation for FY 2012 of CIP funds for this project, to be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis from funds of the Commonwealth of Virginia. This project will be administered by the City.

The City worked with its Urban Program Manager to determine eligible items of work recommended to be accomplished with these funds. A Detailed Designation of Funds Form and a Resolution of the Alexandria City Council authorizing the application for, and use of these funds, will be placed on the Council's docket. If approved, these documents will be submitted to VDOT by no later than April 15, 2011.

Sincerely,

James K. Hartmann
City Manager

cc: Richard W. Burke, Urban Program Manager, Northern Virginia

**City of Alexandria
Memo Sample with
Instructions**

Margins:

Top: 0.65”
Bottom: 0.88”
Left & Right: 1.00”

City of Alexandria, Virginia:

Times New Roman (TNR),
17 pt.

Return twice

Small Line:

SHIFT + Underline 13 times
at TNR, 13 pt.

Return twice

MEMORANDUM:

ALL CAPS, TNR, 14 pt.

Return three times

Use “guide words” such as
**DATE, TO, THROUGH,
FROM and SUBJECT:**

TNR, Bold, 12 pt. Set the left
tab at 1.15”.

After each tab, type text in
TNR, 12 pt.

Return twice

Long Line:

SHIFT + Underline until the
end of the page.

Return twice

Body:

TNR, 12 pt

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE:

TO:

FROM:

SUBJECT:
