

Policies and Procedures

All Whatcom County Sheriff's Office employees are guided in their duties by a system of policies and procedures. These policies and procedures are frequently reviewed and updated to remain compliant with new legislation and court rulings, as well as evolving industry standards and best practices.

In January of 2020, the Sheriff's Office began transitioning to the Lexipol policy system. Lexipol provides over 160 law enforcement and 180 corrections policies that are researched, written, and updated by a team of subject matter experts and attorneys. Lexipol also offers daily training bulletins to help employees maintain proficiency with evolving policies.

The process for adopting Lexipol policies involves the review and editing of each policy by several workgroups including supervisors, managers, legal advisors, collective bargaining groups, and the Sheriff. Unfortunately, this process encountered some delays during the Covid-19 pandemic and the current staffing challenges at the Sheriff's Office.

We continue to work through the review process and have prioritized the adoption of the corrections' policies. To view a tracking sheet that shows the status of each corrections policy, [click here](#).

Once all corrections policies have been reviewed and adopted, the Corrections Bureau will transition to Lexipol, and we will begin the review of the law enforcement policies. **Until then, the policies listed below remain our current working policies.**

Please note that some information has been redacted in accordance with RCW 42.56.



Document Name	Folder	Revision Date	Description	Effective Date
Access Misuse	Policies	9/28/2021		1/10/2019
Administrative Investigations	Policies	9/30/2021	Guidelines for conducting administrative investigations	11/19/2017

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<u>Awards and Recognition</u>	Policies	12/30/2020	Describes awards and other forms of recognition that may be given to employees, volunteers and citizens.	12/10/2010
<u>Bias-Based Policing</u>	Policies	8/28/2013	Prohibits bias-based policing.	9/16/2011
<u>BLEIS Operations Manual</u>	Policies	6/5/2015	Procedures manual for law enforcement personnel. Will continue to shrink as new directives supersede its contents until it is ultimately canceled.	6/5/2015
<u>Body-Worn Cameras</u>	Policies	6/7/2021	Describes guidelines for use of body-worn cameras and associated data and data storage systems	3/31/2019
<u>BWC Special Order 6.2.21</u>	Special Orders	6/7/2021	This Special Order contains procedural information that supports the deployment of body worn cameras under the Portable Audio-Video Recorders policy.	6/7/2021
<u>Canines</u>	Policies	3/2/2015	Establishes guidelines for the use of patrol and controlled substance detection canines.	4/15/2011
<u>Child Protective Custody And Placement</u>	Policies	7/21/2015	Provides deputies with guidelines on when to take children into protective custody and where to place them.	7/19/2011
<u>CJIS - Security Incident Reporting</u>	Policies	3/20/2019		3/20/2019
<u>Clearing and Study Codes Special Order</u>	Special Orders	1/20/2021	Special Order regarding clearing calls.	1/21/2021
<u>Communication - Deaf or Blind Persons</u>	Policies	12/1/2020	This policy contains guidelines for Sheriff's Office personnel about communicating effectively with persons who are deaf or blind.	8/27/2013
<u>Complaints</u>	Policies	7/5/2018	Guidelines about the acceptance and handling of complaints about Sheriff's Office practices and services, and member performance and conduct	9/29/2017
<u>Controlled Substance Training Aids</u>	Policies	3/6/2015	Authorizes and sets guidelines for the use of controlled substance training aids.	5/19/2014
<u>Corrections Policy and Procedure Manual</u>	Policies	5/22/2015	Originally issued July 1, 2002, and updated periodically since. Will continue to shrink as other policies supersede its contents until it is ultimately canceled.	5/22/2015
<u>Cover and Response Codes Policy</u>	Policies	4/4/2019	A policy regarding the cover and response tcodes for law enforcement personnel.	3/5/2018
<u>Criminal Fire Investigations</u>	Policies	3/5/2015	Establishes the roles of Sheriff's Office personnel and fire marshals in conducting criminal fire investigations.	2/19/2015

<u>Criminal History Use And Dissemination</u>	Policies	9/28/2021		1/10/2019
<u>Criminal Street Gangs</u>	Policies	12/16/2016	Defines the criteria for designating criminal street gang members and associates, and sets guidelines for maintenance of street gang files.	8/22/2011
<u>Deadly Force Response Investigations</u>	Policies	3/29/2017	Guidelines for criminal, administrative and civil investigations of incidents in which law enforcement personnel respond with deadly force	12/15/2016
<u>Directives System</u>	Policies	6/17/2013	Describes the WCSO written directives system and establishes employee responsibilities within that system.	6/17/2013
<u>Disposal Of Media</u>	Policies	1/10/2019		1/10/2019
<u>Domestic Violence</u>	Policies	3/2/2015	Sets guidelines for handling domestic violence incidents including assessing ongoing threats to victims and providing them appropriate assistance, preparing documentation and carrying out follow-up actions.	12/19/2012
<u>Dress Code</u>	Policies	11/22/2017	Contains guidelines for clothing worn by non-uniformed personnel.	9/25/2018
<u>DUI & Physical Control - Arrests and Bookings</u>	Special Orders	12/13/2013	This order requires deputy sheriffs to arrest all persons who have committed crimes involving the use of alcohol or drugs while driving and corrections deputies to hold offenders in jail, in accordance with the contents of the order.	12/13/2013
<u>Employee Discipline</u>	Policies	9/30/2021	Describes the types and use of employee disciplinary actions	11/29/2017
<u>Employee Performance Standards</u>	Policies	1/13/2020	Policy establishing performance standards for all personnel	12/16/2015
<u>Employee Training Records</u>	Special Orders	4/22/2016	Establishes new flow for training record documentation into PowerDMS	4/22/2016
<u>Equipment - Duty Knives</u>	Policies	10/20/2014	Guidelines for commissioned personnel who choose to carry knives while on duty.	11/12/2014
<u>Evidence Storage - Vehicle Bays</u>	Special Orders	4/2/2015	Describes when deputies may use secure vehicle bays to store other types of evidence.	4/2/2015
<u>Force Option - Explosive Breaching</u>	Policies	10/31/2014	Authorizes the use of explosive breaching by trained SRT personnel	10/31/2014
<u>Force Option - Noise-Flash Diversionary Devices</u>	Policies	7/26/2021	Authorizes the use of NFDDs by trained SRT personnel	8/27/2014
<u>Full Body Scanner</u>	Special	4/12/2018	Defines the implementation and use of the full	4/12/2018

	Orders		body scanner for the Corrections Bureau.	
<u>Immigration Violations</u>	Policies	8/27/2021	Provides guidance to commissioned personnel with regards to where federal enforcement of immigration law fits in with Sheriff's Office missions.	6/12/2014
<u>Inmate Classes</u>	Policies	11/6/2018		11/6/2018
<u>Inmate Religious Programs</u>	Policies	11/6/2018		11/6/2018
<u>Jail Population Management</u>	Special Orders	12/14/2016	Establishes guidelines for managing inmate population in the Whatcom County Jail	7/12/2016
<u>Kinetic Energy Projectiles</u>	Policies	8/17/2021	Authorizes the use of kinetic energy projectiles by commissioned personnel	8/27/2014
<u>Leadership Teams</u>	Policies	10/30/2014	Establishes and sets guidelines for bureau leadership teams	10/30/2014
<u>Medical Aid and Response</u>	Policies	10/1/2020	Policy on providing medical care and transporting sick or injured individuals.	10/1/2020
<u>Missing Persons</u>	Policies	7/21/2015	Provides employees with guidelines on handling missing persons cases.	7/19/2011
<u>Naloxone</u>	Policies	8/25/2017	Establishes guidelines for acquisition, distribution, replacement, training and administration of naloxone for use to reverse the effects of opioid overdose	7/6/2017
<u>NICS Appeals</u>	Policies	9/28/2021		2/5/2019
<u>Patrol Operations</u>	Policies	11/14/2019	General guidelines to facilitate teamwork in patrol operations	1/23/2013
<u>Peer Support Group Counselors</u>	Special Orders	6/22/2022	Designates peer support group counselors and facilitates employee access to them	6/22/2016
<u>Personal Appearance</u>	Policies	10/24/2022	Describes personal appearance standards for all Sheriff's Office employees, and uniformed and office volunteers	10/11/2017
<u>Physical Protection Of Criminal Justice Information</u>	Policies	9/28/2021		1/10/2019
<u>Point Roberts Resident Deputies</u>	Special Orders	3/14/2016	Describes Point Roberts resident deputies' work schedules and availability	3/14/2016
<u>Potential Impeachment Information</u>	Policies	9/30/2021	Describes the Sheriff's Office's role in ensuring the Prosecutor's Office fulfills its obligations to disclose exculpatory evidence to defendants.	7/9/2014
<u>Probable Cause Arrests</u>	Policies	3/17/2016	Establishes guidelines for probable cause arrests and related processes	6/8/2015

<u>Property Retention And Disposition.</u>	Policies	9/10/2018		9/10/2018
<u>Protected Information</u>	Policies	10/6/2022	Policy related to the access, transmission, and release of protected information.	10/6/2022
<u>Re-Background Investigations</u>	Policies	1/10/2019		1/10/2019 Referring
<u>Referring Suicidal Person To Mental Health Facility.</u>	Policies	2/1/2018	This policy details the requirements of WCSO personnel to refer suicidal persons to mental health services.	2/1/2018
<u>Reporting Arrests & Convictions</u>	Special Orders	7/29/2021		7/29/2021
<u>Rules and Regulations Manual</u>	Policies	10/11/2017	Rules and Regulations Manual, originally issued January 6, 1999, and updated periodically since. Will continue to shrink as other policies supersede its contents until it is ultimately canceled.	11/21/2014
<u>Search And Seizure - Places</u>	Policies	9/29/2021	Provides deputies with guidelines for conducting searches of places and seizing evidence	8/12/2011
<u>Special Assignments (BLEIS)</u>	Policies	7/1/2010	Establishes a competitive, impartial and practical process for the application and selection of law enforcement deputy sheriffs to special positions.	7/1/2010
<u>Special Order - Electronic Recording of Interrogations</u>	Special Orders	1/2/2022		1/3/2022
<u>Special Order - Offender Citizenship and Place of Birth</u>	Special Orders	7/1/2022	Special Order prohibiting corrections deputies from inquiring about an offender's place of birth or citizenship status during booking, and outlining procedures for Spillman data entry and consular notifications.	7/1/2022
<u>Special Order - Youth Access to Attorney.</u>	Special Orders	12/22/2021	Requirements and procedures for providing juveniles access to an attorney as required by HB 1140.	12/22/2021
<u>Special Response Unit</u>	Policies	6/25/2015	Governing policy for the Special Response Unit	6/26/2015
<u>Uniforms</u>	Policies	9/29/2021	Prescribes uniforms and associated standards for uniformed personnel	10/11/2017
<u>Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)</u>	Policies	2/12/2018		2/12/2018
<u>Use of Force (Custody).</u>	Policies	7/21/2021		7/21/2021
<u>Use of Force (LE).</u>	Policies	3/10/2022	Use of Force policy for certified peace officers.	7/20/2021
<u>Validations</u>	Policies	9/28/2021	Validating NCIC/WACIC Entries	2/5/2019

<u>Vehicle Pursuits</u>	Policies	7/19/2021	WCSO Vehicle Pursuit policy	5/19/2014
<u>WCSO Vision, Mission and Values</u>	Special Orders	5/29/2014	From Sheriff Elfo: As part of our recent assessment of the progress we have made towards improving our organization, we identified a need to refine and more clearly articulate specific expectations and standards relating to our mission. I want to thank the members of the organization who provided very valuable feedback that helped form the foundation for the revised mission statement. As we move forward, this revised mission statement and our existing values should guide the actions of all members of the Sheriff's Office.	5/29/2014