

	HACKETTSTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT	
	POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish an Early Warning System (EWS) to identify and address patterns of behavior in officers that may indicate performance issues or potential misconduct. This system is designed to provide early intervention through supervisory review, counseling, training, or other remedial actions to ensure accountability, enhance public trust, and promote officer wellness. The goal is to proactively identify potential concerns before they escalate into serious misconduct or liability for the agency.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Hackettstown Police Department to implement and maintain an Early Warning System (EWS) in accordance with the New Jersey Attorney General's Directive 2018-3 and best practices in law enforcement oversight. The EWS shall track specific performance indicators, including but not limited to use of force incidents, internal affairs complaints, and civil actions, to identify officers who may require intervention. Supervisors shall conduct timely reviews of flagged personnel and implement appropriate corrective measures, such as counseling, retraining, or monitoring.

This agency is committed to ensuring that the EWS serves as a non-punitive tool aimed at improving officer performance, enhancing public safety, and fostering a culture of transparency and accountability. All actions taken under this policy shall be documented and reported in accordance with state and agency requirements, with oversight from the County Prosecutor's Office to ensure compliance.

This policy shall be made available to the public upon request and shall be posted on the agency's website.

DEFINITIONS

Early Warning System (EWS): A proactive tool designed to recognize patterns that may indicate an officer could benefit from additional support or guidance, enabling early and constructive intervention.

Performance Indicator: A measurable factor used to assess an officer's performance and behavior.

Intervention: A supportive action that is taken to address identified concerns and improve an officer's performance.

PROCEDURE

I. System Overview

- A.** The Personnel Early Warning System is designed to identify patterns and trends before they escalate into more serious issues. Its primary goal is to proactively address areas of concern through timely management and supervisory interventions, aiming to resolve issues before formal disciplinary actions become necessary.
- B.** The EWS is a non-punitive early intervention tool designed to support officers in maintaining high standards of conduct. It operates separately from the department's disciplinary processes and Internal Affairs functions.
- C.** All levels of supervision, especially first-line supervisors, are expected to identify behaviors that may require guidance, assess training needs, and provide professional support consistently and equitably. Emphasis should be placed on proactively addressing these behaviors to prevent them from leading to improper conduct or subpar performance.
- D.** The Hackettstown Police Department EWS shall be managed by the Internal Affairs Function herein referred to as the EWS Administrator.
- E.** Any statement made by the subject officer in connection with the EW System review process may not be used against the subject officer in any disciplinary or other proceeding.

II. Performance Indicators and EWS Activation Criteria

- A.** Various measures of officer performance should be regularly reviewed to identify patterns or practices that may signal potential problems. These performance indicators include but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1.** Internal affairs complaints against the officer, whether initiated by another officer or by a member of the public;
 - 2.** Civil actions filed against the officer;
 - 3.** Criminal investigations of or criminal complaints against the officer;
 - 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 officer is an alleged subject;

6. An arrest of the officer, including on a driving under the influence charge; Sexual harassment claims against the officer;
7. Vehicular collisions involving the officer that are formally determined to have been the fault of the officer;
8. Vehicle pursuits determined to have violated department policy;
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; and
14. Unexcused absences by the officer.

B. Specific thresholds within these indicators will trigger an EWS review.

1. An EWS review will be triggered when an officer is involved in three separate incidents that meet the criteria outlined above within a 12-month period. If a single incident falls under multiple criteria, it will only count as one occurrence, not multiple.

C. While some performance indicators have specific numerical thresholds for triggering an EWS review, others require a more nuanced approach. Supervisors are responsible for identifying and assessing these indicators based on their judgment and the context of each situation. The following indicators do not have quantifiable triggers but should be carefully monitored:

1. Sick leave usage including unusual patterns in sick leave usage;
2. Unexcused absences by an officer;
3. Abrupt changes in behavior, including:
 - a) Tardiness or absenteeism;
 - b) Erratic mood swings;
 - c) Unreasonable irritability or aggressiveness;
4. Repeated instances of failure to act or overreaction in the line of duty;
5. Indications of alcohol and/or substance abuse;
6. Significant negative changes in annual performance reviews;
7. Noticeable changes in work quality or productivity; and

- 8. Significant changes in off-duty behavior or personal circumstances that may affect job performance.
- D. This list may be modified based on departmental needs and ongoing evaluation of the system's effectiveness.
- E. A supervisor may initiate a review at any time if they have concerns about an officer's behavior or performance, regardless of whether specific EWS thresholds have been met.
- F. The presence of multiple indicators, even if individually below the threshold, may also trigger a review at the discretion of supervisors or the EWS administrator.
- G. This department shall regularly review the effectiveness of these thresholds and recommend adjustments as needed to ensure the system is identifying potential issues accurately and efficiently.

III. EWS Data Management, Review Process, and Intervention Procedures

- A. This department will utilize the Workforce Activity Tracking Module of the PMAM Software as an early warning system for all officers and relevant indicators. PMAM will be regularly updated by supervisors with identified indicators.
 - 1. All routine performance documentation of an employee will be entered into the PMAM Software. Supervisors will not document routine performance in any other format.
- B. When supervisors enter new data, they are responsible for determining if the newly entered information meets or exceeds any established performance thresholds.
- C. When an officer's data meets or exceeds a threshold, the EWS administrator shall:
 - 1. Conduct an initial review of the officer's performance data to assess the situation. This review will focus on identifying any underlying issues or patterns that may have triggered the alert.
 - a) Unwarranted Flag: If, upon review, it is determined that the EWS flag is unwarranted, the EWS Administrator will document this finding in writing.
 - 2. Formally notify the subject officer in writing;
 - 3. Conference with the subject officer and appropriate supervisory personnel;
 - 4. Prepare a written memo detailing the indicators identified, the findings, and a remedial program which may include either supportive actions (such as counseling or mentoring) or corrective actions (such as retraining or temporary reassignment).
- D. Performance Improvement Plan
 - 1. In conjunction with the officer's immediate supervisor, the EWS will administer a performance improvement plan. This plan will outline the specific steps to be taken, the duration of increased supervisory review, and/or any necessary

supportive or corrective measures as outlined in Section III.D.2 below. The enhanced review period will be clearly defined and will last for a minimum of three (3) months. Generally, the enhanced review period will range from three (3) to six (6) months, or until the officer's behavior has been remediated depending.

2. Interventions shall be tailored to the specific needs of the officer and may include but are not limited to:
 - a) Training or retraining;
 - b) Counseling;
 - c) Employee Assistance Program (EAP) referral (voluntary or involuntary);
 - d) Intensive supervision;
 - e) Fitness-for-duty examination;
 - f) Consult with peer support officer;
 - g) Mentoring by a senior officer; and/or
 - h) Any other appropriate remedial or corrective action.
3. During the enhanced review period, the affected officer and their supervisor shall meet regularly, at least once a month, to discuss the officer's progress toward the agreed-upon goals and objectives. These meetings are essential to ensuring that the officer remains on track and continues to improve.
4. The supervisor shall thoroughly document each meeting, including a detailed account of the officer's ongoing performance, progress toward goals, and any additional support or intervention needed. This documentation will be forwarded to the EWS Administrator.
5. At the end of the enhanced review period or at the six-month mark, the EWS Administrator will submit a memo to the Chief of Police indicating whether the officer no longer requires extensive supervision or if the review period needs to be extended.
 - a) If no further enhanced supervision is required, the officer will return to standard supervisory practices. The EWS Administrator shall prepare a written memo detailing the successful completion of the enhanced review period.
 - b) If an extension is required, the memo will outline the reasons for the extension and provide a revised plan of action. This may include continued monitoring, additional support measures, or further intervention as deemed necessary by the Chief of Police and the EWS Administrator. The extension will also include a new timeframe and goals for continued supervision.

- E. Internal disciplinary action, remedial/corrective intervention, and fitness for duty examinations are not mutually exclusive and should be jointly pursued if and when appropriate.
- F. All reports and memos stemming from the EWS shall be forwarded to the Chief 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.

IV. Responsibilities

A. Middle Management (Command Staff) Responsibilities

1. Command staff provides oversight, ensures compliance, and facilitates agency-wide accountability within the EWS process. Their responsibilities include:
 - a) Reviewing EWS alerts to ensure proper identification of performance concerns.
 - b) Coordinating with supervisors to evaluate officers' progress and ensure corrective measures are properly implemented.
 - c) Ensuring consistency in the application of remedial actions across the department.
 - d) Providing additional guidance and resources to supervisors when necessary.
 - e) Consulting with the EWS Administrator on intervention strategies and program adjustments.
 - f) Reviewing documentation submitted by supervisors to ensure accuracy and completeness.
 - g) Making recommendations to the Chief of Police and/or the EWS Administrator regarding extended monitoring, additional intervention, or case closure based on the officer's progress.

B. Supervisors

1. First-line supervisors play a critical role in the monitoring, support, and documentation of officers flagged by the Early Warning System (EWS). While the EWS initiates remedial or corrective actions, supervisors are responsible for:
 - a) Providing direct support to the officer throughout the intervention process.
 - b) Monitoring performance and tracking progress to ensure compliance with assigned corrective measures (e.g., training, counseling, increased supervision).
 - c) Documenting any significant performance changes, improvements, or continued concerns.
 - d) Conducting regular check-ins with the officer to assess progress and provide guidance.
 - e) Reporting progress to the EWS Administrator.

- f) Ensuring all necessary documentation (e.g., use of force reports, pursuit reports, attendance records) is submitted in accordance with agency policy.

C. Employee Responsibilities

1. Employees flagged by the EWS are expected to actively engage in the performance improvement process and take responsibility for their professional development. Their responsibilities include:
 - a) Fully participating in the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), including attending all scheduled feedback meetings and completing assigned activities.
 - b) Demonstrating a commitment to improving performance by utilizing available resources and applying feedback.
 - c) Communicating openly with supervisors about challenges, confusion, or barriers to improvement so that timely adjustments can be made.
 - d) Making a good-faith effort to meet the expectations set forth in the PIP.

V. 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, it is the responsibility of the Hackettstown Police Department to notify the subsequent employing law enforcement agency of the officer's early warning system review process history and outcomes.
- B. Upon request, the Hackettstown Police Department shall share the officer's early warning system review process files with the subsequent employing agency

VI. Notification To the County Prosecutor

- A. Upon initiation of the Early Warning System (EWS) review process, the Hackettstown Police Department's Chief Executive, or their designee, shall provide a confidential written notification to the County Prosecutor or their designee. This notification shall include:
 1. The identity of the officer subject to the EWS review.
 2. The performance indicators that triggered the review.
 3. The planned remedial program, including any corrective or supportive actions.
- B. Upon completion of the EWS review process, the Chief of Police or their designee shall submit a follow-up confidential written notification to the County Prosecutor or their designee. This notification shall detail:
 1. The final outcome of the EWS review.
 2. Any remedial measures taken.

3. Whether additional monitoring, intervention, or an extension of the review period is required.

VII. Confidentiality

- A. All written reports created or submitted pursuant to this policy that identify specific officers are confidential and not subject to public disclosure.