

ALASKA LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY ACCREDITATION COMMISSION



ACCREDITATION MANAGER'S MANUAL, 1.1

INITIAL STEPS

CEO makes decision to pursue accredited status. The decision by the CEO to go forward with accreditation can be based on many factors. What is most important is that the CEO is aware of the complexity of the task and that he/she is going to be supportive of the accreditation manager. Without the CEO making it clear to all members of the organization that accreditation is a priority, it will be extremely difficult for the accreditation manager to get the job done.

CEO designates the accreditation manager. There are several factors to consider when choosing an accreditation manager. The CEO should appoint an individual whom 1) has an interest in doing the job, 2) is computer literate, 3) is organized and efficient in their present job tasks, 4) is capable of writing clearly and concisely, 5) is capable of formulating drafts of agency policy statements, 6) is capable of dealing effectively with all levels of agency management, 7) and, is willing to work the long hours that accreditation activities demand. Another consideration for the CEO is, based on his/her knowledge of the agency, the accreditation manager should be someone who is innovative and not locked in a mindset that does not allow for much change. Accreditation WILL change the agency. The accreditation manager is a key change agent. The CEO should also be mindful that accreditation is a task in which the entire agency participates. The manager will have a very difficult time if expected to accomplish this task by him or herself. The CEO and command staff will need to participate in the process regularly.

The accreditation manager attends training. Formal training classes are offered by ALEAAC. However, the new accreditation manager, especially when not familiar with accreditation, should begin their own education by visiting other agencies.

Presentation by ALEAAC staff to agency command staff (optional). This service by ALEAAC is offered to allow the CEO to invite an accreditation staff person to provide a 30-45 minute presentation on the accreditation program to invited personnel. A staff person will travel to the agency and present the program, usually at the regular agency staff meeting. Taking advantage of this service allows for the agency command to ask questions and to get a clear and concise view of what accredited status will mean to the department. To arrange for the presentation, simply call or e-mail the Program Manager. *Travel and accommodation costs are the responsibility of the agency.*

Memo from the CEO. This is an often overlooked, but very important step in the accreditation process. The CEO should advise the agency personnel what is going to take place regarding accreditation. The memo should indicate the importance of the process, the positive effect it will have on the department, and, very importantly, the authority of the accreditation manager when dealing with accreditation issues and timelines. The memo should be read at roll calls or posted where personnel can read it.

Designation of clerical support. Accreditation is information intensive. The creation and dissemination of information regarding agency policy lies at the heart of the process. The level of clerical support for the accreditation manager is dependent on his/her own clerical and organization ability and the resources available within the organization. Many managers rely on secretarial assistance while others prefer to produce their own documents and provide a personal approach to clerical duties.

Schedule briefings. The role of accreditation manager includes the important component of information officer. When beginning the process, the manager should arrange with the CEO for regular briefings on accreditation activities. The CEO may also want to schedule time at regular command staff meeting for the manager to bring staff personnel up to date on progress and to address problem areas. Some agencies also use the staff briefings to formalize the process of assigning agency command staff policy review areas and other duties designed to assist the manager.

Visiting other agencies. The new accreditation manager should make contact with other agencies involved in accreditation. Establishing and maintaining relationships with agencies and their accreditation managers will greatly assist the new manager in developing policies and procedures based on the standards. There is a respected technique in accreditation that allows managers to beg, borrow and steal from other agencies policy statements and other documents as often as possible! The fact is most law enforcement policy is generic. A policy on use of force in Soldotna is very likely similar to one found in Whittier, Wrangell, Valdez, or Anchorage. Accreditation managers can develop much of what they need based on the work done by others. By visiting other departments that are involved in accreditation, the new manager can also get feedback on his/her policy drafts, develop strategies to address snags they may encounter, and weigh different methods of administering the program in their own agency. One suggested method of supplying information is the regional committee format. Several agencies from the same geographic region of the state may want to form

a work group that meets regularly. This process is highly recommended, and if one is active in the area, it can prove helpful.

I. ORGANIZATION

Obtain necessary supplies. There is no single way for an accreditation manager to do the job, and supplies are dependent on the manager's organization skills. Access to the Internet is becoming almost mandatory, but the information you need can be obtained by traditional means. A new manager will need the usual office paraphernalia, but will also need a computer work station and some specialized supplies. Agencies (and their managers) have been innovative in designing their files and color-coding seems to be the easiest and most accepted method of identification. A file cabinet that is designated only for accreditation files is important. Your agency will be keeping files for many years, and the new manager will need the file space. Accreditation files must be tab labeled in binders and most managers use highlighters to accent relevant portions of the enclosed documentation. Once you have your files created, you are ready to get started on filling the self-assessment binders.

Print out standards. The standards can be found in the Law Enforcement Agency Accreditation Commission booklet available from the Program Manager. Also available are discs of sample directives and support forms, which make the self-assessment binders easier to produce. Sample self-assessment binders are available from the Program Manager.

Prepare the self-assessment binders. The self-assessment binders are the main focus of an accreditation manager. The manager will spend many hours filling the binders, checking them, re-filling and re-checking the contents. It is important that the binders be set up with one goal: make it as easy as possible for the assessors to read, understand, and agree with, and close the file! To this end, the binders should be "user friendly" and constructed in such a way that all four of the above components are addressed. The contents of a typical accreditation folder include:

- a tab with the standard number clearly typed
- a printed or typed copy of the standard being addressed by this file
- a completed standard compliance listing on the copy of the standard
- those items that prove that the agency is actually doing what the standard addresses and agency directives demand. These are the proofs of compliance and are the lifeblood of the files. They should be organized in a manner that directs the assessors quickly and effectively to the information needed.

There are several helpful hints to preparing an accreditation file, but some are best to know when first getting started. For instance, always identify the items inside the file as belonging to that file only. This can be accomplished by placing the standard number for every proof of compliance at a consistent location on all items. This will help identify loose papers, especially if a pile of folders accidentally is knocked to the floor! Many managers use a separation sheet for each proof for bulleted items. The proofs of

compliance are arranged so that the assessor can read the standard statement and immediately tab to bullet “a” “b” “c” as desired. Whichever technique the manager uses, the goals mentioned above remain the same. Just as the accreditation program tells the agency WHAT they must do, but not HOW it must be done, the files must contain certain items, but how the information is presented is only constrained by the imagination and innovation of the accreditation manager.

Schedule briefings for rank and file personnel. The manager should arrange with agency line supervisors for time at roll calls to brief personnel on progress toward accredited status. Don’t forget the communications staff, records clerk, clerical staff, and others who are affected by this effort.

II. MANAGING, CONTROLLING, AND PROVING COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS

Create a tracking system. The accreditation manager will need to create a tracking system that will provide quick reference to the status of each file. Some managers use a large white board, others an Excel spreadsheet on their computer. Make this as convenient and easy for you as possible. A status board makes it easy for the CEO and other interested parties to visualize agency progress.

Begin self-assessment. Now the real work begins. Self-assessment simply translates as an exercise in comparison. Once the filing system is organized, the manager starts comparing current agency policy to the accreditation standards. Most managers quickly come to the conclusion that the agency is closer to compliance than anticipated. Law enforcement adapts to the ebb and flow of legislative changes and agencies adopt policy that is consistent with the law. As the accreditation manager compares what must be covered for accreditation purposes, he/she will probably find that some fine-tuning is necessary. One of the biggest mistakes committed by new accreditation managers is in rushing the job. There are no time limitations on the process. The manager may want to address high liability areas first in order to get any necessary changes in agency policy into the hands of those it effects as quickly as possible. Use of forced, pursuit driving, property and evidence control, arrest procedures, etc. are some of these high liability areas. When comparing agency policy to the standards, the manager will need to be mindful of the cross-compliance and reference. For instance, when comparing agency policy on use of force, are roadblocks addressed? Is there separate policy on this (or any) one element? If so, the manager will need the separate policy in the compliance file, or may opt to submit a draft combining the two! Self-assessment provides the agency with the opportunity to do a thorough audit of how they do business.

Compile supportive documentation. Accreditation managers are not bound by conventional wisdom when it comes to proving compliance to standards. There are several ways to prove compliance on just about every standard. ALEAAC designates four types of proofs of compliance: written directives, other documentation, interviews, and observation.

Written directives are anything that directs a particular action is required of personnel. Examples of written documents include, but are not limited to general orders, procedure manuals, lesson plans, memos, state code sections, or jurisdictional policies and law. Agency policy is usually considered a written directive, and will most often be the first item the manager has available to prove compliance.

Other documentation may include photographs, videos, log sheets, agency forms, training rosters, evidence bags, or a number of other items. The key element in this category is that the proof does not require a specific action be taken, but is an instrument of the person taking the action.

Interviews will be conducted by the assessment team. The manager may want to list individuals who are most knowledgeable about the agency action in a specific arena. For example, the director of personnel for the jurisdiction may be listed as a potential interview to prove compliance with certain personnel standards. The lead dispatcher may be listed as the best source of information on dispatch responsibilities during high-speed pursuits. Listing the names of individuals does not insure that the assessment team will interview the person. However, if the team does choose to interview the suggested person, the manager has already supplied them with the name (and proper spelling) of the interviewee. This makes the assessor's job easier, and that makes the assessment go faster.

Observation is the fourth and final category. This type of proof is the easiest for the assessor, and probably the least utilized. There are several standards where simply observing an action or a piece of equipment is proof that the agency is in compliance with the standard. Standards addressing markings on agency vehicles, alternative sources of power for communications equipment, or instructions for citizen complaints are examples of observation compliance.

Accreditation managers should also be aware that the best assessors will not settle for single proof of compliance unless it is overwhelming in nature. The wise manager will list proofs in at least two categories, and in some cases, all four categories. The more ways a manager can show the agency is truly doing what they say they are doing, the better. The assessors will be looking to find compliance with the first few items they look at in the file. Having additional proofs will never hurt, but not having enough is a common shortcoming.

Train agency personnel in policy changes. Whenever appropriate, the manager should utilize the briefing schedules set up early in the process. The manager may want to have other agency personnel present the changes (including the CEO or other high ranking officer) or may simply coordinate with shift commanders. The important point is that agency personnel know about newly adopted policy as soon as possible. Any new policy should include a training component for those it effects, and the manager should remember that the assessment team may desire to interview agency rank and file on the particular issue addressed.

III. PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING A MOCK ON-SITE (OPTIONAL).

Manager observes/participates in a mock assessment. Accreditation managers depend on their peers to assist them in obtaining accreditation status. When the agency has completed the self-assessment phase, it should arrange for a mock assessment. Mock assessments are not required, but, when conducted properly, they are the most helpful strategy to prepare for actual evaluation. Mock assessments are a tremendous classroom for the people who are assessing an agency. When asked to participate on a mock team, the accreditation manager is assisting his/her own agency at least as much as the agency being assessed. Whenever possible, accreditation managers should participate on the mock teams.

Conduct a thorough review of all files. Setting up a final review of all agency files prior to holding a mock assessment will give the manager one last opportunity to fill any gaps and correct last minute compliance issues. How thorough a review must be is dependent on many factors, however, giving a last check never hurts.

Schedule and host a mock assessment. The Program Manager arranges for mock assessments, however, staff personnel will assist identifying potential assessors from the Assessors pool. The manager is responsible for organizing a team, making all arrangements for the team, what is to be looked at, and time scheduling. The more comprehensive the mock, the more likely the actual on-site will be successful. Mock assessments are not required, but are considered critical to a successful on-site assessment. Many agencies conduct internal mock assessments as a part of preparation for assessment.

Review mock team findings and amend files as appropriate. The Program Manager will probably make suggestions as to compliance, format, or arrangements in his/her report to the agency. They may make recommendations in all of these areas and others, too! The manager must not take the team's recommendations personally. The entire mock team format is designed to show deficiencies now so that it will be easier when the true test comes. The manager should review all mock team comments and weigh the relevance of each item. In some cases, additional proofs may be suggested for a particular file. In another case, rewording may be suggested. In rare cases, a complete rewriting of policy may be recommended. The agency has the option of accepting or not accepting the mock team recommendations. ALEAAC does not consider mock team findings when determining accreditation status. One strategy on contested items may be to contact several other managers and/or assessors prior to making any changes suggested by the mock team. When appropriate, make the changes.

Retrain employees. Whenever a substantive change in policy is made, the re-training of affected personnel is necessary.

IV. PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

Contact ALEAAC Staff. When the agency believes it is prepared for the ALEAAC on-site assessment, the first step is to contact the ALEAAC staff and decide on the dates of the visit. The ALEAAC staff will need a minimum of one month lead-time to arrange for a team. Remember, the assessors must make personal and professional arrangements in order to come to your department. Your professional treatment of the team starts by allowing ample time for these arrangements to be made.

The assessor selection list. The ALEAAC staff will submit to the agency an Assessor Selection List (ASL) containing the names and departments for the potential assessment team members. The agency has the option, but not the obligation, of striking a name off the list. The CEO and the accreditation manager should conduct the review of the ASL.

ALEAAC will not question the striking of a name. The ALEAAC staff will make every effort to ensure a balanced team is formed. Team leaders will normally be from like-size agencies, however, the ALEAAC staff will not necessarily select the team based upon agency type. The agency will be notified of the final team composition as soon as possible.

On-site protocol. The accreditation manager has now reached the critical stage of the process, the actual site visit. Preparation for the team should be a well-orchestrated and efficient procedure. The following list does not represent all of the preparations the manager may arrange, but is fairly comprehensive.

PRIOR TO ON-SITE

- Make a personal phone call to the Program Manager about two weeks prior to the visit.
- Send an “Information Package” to the Program Manager containing a letter of welcome from the CEO, a map to the hotel, pertinent phone numbers (including the manager’s home number), an explanation of meal arrangements, a proposed itinerary, and information on the jurisdiction such as history, demographics, etc.
- Discuss arrangements with the team leader as soon as possible. Arrange for the best possible accommodations. Individual rooms are a must. Check with the team members for special considerations such as dietary restrictions, smoking/no-smoking preferences, or disability access.
- Lodging should be reasonably near the agency headquarters. Make the hotel accommodations well in advance of the arrival date and re-check on the status of the reservation a minimum of two days prior to arrival. The hotel should have restaurant facilities. Arrange with the hotel management for rooms away from main traffic corridors and in an area of the hotel away from touring youth groups or other distractions. Make the hotel manager aware of the importance of the

team. Advise the hotel manager that the team may want to secure their weapons in the hotel safe.

- Arranging meals should be discussed with the team leader. The agency will usually arrange a meal on the evening after the team arrives. All other meals should be arranged with the team conducting the assessment as the pivotal consideration. Most often, once the team starts they will want the meals brought into the assessment room. Provide the team work area with an array of menus from local restaurants, and arrange for pick up of the food when necessary.
- If the agency arranges a “per diem” meal arrangement, the details should be very clearly explained with the team members. Most agencies have arranged for any meals eaten at the hotel restaurant to be charged to the respective rooms.
- An often-overlooked preparation for on-site evaluation involves preparing the custodial crew that cleans agency offices. The manager will want to brief the crew chief about the importance of agency appearance and when the team is due on site.

WHILE ON-SITE

- The team will be in the jurisdiction for one or two days. The manager should have the itinerary arranged with the team leader as much as possible.
- Arrange for the static display and agency tour to be conducted early in the assessment. Keep in mind that these items are time intensive, and the sooner the team gets into the files, the faster the assessment goes.
- The static display and agency tour provides the team with many proofs of compliance by observation and interview. Some agencies have given the team a list of those standards that are at least partially complied with through the static display or agency tour. The manager should provide the team a list of personnel assigned to the static display. The agency tour should include the property room and communications component. These areas may take some time to inspect. The property room personnel will likely be asked a number of questions and also asked to pull items under agency care. Communications personnel may be asked to follow a request for service through their system. Arrangements for the static display are at agency discretion; however, if the agency is arranging an outdoor display, it is prudent to also arrange an alternate indoor site.
- The actual assessment room is a critical area. The manager should insure that it is comfortable, quiet, well lit and ventilated, clean and effectively supplied. The accreditation files should be easily accessible, and all agency procedure or operational manuals available. Easy access to rest rooms and comfortable chairs are examples of making this an environment that is conducive to work. Supplies such as coffee, soft drinks and water, snacks, fruit, etc. should be available. If the agency is automated, a workstation should be set up in the room. A copy machine and telephone should also be available.
- The team leader will be the contact person for the team, and discussions regarding compliance issues should be moderated by him/her. The manager will be expected to be available to discuss issues anytime the team is working. As many

staff as necessary should assist the manager. More than one assessor may need information at any given time, so available help for the manager should be arranged, if not assigned.

- Members of the team may want to attend roll calls, ride along with officers, and/or interview members of the agency not scheduled for interview. This means the entire agency needs to be prepared for these possibilities. The team is trained to weigh all responses to queries. The manager should arrange to attend roll calls prior to the assessment and brief the rank and file on who is coming and what to expect.
- Unless appealed to the executive board, the assessment team has the final say on waived standards.

POST-ASSESSMENT

- The team will conduct an exit interview with the CEO and the manager prior to departure. At this meeting, the agency will be advised of the final recommendation the team will give the executive board. If the team finds the agency in compliance with all applicable standards, the team leader will inform the CEO that the agency will be recommended for accredited status. If the agency fell short in some area, the team leader can grant up to a sixty (60) day extension. The team leader and the manager will make arrangements for the agency to prove compliance to the team leader during this period.
- If there are disputed compliance issues, the agency has the option of presenting their case to the executive board. The manager and CEO should appear before the board at the next scheduled meeting and present their interpretation of the issue. The board will rule on the item, and, if this issue is the deciding factor as to total compliance, will either grant or deny accreditation status at that time.

V. NOW WHAT?

Length of accreditation. The ALEAAC period for accredited status is five years. In the fifth year, the agency must arrange for an on-site team visit using the same guidelines as with the original assessment.

Use of Accredited Agency seal. The ALEAAC staff will provide the manager with copies of the official “Accredited Agency” seal. This logo can be displayed on agency vehicles, letterhead, web pages or any other official presentation. Within reason, any color combination that matches the item the seal is placed on is acceptable. Any change in the seal format should be discussed with program staff first.

Certificate presentation. Perhaps the most satisfying moment for the CEO comes with the presentation of the certificate of accredited status. Presentations are most often done at city, borough, or town council meetings, but can be held in almost any venue. The manager should contact program staff with the date, time, and place of the presentation. The format for the presentation is quite simple: the CEO introduces a staff member who then speaks for about 10 minutes. This is followed by remarks from the CEO and any

others he/she desires. ALEAAC also honors all agencies that have obtained accreditation during the conference year at the APOA Crime Conference.

Maintenance of files. The maintenance of accreditation files is an ongoing endeavor. The accreditation manager should plan on reviewing each file on a regular basis, and constantly be on the watch for proofs of compliance that can be used when the ALEAAC sends the re-accreditation team to the agency in 5 years. The agency should never be without an accreditation manager to help insure that all new policies and procedures adopted by the department are in compliance with applicable ALEAAC standards. This in turn makes re-accreditation much easier.



Note: This manual is produced with the intention of assisting accreditation managers in the accreditation process. Although most of the program areas are addressed, there may be additional questions that either program staff or fellow managers can clarify. It is important to maintain contact with individuals involved in all stages of the program, and to assist other managers in their activities.

ALASKA LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY ACCREDITATION COMMISSION
(SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION)

ACCREDITATION MANAGER

JOB OVERVIEW:

This person reports directly to the CEO or through the appropriate Deputy CEO. The person in this position will be responsible for performing analytical and administrative work with minimal supervision. Emphasis is on planning and coordinating accreditation activities by the CEO. This person will be encouraged to make independent judgments and decisions based on analytical and innovative thinking. Performance in this job is measured through conferences, reports, analyses, methodology and levels of success accomplishing the accreditation goals of the agency.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Receives assignments and sets work priorities, coordinating accreditation tasks to meet deadlines in order to assure an efficient workflow throughout the agency.
- Reviews a wide variety of complex and technical issues concerning law enforcement standards and the accreditation process.
- Meets regularly with the CEO or designee, key agency members, and others to identify needs and report progress on accreditation efforts.
- Identifies and develops new programs, systems, procedures, or equipment specifications for the improvement of agency performance in compliance with applicable accreditation standards.
- Provides liaison to the Alaska Law Enforcement Agency Accreditation Commission (ALEAAC) for accreditation issues.
- Attends ALEAAC meetings and local accreditation network meetings, accompanied by others within the agency whose attendance at these meetings would be beneficial and help expedite self-assessment efforts.
- Keeps informed concerning the accreditation process, including proposed changes or amendments to the standards, transition policies, or process changes. Evaluates the impact of these changes on agency policies and procedures.
- Provides accreditation training for agency members.
- Provides information and public appearances concerning the accreditation process.

- Assigns, directs, and coordinates accreditation work groups to achieve plans of action, recommendations to the CEO or designee, or complete other accreditation goals.
- Drafts written directives, or assigns writing projects to achieve accreditation objectives.
- Maintains master and archive files for agency written directives.
- Maintains ALEAAC ISSR files.
- Performs other related work as assigned by the CEO or designee.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Five years continuous experience with a law enforcement agency. Background in supervision or planning. Rank of lieutenant or above is preferable, but the person filling the position (including civilians) should have the authority to make appropriate assignments throughout the agency and to enforce deadlines or have such a person as their immediate supervisor.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

- Ability to read and understand materials concerning the law enforcement and criminal justice processes.
- Knowledge of the principles and practices of modern law enforcement operations and administration.
- Exemplary writing skills.
- Ability to work independently and solve problems involving complex variables.
- Ability to organize, plan activities, and train agency members.
- Ability to speak informatively to public groups concerning accreditation process.
- Ability to analyze facts and to exercise sound judgment in arriving at conclusions and recommendations.
- Ability to make decisions based upon experience, giving attention to details.
- Ability to read and understand a wide range of technical material.
- Ability to complete assignments in a timely fashion.
- Ability to deal tactfully, professionally, and effectively with others.
- Ability to delegate tasks effectively, accepting responsibility for the outcome.