

To all DPD Employees,

The core function of any police department is to prevent crime. Everything we do, or plan, or apply resources toward must be measured by its impact on that core vision. I realize that the past six months have contained uncertainty and anxiety, but all of the changes we are making are geared toward creating a police department, which excels at preventing crime.

Denver, like most municipalities, and even our state and nation has faced harsh economic realities. The impact is obvious as organizational budgets are slashed and even Career Service Employees compensation is routinely reduced through repeated furlough days. We must be efficient and we must be good stewards of the taxpayer's dollars. These are not just platitudes – these are moral and ethical obligations. These are critical elements of our relationship with the community.

From the moment I decided to apply to become the Chief of the Denver Police Department, I knew this was a good organization. And no good organization exists without good people. Of all the things I have been impressed with about the DPD, the exceptional quality, caliber, and talent of people I have witnessed has been paramount. But like so many of you, I don't desire a good police department – I envision a great one.

Today I would like to address three organizational changes:

1. The move to replace sworn officers from some assignments with high caliber Career Service Employees
2. The need to ensure that the correct numbers of appointed corporals, detectives, and technicians are assigned throughout the department and that the duties of the assignment match the responsibilities of the assignment
3. The need to create fair opportunity for all employees in what has become a stagnant organization due to the lack of hiring and inability to promote.

I will address each of these changes in detail and will provide you with effective dates for the start and completion of each.

Civilianization

If you haven't heard me say it, then likely you've heard it somewhere else, "Patrol is the backbone of the department". The reason for this is that patrol officers are by far the single best resource for preventing crime. But if those words are to have meaning, then the commitment must be represented in practice. Six months ago, less than half of the resources of the Denver Police Department were allocated to the six districts. We have already moved sixty-nine sworn positions to the six districts and will continue to do that wherever there is an opportunity.

This is not about how an employee in a position being civilianized is viewed as a person. It is not a reflection of the quality of work they do – nor an indication that the function they have been performing is unimportant. And it is not about money. In fact, we anticipate that some of the civilian employees salaries may be more expensive than those of the current sworn staff. This is about preventing crime through moving resources to patrol. Simply put, this is the right thing to do.

I will announce the positions that have been identified for civilianization by June 29, 2012. The first actual CSA hires will begin working by October 1, 2012. I want to ensure that employees have advance notice so that they may make changes in their personal lives. This process will occur over time and I will make every effort to communicate not only which positions will be civilianized but also when we anticipate that happening. The civilianization will be completed department wide by summer of 2013.

Ensuring the Correct Number of Corporals, Detectives, and Technicians

Let me start by saying that each of these assignments has value and will be maintained. However, a careful audit of each assignment has revealed that the current appointed assignments are not appropriately staffed. The assignment of corporal is understaffed. The assignment of detective is slightly overstaffed and that of technician is significantly overstaffed. We have technicians and corporals performing the same functions, and positions staffed by detectives that are not consistent with the duties of that assignment.

The command staff and I believe that the corporal assignment can help the department reach its vision by assuming more duties and responsibilities. These will be clarified as a part of the application process.

I have directed the Deputy Chiefs to re-write the duties and responsibilities for each appointed assignment and then to identify what assignments best fit those parameters. We are nearing the completion of that process and I will identify the number and types of appointed positions for each specific area of the department by June 29, 2012. The changes to these specific assignments will be completed by November 4, 2012.

This change is not about the officers in a assignment, the value placed on the quality of work they do, or the respect and appreciation for the duties they perform. In order to bring about needed change difficult decisions must be made.

Fair Opportunity

I have spent a great deal of time listening to employees and observing the operation of the department during my first six months. One thing I have been told repeatedly is that there is stagnation and that employees desire a fair opportunity for career advancement. I agree.

I am a firm believer that employees should be judged and rewarded based on their performance. In order to create a great department we must have a system in which the best employees have the opportunity to prove themselves as corporals, detectives, and technicians. And by the same token, employees who have already reached these assignments must only be retained there if they consistently meet expectations. In short, everyone should have hope and no one should be complacent.

After numerous consultations with my command staff and all of the employee organizations, I have decided that all appointed positions will be opened for application by any eligible employee. If an officer is currently assigned to one of these appointed assignments, they will have to re-apply. However, if they are meeting the expectations desired of them and are the best employee for the position they have nothing to worry about. These are *appointed* positions and we will fill them with the best employees. This will not be based on any current list, current training, or past promise. We are creating a fair process and any officer may apply for any appointed position, or several if they desire.

I will be releasing the specifics of the process by June 29, 2012. However, it is critical that the commanders of the officers in the appointed ranks must be empowered to make the decisions about the personnel they will be held accountable for. The process will be standardized across all divisions, but the decisions will be made by the responsible commander.

The process for applying and selecting employees for appointment will be completed by November 4, 2012.

I have heard that some people feel like they are “just a number” and that there is no personal thought given to the impact on their lives. This just isn’t true. I care very much about you as employees and as people. But we have to do the right thing. And often the right things are hard to do. But we cannot have a strong and trusting relationship with the community until we tackle these issues and do the right thing. Even when it hurts.

Over the past six months many officers have utilized the email I set up to communicate personally regarding the departmental change (DPDrealignment@denvergov.org), I encourage you send me questions or comments.

It is important for each one of us to remember the commitments we made as we swore the oath when we became police officers. This is about giving our best every day, about service to others before self, and about preventing crime for the people we serve..

Chief White