PURPOSE: The Greenville County Sheriff's Office disciplinary system consists of positive (awards/recognition) as well as negative (punitive) elements. Awards and recognition encourage behavior that contributes to the effective execution of agency objectives. Similarly, a system of training, counseling, and punitive action provides employees with the knowledge necessary to correct undesirable behavior.

RECOGNITION: The Sheriff recognizes employees for exceptional performance through an awards process. This process begins with letters of appreciation and commendation and progresses to more formal modes of recognition, culminating in awards ceremonies.

AWARDS COMMITTTEE: Comprised of employees from each division/platoon to review nominations that have been submitted and select the best candidate for each category with the exception of the Sheriff's Award which is selected by the Sheriff.

AWARDS –

SHERIFF SAM SIMMONS MEMORIAL AWARD – Honors the memory of Sheriff Sam Simmons who died while in office on September 4, 2002. Presented annually to a deputy who meets any or all of the following:

- Performed an outstanding act of police investigation and/or apprehension.
- Conducted themselves in a professional manner, presenting at all times an outstanding image of the Sheriff's Office.
- Performed work assignments on a consistently high-quality basis.
- Performed an outstanding act of heroism.

SHERIFF'S AWARD – Recognizes an individual who, by their actions, contributes greatly to the success of the Sheriff's Office or law enforcement in general. Presented annually following selection by the Sheriff.

VALOR AWARD – Recognizes a deputy who willingly risks their life in the furtherance of a law enforcement mission or to save the life of another. Written nominations submitted by supervisors are based

on a deputy's act of bravery in a situation that posed an actual and grave threat to the life of the deputy.

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND CALL TAKER OF THE YEAR – Recognizes contribution made by a communications specialist and call taker who demonstrates ability to perform assigned duties and responsibilities in an exemplary manner. Nominees demonstrate superior ability and present an exceptional image of the Sheriff's Office.

DIVISIONAL DEPUTY OF THE YEAR – Recognizes the contribution made by a deputy who consistently performs their assignments on a high quality basis. Conducts themselves in a professional manner presenting an outstanding image of the Sheriff's Office.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR – Recognizes contributions made by a deputy during their first year in law enforcement. Recognizes the deputy's ability to perform duties and responsibilities in an exemplary manner.

RESERVE DEPUTY OF THE YEAR – Recognizes a reserve deputy who meets any or all of the following:

- Demonstrates superior ability in job skills.
- Performs duties and responsibilities in an exceptional manner.
- Performed a meritorious act, above and beyond the call of duty.

TOP TRIGGER AWARD – Recognizes top marksmen in the Sheriff's Office. Encourages proficiency in firearms skills. A winner is determined annually in a shooting competition at the Center for Advanced Training.

SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD OF THE YEAR – Recognizes a guard's ability to perform duties and responsibilities in an exemplary manner.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE – Any deputy who has displayed personal initiative, commitment and skill in performing their law enforcement duties.

CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR – Presented to a full time civilian employee who has exhibited hard work and dedication in the performance of their duties.

DEPUTY OF THE QUARTER – Criteria:

- Any deputy who has displayed personal initiative, commitment and skill in the performance of their law enforcement duties.
- Any deputy who has performed an exceptional act, investigation, apprehension or has been exemplary in carrying out their duties.
- Any deputy who has performed an act of bravery or heroism in a situation of danger, or who has attempted to save the life of another person.

Selection is made by the Command Staff.

COUNSELING:

Counseling provides an employee, whose performance is not to standard, with the steps necessary to avoid more radical forms of discipline. Counseling is appropriate when there is a reasonable belief the employee has a problem or is experiencing difficulty understanding, adjusting to, or internalizing matters which:

- Are job related.
- Involve personnel policies.
- Involve interpersonal relationships among co-workers.
- Involve personal matters affecting the employee's work performance.

Supervisors or employees start the counseling process. If the problem is not resolved, assistance is sought from a division commander, chaplain, or outside counseling professional. Counseling in specific situations is mandatory:

- Officer involved shootings.
- Officer involved vehicle collision with other party injuries.

VERBAL WARNING REPORTS:

VERBAL WARNING REPORT – This report is used as a form of counseling for giving advice or advising and shall be issued by a Sergeant or above for minor infractions.

- Verbal Warning Reports will be completed on a Platoon / Unit level and kept digitally and only accessible by approved personnel.
- Verbal Warning Reports are produced in duplicate with a copy given to the offending employee. The original document is signed by the offending employee and the issuing employee.
- If no further action is required within a twelve month period, the Verbal Warning Report will be purged.

- Verbal Warning Reports are not considered punitive discipline; however, if there is a recurring issue that needs to be addressed through punitive discipline, the Verbal Warning Report should be used to support that action. Supervisors are to attach the Verbal Warning Report to the Written Warning or Written Reprimand if the recurring issue is within a twelve month period.
- Once signed, this document is forwarded up the chain of command and ultimately given to the Sheriff for his review.

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION:

Letters of Appreciation may be used by a supervisor or a Master Deputy to recognize and document quality work/behavior displayed by deputies. Once signed, this document is forwarded up the chain of command and ultimately given to the Sheriff for his review

REMEDIAL TRAINING:

Remedial training is a means of improving performance and correcting deficiencies in knowledge or in performance. If an employee fails to demonstrate minimum levels of proficiency on specified job-related tasks or knowledge, the employee receives remedial training. The employee is instructed about how to perform in an acceptable manner. Remedial training is corrective in nature. Its purpose is to enhance employee performance and job knowledge.

PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE:

Punitive discipline is authorized under the Sheriff's Office Rules and Regulations Manual. There are five forms of punitive discipline:

1. **WRITTEN WARNING –** Issued by a higher ranking supervisor and used to:
   - Address an issue that has previously been handled through a Verbal Warning Report within a twelve month period.
   - Address an issue that exceeds minor infractions but does not rise to the level of a Written Reprimand.

Written Warnings are produced in duplicate with a copy given to the offending employee. The original document is signed by the offending employee and their supervisor. Once signed, this document is forwarded up the chain of command and ultimately given to the Sheriff for his review. Following the Sheriff's review, the original is stored in the offending employee's file in the Office of Professional Standards.

2. WRITTEN REPRIMAND - Issued by a higher ranking supervisor and used to:

- Correct violations of the policy and procedure.
- Correct repeated procedural errors.

- Correct violations of other written directives.

Written reprimands are produced in duplicate with a copy given to the offending employee. The original document is signed by the offending employee and their supervisor. Once signed, this document is forwarded up the chain of command and ultimately given to the Sheriff for his review. Following the Sheriff's review, the original is stored in the offending employee's file in the Office of Professional Standards.

3. **SUSPENSION -** Appropriate when:
   - Earlier, documented efforts to discipline have failed.
   - The offense is so serious that retaining the employee in an on-duty status would pose a threat to public safety, or the good order and discipline of the Sheriff's Office.

Only the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Majors, Captains and Lieutenants may suspend employees without pay.

IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION - Affected employee is immediately advised of the reason(s) for suspension, the estimated duration of the suspension, and whether it is with or without pay. Written notification is given to the offending employee within seventy-two hours of verbal notice of suspension.

ANTICIPATED SUSPENSION - Affected employee is notified by giving them a Disciplinary Action form, listing reasons for suspension, its duration, and any additional disciplinary action to be rendered.

SURRENDER OF PROPERTY – Unless otherwise directed by the Sheriff, a suspended employee immediately surrenders their badge, weapon, identification card, and any other equipment as ordered. This includes reserve deputies.

4. **DEMOTION -** Demotion is reduction in rank. The Sheriff, Chief Deputy, and Majors are authorized to demote employees.

5. DISMISSAL – Dismissal is termination of employment. The Sheriff, Chief Deputy and Majors hold legal authority to dismiss employees. Captains dismiss employees with permission from the Sheriff. A dismissed employee receives a written statement that includes:
   - Reason for dismissal.
   - Effective date of dismissal.

- Statement of the status of accrued employee benefits after termination.
- Reference to the content of the employee's employment record as related to the dismissal.

SIGNING OF PUNITIVE DISCPLINARY ACTION:

The employee **must** sign punitive disciplinary action with the understanding that their signature indicates receipt of the document and does not necessarily indicate their agreement with the contents. Failure to sign will result in the employee immediately being placed on administrative leave without pay. If an employee fails to sign the document by the end of the second full workday, they are considered to have resigned without notice. Employees who wish to grieve the disciplinary action should follow the procedures in General Order 113.

CONDUCT AND PROCEDURES REVIEW BOARD:

Examines the circumstances surrounding disciplinary action taken against an employee. The board contemplates disciplinary action previously rendered. General Order 110 describes the composition of the board and its process.

EVALUATION:

When negative disciplinary action is rendered, the supervisor of the offending employee is to complete a detailed written report describing the nature of the offense, and the facts and circumstances leading to disciplinary action. The report is to describe the offending employee's conduct in the following terms:

1. **Proper conduct -** Allegation is true and action of the employee was consistent with Sheriff's Office policy.
2. **Improper Conduct -** Allegation is true, and action of the employee was inconsistent with Sheriff's Office policy.
3. **Policy Failure -** Allegation is true, and action of the employee was not inconsistent with Sheriff's Office policy.
4. **Insufficient Evidence -** There is insufficient proof to confirm or deny the allegation.
5. **Unfounded Complaint -** Either the allegation is demonstrably false or there is no credible evidence to support it.

RECORDS:

The Sheriff reviews all disciplinary action records. All disciplinary action records are filed in the Office of Professional Standards, with exception of the following:

1. Investigative records that support a criminal charge and are within normal records procedures.
2. Personnel action forms related to suspension or termination.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS TO BE RETAINED IN EMPLOYEE AND OPS FILES:

1. Letters of Appreciation
2. Letters of Commendation
3. Annual Awards

RECORDS RETENTION:

RECORDS OF OPS INVESTIGATIONS AND SUBSEQUENT DISCIPLINARY ACTION – Maintained in a permanent file.

ALL OTHER RECORDS – Five years.

RECORDS OF ALL COMPLAINTS, INCLUDING THOSE EXONERATED OR UNFOUNDED – Maintained in a permanent file.

STATISTICAL RECORDS:

RELATED TO COMPLAINT / DISCIPLINARY PROCESS – Maintained in OPS. Include the number and classification of complaints.

GRIEVANCE POLICY:

ALL EMPLOYEES have the right to grieve any disciplinary action taken against them in accordance with General Order 113.

Hobart Lewis, Sheriff