



STATE OF DELAWARE
THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

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ALAN G. DAVIS
CHIEF MAGISTRATE

POLICY DIRECTIVE 80-011 (Revised)

TO: ALL JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

FROM: ALAN G. DAVIS *AGD*
CHIEF MAGISTRATE

DATE: January 21, 2026

RE: DUTIES OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF MAGISTRATE

The Deputy Chief Magistrates are responsible for managing and supervising the daily judicial operations of the Justice of the Peace Court in the county to which they are appointed.

The Deputy Chief Magistrates report to the Chief Magistrate regarding administrative matters and are members of the Court's administrative team, assisting in case management, handling human resources issues involving judges, and reviewing and developing court policy. They are responsible for advising the Chief Magistrate on matters of interest and importance in their respective county as well as daily judicial operations including scheduling, judges' leave and advising judges. They work collaboratively with administrative, management, clerical and uniformed services to provide essential court services.

Essential Functions:

The essential functions listed below are intended to be descriptive in nature and

not exhaustive:

1. With approval by the Chief Magistrate, the Deputy Chief Magistrates shall be responsible for scheduling Justices of the Peace to the various court locations within their jurisdiction and with assigning the Justices of the Peace to various relief assignments in conformance with Policy Directive 94-143.

2. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall act on Justices of the Peace requests for administrative annual leave, annual leave, administrative sick leave, sick leave, compassionate leave, and compensatory leave accrual/usage. They shall consult with the Chief Magistrate on requests for leaves of absence and with extended sick leaves when and where all other legitimate and established leaves have been exhausted. They will work with Human resources staff on leave issues related to extended leave, disability and other applicable state or federal employment laws.

3. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall investigate complaints against Justices of the Peace within their county of jurisdiction. When a complaint is received directly by the Deputy Chief Magistrate, a copy of the complaint and proposed investigative process shall be forwarded to the Chief Magistrate. Investigations shall be completed with the assistance of Human Resources or other staff as necessary. Investigative findings and a proposed response shall be communicated to the Chief Magistrate with other comments and recommendations. A copy of any response shall be forwarded to to the Chief Magistrate and the involved Justice of the Peace. Complaints involving both administrative and judicial operations, or complaints made against a Justice of the Peace by another judge or member of the court staff should be coordinated with the applicable Operations Manager and must include Human Resources for input and recommendations. On those occasions where the Deputy Chief Magistrate is not sure whether a complaint impacts non-judicial operations, the rule of thumb should be to review the complaint with the appropriate Operations Manager.

4. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall attempt to answer initial legal inquiries from Justices of the Peace and procedural inquiries from court personnel within their jurisdiction. Copies of answers on legal matters provided in writing should be forwarded to the Chief Magistrate; written procedural answers should be forwarded to the Chief Magistrate and Operations Managers. Questions which require legal research or involve matters of first impression shall be directed to the Chief Magistrate and/or Staff Attorney. Responses to legal inquiries that may be of interest to all judges shall be forwarded by the Deputy Chief Magistrate via electronic mail to all judges in the county, as well as the other Deputy Chief Magistrates for distribution

to their judges.

5. To the extent possible, the Deputy Chief Magistrates are responsible for assuring that they and the Justices of the Peace under their jurisdiction follow the directives and guidelines which come from the Chief Justice and the Chief Magistrate and shall report departures from established policy or procedure to the Chief Magistrate. The Chief Magistrate and administration should be included in all broadcast emails to judicial officers in their respective county.

6. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall conduct regular meetings of Justices of the Peace within their county of jurisdiction, including arranging periodic educational programs. Such meetings shall take place at least four times per year, but more frequently as warranted. The Chief Magistrate should be invited to attend all meetings and provided an advance copy of the agenda for review and comment. Following the meeting, a timed agenda should be submitted to the Chief Magistrate's office for review and consideration for CLE credits.

7. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall participate in regular meetings with other Deputy Chief Magistrates and the Chief Magistrate, and with the Operations Managers administering their area of jurisdiction.

8. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall not share confidential information learned as a result of their position with persons other than the Chief Magistrate, unless release is authorized by the Chief Magistrate.

9. In administrative matters, the Deputy Chief Magistrates should consult with and act through the Operations Managers, Court Administrator, or Chief Magistrate as appropriate. They should work closely with the Operations Managers and other administrative staff (if necessary) responsible for administrative operations within their jurisdiction to ensure smooth coordination of administrative and judicial operations and enhance relationships between staff and Justices of the Peace.

10. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall work with the appropriate Operations Managers to resolve caseflow problems in civil and criminal locations, and keep the Chief Magistrate apprised of caseflow status.

11. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the BLE Committee and participate actively in the orientation and education of new Justices of the Peace. They shall ensure new judges are given adequate support as they transition from BLE to active judicial duties.

12. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall actively monitor the Justices of the Peace in their jurisdiction for ethical, personal, and professional issues that may affect their ability to properly perform the duties of the position, providing guidance and direction as appropriate to the individual Justice of the Peace and maintaining communication with the Chief Magistrate and others as directed by the Chief Magistrate.

13. The Deputy Chief Magistrates shall perform other such administrative responsibilities as delegated by the Chief Magistrate, including serving as Justice of the Peace representatives on various committees throughout the state or serving as proxy for the Chief Magistrate as necessary.

14. In addition to full-time administrative responsibilities, the Deputy Chief Magistrates shall work courtroom shifts as needed to stay up to date on issues facing frontline judges or as coverage needs demand. The Deputy Chief Magistrate should report shifts worked to the Chief Magistrate. Any work completed as a judicial officer in a courtroom would be considered as a courtroom shift, whether the Deputy Chief Magistrate is covering an entire shift or not.

15. Subject to the approval of the Chief Magistrate, the Deputy Chief Magistrates shall work in another county once per quarter to assist in developing greater knowledge of operations in other counties and insure consistency, as appropriate.

16. These duties shall be subject to the supervision of and changed by the Chief Magistrate.

cc: Honorable Collins J. Seitz, Jr.
Honorable Eric M. Davis
Honorable Kathaleen S. McCormick
Honorable Carl C. Danberg
Honorable Michael K. Newell
Gayle P. Lafferty, State Court Administrator
All Justice of the Peace Courts
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