

# The MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

## What is it and Why Participate?

Law Enforcement Accreditation is a "Badge of Honor"  
in the Law Enforcement Profession.

It is one of the *best* measures of a Police Department's compliance  
with *professional* Standards.

**Accreditation** is a self-initiated process by which agencies *voluntarily* strive to meet and maintain the body of standards that have been established *for* their profession, *by* their profession.

**Being *certified* or *accredited*** is symbolic of an agency's commitment to professional excellence in the workplace.

It means that the agency has agreed to adopt Program standards as a way of doing business -- and those standards are considered *best practices*, administratively and operationally.

### Achieving Certification or Accreditation status means:

1. The agency is committed to meeting professional standards.
2. The agency is willing to be assessed on a regularly scheduled basis by Commission-appointed assessors to confirm compliance with professional standards; and
3. The agency agrees to correct any deficiencies discovered during the assessment process to establish or re-establish compliance with standards.

### About the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Program

- ❑ Massachusetts is proud to be one of 25 states that offer an accreditation program for its law enforcement community.
- ❑ Massachusetts offers two program awards: Certification and Accreditation, and *Accreditation* is the higher of the two awards.
- ❑ Participation in the program is strictly **voluntary**. CEO's understand that enrolling in the program may generate some constructive criticism, *but* the process is not designed or intended to embarrass the agency's CEO or its personnel.
- ❑ The Program establishes standards for police departments to adopt. Standards generally dictate *which* topical areas an agency must have policies and procedures on leaving the *development* and the *enforcement* of *agency-specific* policies and procedures up to the agency's CEO and supervisory staff.
- ❑ The vast majority of the Commission's standards require agencies to commit their often unwritten policies and procedures to writing; the remaining standards are equipment and facility related.

### Cost to Enroll in the Program

- ❑ FY2018's Annual Fee: \$1,250\*
- ❑ Pro-rated Fee: \$100 per month
- ❑ Agencies with Ten (10) or fewer Full-time Police Officers pay 50% of the annual fee (\$625)

### \*MIIA Members

For information on MIIA's Police Accreditation/Certification Reimbursement Program, contact: MIIA's Loss Control Department at 617-426-7272.

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## What is it and Why Participate?

.....the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Program (continued)

- ❑ The *process* begins with a thorough examination of the agency *by the agency* to determine compliance with program standards. This “self-assessment” (or *internal evaluation*) that is initiated by the agency's CEO is then followed by an **external, peer review** by Commission-appointed assessors. Assessors are typically Chiefs of Police and Accreditation Managers from other participating agencies that have been specially trained to conduct “on-site assessments” on behalf of the Commission.
- ❑ Assessments for Certification are conducted in two days by two assessors (assessing 159 standards). Assessments for Accreditation are conducted in three days by three assessors (assessing 300+ standards).
- ❑ The Commission fully expects “functional” compliance with program standards (i.e. compliance in practice), not only at the time of the agency’s assessment but following it.
- ❑ Assessments for Certification and Accreditation are not much different than *line and staff inspections* in that they both serve to acknowledge what’s right, and identify and correct deficiencies. That said Certification and Accreditation awards do not necessarily imply total or continual compliance with program standards. Participating agencies are however expected to monitor and evaluate their compliance with standards during their three-year award period and take all necessary steps to re-establish standards compliance when non-compliance is discovered.

### Nature of the On-site Assessment

- ❑ The on-site assessment is audit in nature and limited in scope by design. It is not a management study. The Commission’s Assessment Checklists establish specific evaluation measures for determining compliance with each standard and these Checklists are provided to agencies upon enrollment in the program.
- ❑ *Initial* assessments for Certification and Accreditation are *system-based*; *Re-assessments* for Certification and Accreditation are more *performance-based*.
- ❑ Quote from MBTA Police Chief William J. Bratton introducing the concept of accreditation to department personnel in a department-wide memo: “*The standards used for accreditation deal with the Police Department, not individuals within the Department. Accreditation is not a performance evaluation of individuals. It is a national measure of procedures and policies for police agencies. These standards most often deal with whether the department has a written guideline - a policy, rule or procedure - covering particular aspects of its operation.*”
- ❑ Certification and Accreditation Programs do not certify or accredit Police Chiefs, Accreditation Managers or any other individuals in the agency; they certify and accredit *police departments as a whole*.

**For More Information** about the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Program:

Visit the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission’s Website:

[www.masspoliceaccred.net](http://www.masspoliceaccred.net)

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