

Statement from Hartford Police Chief Jason Thody, obtained Tuesday June 11:

“Police staffing continues to be one of the greatest challenges facing law enforcement in the United States. Our Recruitment Division and Human Resources continue to work tirelessly to bring in new officers. We worked with City leaders to increase funding in this past budget to hire additional officers. I have worked with the City Administration and past union leadership to improve pay and benefits in order to remain competitive in attracting new officers, while retaining the great ones we already have. While there is no immediate fix available, we have made great strides in recruitment, and especially retention. Some of these strides included changes in policies and procedures to avoid officer burnout, while continuing to provide police service to ensure public safety and quality of life. These changes were unpopular for some that were used to the status quo, and wanted to just ride it out.

I acknowledge the Union’s position in these difficult times. When pressured by officers for answers, I can attest to the fact that there are no easy answers, or immediate reliefs. I face the same questions and the same pressure for answers. However, leadership is not about folding your arms on the sidelines, deflecting blame, pointing fingers, and not working toward real solutions to difficult problems. Leadership is about rolling up your sleeves, working with others you may not always agree with, and making difficult decisions for the greater good. That is exactly what we did by changing some of our policies and procedures in these challenging times. The Union has every right to challenge those decisions and the process will play out in the coming months.

I have been to countless meetings and have spoken with countless jurisdictions on what can be done to accelerate the road to full staffing. The one thing that makes some more successful than others is cooperation. Jurisdictions that put differences aside, focus on the masses versus the individuals, and work together between unions, department leaders, and city and state elected officials move forward faster and with greater success. It will take time to restore our numbers to a place where we no longer need to order officers in. During that time, all officers will undoubtedly feel the weight on their shoulders. I will continue to work to mitigate the impact to our great officers.”

Policy notes

- 6/14/2021 – General Order 8.09 went into effect:
 - There has never been a policy that exempted officers from being ordered in on their days off. This has been an existing practice that dates back as far as anyone here can remember. The revisions made to the order-in policy were made through General Order 8.09 (attached), which went into place on 6/14/2021. The changes made in this policy added all officers in the impacted division to the order-in list. Our previous practice (not in any policy) was to order in starting at the least senior person, but the list got re-set each week. This practice disproportionately impacted our most junior officers. As the list reset every week, the same junior officers were being ordered in all the time. The revision to 8.09 started order-ins at the least senior officer and proceeded all the way through the most senior officer before the list was re-set. Chief Thody also added a “Pass” to this policy. When an officer was

called for an order-in, he or she could take a pass and be skipped for that order-in. This was done in case the officer had an important event planned. The officer would then be placed next on the list when another order-in was needed. The specifics of this are in 8.09, Section IV, Subsection C (Attached).

- 10/1/2021 – Chief Thody memo on order-in process changes (attached).
 - This directive created the process where officers were incentivized to work voluntary OT as a way to avoid order-ins. With low staffing, we know officers would be required to work extra shifts. The goal was for officers to schedule when they worked these extra shifts to avoid being ordered-in or held over.

- Neither the 6/14/2021 General Order nor the 10/1/2021 Memorandum mention or change anything with regard to officers being ordered in on a regular day off.
- These and other changes were discussed with the Hartford Police Union, both previous and current Executive Boards, to gain input. The response was no additional input or suggestions and they did not agree with any changes to the practices and policies in place.

- Example: Puerto Rican Day Parade 6/2/2018
 - There were 120 total posts to be filled.
 - There were 47 order-ins. 33 of them were on the officer's day off.
 - This was three years before the policy change.

- The Union filed a grievance regarding officers being ordered-in on regular days off on June 22, 2023 (attached).
- Chief Thody replied to the step-two grievance on June 28, 2023 (attached).
- The step-three decision denying the grievance was dated November 13, 2023 (attached).
- The step-four grievance was scheduled for April 24, 2024 and there was a second grievance regarding sick notes that was scheduled at the same time. The Union and City attorneys had conflicts and needed to reschedule.
- They rescheduled for June 6, 2024. This was the date of the FBI National Academy Graduation in Quantico, VA, where Deputy Chief Ian Powell was graduating. Chief

Thody informed counsel of the fact that he would be out of state attending the graduation and the hearing was rescheduled.

- These hearings are rescheduled due to scheduling conflicts on a regular basis. These conflicts have not been objected to in the past by the City or the Union.

Outcomes:

- Order-In/RDO Stats:

- **Pre policy change - 10/1/2020-10/1/2021** (time period before 10/1/21 memo order in process)

365 days total for this time period X 69 shifts per day = 29,930 total shifts filled.

- There were 1733 order-ins during this period, 471 of them were on the officer's regular day off.
- Of the shifts filled, 5.79% required an order-in and 1.57% required an order-in on an officer's regular day off

- **Post policy change (current) 6/11/23-6/11/24**

366 days total for this time period X 82 minimum shifts per day = 30,012 total shifts filled.

- There were 354 order-ins during this period, 94 of them were on the officer's regular day off.
- Of the shifts filled, 1.18% required an order-in and 0.31% required an order-in on an officer's regular day off

Policy and procedural changes have improved order-in numbers.

Attrition number since current order in policy was enacted (6/14/2021)

Fiscal Year	Resignations	Retirements	Separations	EOW	Total Attrition
2021-2022	40	2	6	0	48
2022-2023	20	0	3	0	23
2023-2024	8	0	3	1	12

Data shows that since the current order in policy was enacted in June of 2021, just prior to the beginning of FY 21-22, there has been an approx. 50% or greater decrease in both total attrition and resignations each year.