



**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania**

**Policy 1-02**

**Policy Title:** Legal Authority Defined

**Date of Issue:** December 1, 2022

**Rescinds:** None

**By Authority of:**

**Chief of Police**

**I. Purpose**

This policy provides for the recognition of police authority and the associated limitations of that authority. It is established to define an officer's authority through governmental legitimacy by defining that authority in terms of constitutional requirements, statute, case law, and the rules of criminal procedure.

**II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Springfield Township Police Department to provide for and promote the delivery of police services corresponding to the provisions of this policy.

**III. Legal Authority Defined**

- A. The United States Constitution, Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure, and the First-Class Township Code define the scope and limits of law enforcement authority as it pertains to the enforcement of laws, statutes, and ordinances.
- B. The Township of Springfield was established in accordance with the Act of June 24, 1931 (Pennsylvania Law 1206, Number 331) cited as "The First-Class Township Code"; reenacted and amended May 27, 1949 (Pennsylvania Law 1955, Number 569). This is to define and establish an officer's authority through governmental legitimacy by defining that authority in terms of constitutional requirements, statute, case law, and the rules of criminal procedure.
- C. The First-Class Township Code in Article XV: Corporate Powers, Section 1502, General Powers, grants to the elected Board of Commissioners the corporate powers of townships of the first class to adopt resolutions and ordinances prescribing the manner in which powers of the township shall be carried out and generally regulating the affairs of the township.

1. Article V: Police Force Section 1502, Appointment of Police to establish, equip, and maintain a police force and to define the duties of same, including Article VI Lock-Ups and Commitments, Article VII Committing Magistrate, Article VIII Vagrants, Article IX Disorderly Practices, and Article X Public Safety.
- D. The Springfield Township Police Department is a legally constituted police department of a government entity, having been organized in 1903 by the Township of Springfield under the provisions of the First-Class Township Code. Article XIV, Sections 1401 thru 1408 authorizes the Department of Police and sets forth its function. Section 1402 provides for a department head, the Chief of Police. Section 1403 outlines the powers of the Policemen.
- E. As employees of a municipal police department, Springfield Township Police officers are certified as municipal police officers under P.L. 1974, Act 120, effective June 18, 1974, establishing the "Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission" (MPOETC).
1. Under the Act, a "police officer" is any full or part-time employee of a city, borough, town, township, or county police department assigned to criminal and / or traffic law enforcement duties.
  2. Police officers who are certified by the MPOETC are eligible to carry and use weapons in the performance of their duties, make arrests and / or otherwise enforce the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and their respective municipalities.