



Lehman Township Police Department

From the Desk of the Chief of Police

Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

over a decade in the making >>>

In September of 2013, Chief Mark Liparela applied to the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police to participate in the Law Enforcement Accreditation program. Over the next 12 years, the process of becoming a professional, accredited, law enforcement agency was slow, but work remained steady.

In January of 2021, Chief Liparela re-applied to the PA Chiefs Accreditation program due to the five-year period having expired. A strong and steady focus was put toward law enforcement accreditation, along with the full commitment and support of the current Lehman Township Board of Supervisors.

In September of 2023, Officer Wade Curtis was hired part-time to perform steady work with a goal of early 2025 to become accredited.

With a strong focus and a dedicated accreditation manager working tirelessly to be sure the department was in compliance with the 139 standards of the accreditation program, the Lehman Township Police Department was successfully recommended for accreditation in January of 2025.

In this newsletter you will find what accreditation means, how to apply, comply and the years of hard work and support needed to accomplish such a title.



Accreditation Ceremony, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Pictured, from Left to Right: Chief/Commission Chairman Lee Benson, LTPD Sergeant Ken Kugler, LTPD Chief Mark Liparela, LTPD Officer Wade Curtis, Executive Director Scott Bohn

improvements >>>

These are just a few improvements made within the police department over the years to prepare for accreditation assessment:

- ✓ completion of the new police station addition
- ✓ added equipment such as a DRONE and several new cruisers
- ✓ many new tools, i.e.: in-car computers, in-car printers
- ✓ state of the art electronic filing system for traffic and non-traffic citations
- ✓ remodeled existing police station
- ✓ added full time officers
- ✓ a full time School Resource officer program
- ✓ firearms, helmets, ballistic shields, body and in-car cameras
- ✓ formation of the Lehman Township Police Officers Association
- ✓ formation of a completely new 4-chapter operations and policy manual
- ✓ intense active shooter training and firearms range qualifications
- ✓ aggressive narcotics investigations
- ✓ aggressive traffic enforcement
- ✓ daily 24/7/365 routine patrols in fully marked police cars
- ✓ a fully enclosed and secure outside storage area (aka impound area)



Shown: Body worn Cameras



Shown: Police Drone & Training Equipment



Shown: Crowd Control shield, Helmet, Pop Shield, Flexicuffs, Ballistic Panel vest



Shown: New Police Station addition; Five (5) of LTPDs Nine (9) cruisers

the process >>>

Phase One - Application/Enrollment

Once the law enforcement agency and the governmental body make the decision to move forward with the process, a letter of intent should be sent to the accreditation program coordinator. The letter should be signed by the Chief of the agency and co-signed by a government representative, such as a mayor, manager, or other elected official.

Phase Two - Self-Assessment

The Accreditation Manager you have selected for your agency will begin the process internally by performing a self-assessment of the agency. The Accreditation Manager will compare how the current policies comply with the Program's 139 standards. When the agency has completed the self-assessment phase, it will want to host a mock assessment. Once the 139 standards are in place, the assessment team will prepare and present an assessment report for the Accreditation Commission.

Phase Three - Formal Assessment

The final phase of the accreditation process is the Commission assessment. Trained assessors will do an on-site review of agency files ensuring compliance with all standards.

what is accreditation >>>

The Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association introduced the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Program to the Commonwealth in July 2001.

Accreditation is a progressive and time-proven way of helping institutions evaluate and improve their overall performance. The cornerstone of this strategy lies in the declaration of standards containing a clear statement of professional objectives. Participating administrators then conduct a thorough analysis to determine how existing operations can be adapted to meet these objectives. When the procedures are in place, a team of independent professionals is assigned to verify that all applicable standards have been successfully implemented. The process culminates with a decision by an authoritative body that the institution is worthy of accreditation. The Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Program was designed and developed by professional law enforcement executives to provide a reasonable plan for the professionalization of law enforcement agencies within the Commonwealth. The underlying philosophy of the program is to have a user-friendly undertaking for the departments that will result in a "success" oriented outcome.

Law enforcement peers want the program to be consistent and achievable for all types and sizes of law enforcement agencies within Pennsylvania. That perspective has been used in the development of the program and in its implementation. Whether an agency has 10 personnel, 100 members, or a cadre of thousands, the department can

successfully undertake and complete the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Program of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association.

There is complex work involved, but that is true of any professional project that is worth accomplishing. However, the commission members, the accreditation staff, and the accreditation coalition support groups in various parts of the state are in place to assist with the process leading to accredited status and Commission recognition and certification. It is the goal of the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Program to be affordable, Pennsylvania-specific, and user-friendly.

benefits of accreditation >>>

- ◆ *Establishes a credible framework for evaluating agency practices and procedures*
- ◆ *Reduces agency risk and exposure to lawsuits*
- ◆ *Decreases in some liability insurance expenditures*
- ◆ *Improves law enforcement - community relations*
- ◆ *Increases employee input, interaction and confidence in the agency*
- ◆ *Enlarges the outlook and viewpoints of managers, officers and employees*
- ◆ *Identifies and highlights the capabilities and competence of the agency*
- ◆ *Furnishes a solid foundation for the agency to build upon for further progress*
- ◆ *Provides reliable methods to improve essential management procedures*
- ◆ *Extends agency accountability to the public and elected officials*
- ◆ *Enhances planning and innovative activities by all agency personnel*
- ◆ *Develops improved methods for providing services to the community*
- ◆ *Encourages problem-solving activities within the agency*

accreditation recommendation & ceremony >>>

Over a two-day period, on January 15 and 16 of this year, assessors from the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission were on site at Lehman Twp. PD to perform the on-site assessment. Subsequently, Lehman Township PD was successfully recommended for accreditation and will be awarded at a ceremony in Harrisburg on April 24, 2025. Law Enforcement Accreditation is valid for 3 years. Every 3 years an accredited agency must be re-assessed by three different assessors. Accreditation is so important because Chief Liparela is committed to the highest law enforcement and community professional standards.

Lehman Township PD is one of 6 municipal police departments in Luzerne County to have successfully obtained law enforcement accreditation. Lehman Township is one of three departments in the Back Mountain alone. The current list of accredited departments in Luzerne County are: *Dallas Township, Forty-Fort Borough, Hanover Township, Kingston Township, Lehman Township, and Wright Township.*

Included within accreditation, in February of 2021, the Lehman Township Police Department received certification on Safe Policing for Communities pursuant to section 2 of the Presidential Executive Order # 13929. Within this Executive Order, the LTPD can apply for and obtain federal grant funding through the Department of Justice.



Left to Right: Officer Wade Curtis, Chief Mark Liparela, Sergeant Ken Kugler



LTPD's Certificate of Law Enforcement Accreditation & Challenge Coin



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or find us on



A special thanks to the current Lehman Township Board of Supervisors Dave, Doug, and Ray. Retired Chief Howard Kocher. Senator Lisa Baker, the PLEAC mock assessment team, the PLEAC on site assessors, the PLEAC Commission, Accreditation Manager Officer Wade Curtis, and most of all the dedicated and professional police officers of the Lehman Township Police Department.

- Chief Mark Liparela