



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CITY WORKS ON PROCESS TO EARN NATIONAL ACCREDITATION**

FAIRBANKS, Alaska



The Fairbanks Police Department has begun the long and challenging process of earning professional accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA).

The purpose of the Commission's accreditation program is to improve delivery of law enforcement service by offering 189 professional standards, developed by law enforcement practitioners, covering a wide range of up-to-date, best practice, law enforcement topics.

CALEA accreditation improves operations and accountability and raises citizens' and employees' confidence in their police department's ability to deliver world class service. Like all progressive organizations, the Fairbanks Police Department continually looks for ways to upgrade its policies and procedures. No matter how effective daily operations are, there is always room for improvement. In keeping with our department's values, Police Chief Randall Aragon is committed to the accreditation standards and process, to ensure that we provide the highest level of service to our community.

Professional standards build trust, and achieving CALEA accreditation will serve as the foundation for our department to meet or exceed nationally established benchmarks for policing activities. The accreditation process typically takes between 2 and 3 years with reaccreditation every 3 years thereafter.

### **Why Accreditation?**

Although relatively new to the law enforcement field, universities, hospitals and other professional organizations have, for many years, undergone similar accreditation processes to prove compliance with a set of professional, nationwide standards.

Accreditation serves to distinguish participating organizations as having met professional standards of conduct and service. As in other professional organizations, law enforcement leaders recognized the need to develop professional standards. Accordingly, the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies was formed in 1979 to establish a body of standards intended to increase efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in law enforcement organizations. The Commission is a joint effort of four highly respected national law enforcement organizations: the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the National Sheriff's Association, and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF).

### **What do the standards address?**

Law enforcement accreditation requires meeting over 189 independently reviewed professional standards that address six major law enforcement subjects, including: role, responsibilities and relationships with other agencies; organization, management and administration; personnel

administration; law enforcement operations, operational support and traffic law support; prisoner and court-related services; and auxiliary and technical services.

**What are the benefits of accreditation?**

Police officers who work for departments accredited by CALEA say that they are better prepared to handle difficult situations, especially where liability issues are involved. Independent studies have shown that CALEA accreditation has helped police departments reduce lawsuits and other liability issues. Some additional benefits of accreditation include:

- Nationwide recognition of professional excellence;
- Community understanding and support;
- Pro-active management systems, polices, and procedures documented;
- Liability litigations are reduced;
- Enhances the morale of department personnel;
- Adherence to law enforcement standards reinforces public confidence in police departments much the same as it does for hospitals, universities, and other professional services;
- Accreditation makes a statement to other law enforcement agencies, professions and the community that the Fairbanks Police Department meets the highest level of standards and professionalism.

**How many law enforcement agencies are accredited?**

Accredited agencies take pride in their department, knowing it represents the very best in law enforcement agencies. Only the top police agencies in the country are accredited, as currently only 5% of the approximately 18,000 agencies nationwide are accredited through CALEA. The Fairbanks Police Department is the first law enforcement agency in the state of Alaska to seek CALEA accreditation. CALEA accreditation is a coveted award that symbolizes professionalism, distinction, and competence; it will be a significant professional achievement for our agency and will be formal recognition of our commitment to excellence.

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