

Mission Driven Culture

WHAT is MDC?

A culture that relies on individuals to use their judgment to make decisions guided by the **values, principles of the organization, and the leader's intent** rather than being confined by a particular policy or guideline.

- Allows people to adapt to complex situations and environments that are continually changing
- Encourages decision-making at the lowest possible level without need to ask permission
- SOPs and policies are considered authoritative but flexible, to be used like a playbook
- Decisions that result in bad outcomes, if made in good faith trying to meet the leader's intent, are written off as acceptable losses and become learning points. If we decide to deviate or adjust from the pre-scripted playbook, we must take accountability/ownership for these decisions.

TASK

- To discuss the concept of mission driven culture and how we can incorporate its principles into our daily operations
- Implement and encourage a Mission Driven Culture **within all ranks and personnel**

PURPOSE

- Minimize situations where policy, guidelines, or other non-operational requirements get in the way of serving the common good and established values

END STATE

- Do a better job of doing the right thing, right now
- To make decisions and take actions that better serve our customers
- All personnel feel empowered and excited that leadership entrusts us to make the best decision possible

WHY is Mission Driven Culture being encouraged for all ranks?

- In **complex and/or extreme** situations, the established policies and procedures either didn't apply, they fall short, or can be a hindrance
- One single solution (i.e. regimented policy) does not exist to best solve every possible problem to be encountered
- There isn't time to ask for permission and receive approval before every action
 - The traditional "rules-based" operational paradigm functions on permission-asking and reserves decision making for the highest levels.
- Decisions needed to be made in the field to allow for faster decision-making and better outcomes
- Emphasis placed on adaptability and versatility

Leader's Intent / Operational Mission

Updated Leader' Intent, Values, and Mission Statement needs to be provided by Fire Chief Stowell or have him reaffirm our existing values and principles.

Existing Organizational Values and Principles

The values of the organization are used to drive decision-making

Professionalism

Respect

Integrity

Dedication

Excellence

MDC Decision-Making Criteria

Use thorough situational awareness to take the most appropriate action to ensure our values are being met

- Does it align with the leader's intent?
- Does it align with our Values and Principles?
- Is this my decision to make?
- What are the unintended consequences?
- Can I stand by my decision as doing the right thing?

Crew Resource Management (CRM) as a tool to assist with decision making.

What MDC <u>IS</u>	What MDC is <u>NOT</u>
Doing the right thing at the right time	A license for freelancing
Decision-making at the lowest level possible	A cover for self-serving decisions
Accountability to the decision-maker	A free pass to do what you want
Service to the Common Good	An opportunity to disregard policy, SOGs, laws (i.e. wearing a seatbelt)
The difficult right over the easy wrong	
Disciplined decision making	
Adaptive	

Communicating in the Mission Driven Culture

- Task – What is to be done
- Purpose – Why it should be done
- End State – What success looks like

Department Commitment

The Fire Chief is expected to make a statement in the near future where he and his Chief Officers will be pledging to support and embrace a Mission Driven Culture from the top down to the ranks of Firefighter, including Lifeguards and Civilian employees.

Communicate your successes, suggestions, questions to:

MDCLeadership@sandiego.gov

Frequently Asked Questions

Q - Can I get disciplined applying MDC principles to my decision making process.

A – If applied correctly, decisions made in accordance with the established values will keep you from making poor decisions. However, Mission Driven Culture is not a “get out of jail free card.” Yes, if your decision process does not follow the principle of MDC and does not fall in line with the established values, discipline may result following a poorly made decision. Employees and leaders shall be held **accountable** for both good and bad decisions. Accountability is a key component in promoting **trust**.

Q- What if I don't feel comfortable making a decision that does not follow the established policies or guidelines?

A - MDC is giving you more options, not taking away options from you. If you don't feel confident enough to vary your actions from a policy or guideline, then simply follow the established policy or guideline.

Q - What's the difference between Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) vs. Policies vs. Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG's)?

A - Although the technical and legal difference between SOP's, SOG's and Policies may vary, the purpose of the three are similar. They are created to serve as pre-made decisions, based on experiences and best practices that are communicated by the organization. In a rules-based, permission asking culture, they are very directive. The phrases “you must”, “you should”, “always”, and “never” are commonplace.

However, within the Mission Driven Culture, SOP's, Policies, and SOG's are intended to be used as decision making tools, allowing for discretion and judgment. Like a football playbook, we are accountable to know the established SOP's, policies, and SOG's, however, if we adapt, deviate or adjust from them, we must be accountable for them.

Adaptability without accountability is freelancing

Q – Who has oversight or makes the determination if an MDC related decision is bad or good?

A – There is not a special committee to review your MDC decisions. Your direct line supervisor will still be responsible for your actions and will evaluate them by also applying the principles of MDC. All standard disciplinary procedures, chain of command remain in place, as well as the FF Bill of Rights and current MOU's. Some decisions will have better end results than others and that is expected. Learn from the decisions that did not end up going as well.

Additionally, just because a decision may have resulted in a failure does not necessarily mean it was the wrong decision. Many times we are faced with situations where success may be measured as failing a little versus failing a lot.

Q - Do MDC principles apply to deviations away from EMS Protocols or State and Local Laws?

A – Generally, NO. MDC does not allow you to simply disregard or break laws/medical protocols. It is designed to be a decision making tool for you to apply to extreme or unique situations.

Q – How can I trust that my supervisor will support me making a MDC based decision?

A – Although we would like to say that they all will, we can't. The one guarantee we have is that Management has committed to this culture shift. You may receive some level of discipline for an MDC, however, know that there are many layers to discipline and they are committed to ensuring that actions by staff that may damage or diminish our confidence in the MDC will be addressed and corrected as necessary.

As long as your decisions are based in the values set forth in this document, you should feel confident to stand behind them.

Q – As a supervisor, does MDC limit or take away my ability to apply discipline.

A – No. MDC is only asking that you evaluate the decisions made by your subordinates based on the SOG's/Policies **combined with** the values and principles of our organization and the principles of a mission driven culture as they specifically apply to each situation.