

Cops get new regs in wake of DN series

Tighter controls placed on officers, informants

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No sexual relationships. No gifts. No “social, financial or business” dealings. No undocumented meetings or telephone conversations.

Those are just a few of the rules spelled out in a new police directive that places tighter controls on officers and their confidential informants.

The directive — issued Sept. 11 — comes in the wake of a *Daily News* series detailing allegations that narcotics officer Jeffrey Cujdik improperly rented a house to one informant, provided cash to bail another out of jail, and gave gifts, including cartons of

cigarettes, to at least three informants.

“One of the things that [the new directive] does is eliminate the idea of an officer using poor discretion,” said William M. Johnson, executive director of

the Police Advisory Commission, a city-funded watchdog agency. “It’s telling officers, ‘Don’t do this. Don’t do that.’ That comes across very clearly.”

He added, “It’s designed to act as a safeguard against the conduct we’ve been reading about in the newspaper.”

Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey was unavailable for comment yesterday.

The 22-page directive replaces a shorter, vaguely worded and less-stringent policy implement-

ed in October 1986.

The stricter rules for officers and informants is the latest step in an ongoing effort to prevent police misconduct and root out corruption within the Police Department’s narcotics units.

Earlier this year, Ramsey split up the officers in Cujdik’s squad and appointed a chief integrity officer to scrutinize drug investigations that use informants.

Cujdik is at the center of an FBI-led probe into allegations that he became too close to his informants and lied on search-warrant applications to gain access to suspected drug homes. Cujdik allegedly told informants to make drug buys elsewhere if they couldn’t make a buy from the targeted house.

A *Daily News* review of search warrants revealed that many

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read like form letters and, in some cases, confidential informants made drug buys across the city, just minutes apart, defying the laws of physics.

Four officers — Cujdik, his brother Richard Cujdik, Robert McDonnell and Thomas Tolstoy — remain on desk duty pending outcome of the investigation. Dozens of criminal cases are in legal limbo as a result. No officer has been charged criminally.

Under the new police directive, Chief Integrity Officer Alice Mulvey will review all search warrants and all interactions between officers and informants to look for any red flags.

The new policy includes a specific and lengthy list of do's and don'ts between officers and informants. The old one merely directed officers to remain professional and objective when using informants, stating that "no personal relationship" should jeopardize

the integrity of the department.

The new policy also calls for increased supervision of officers and informants, whom the Police Department pays for making drug buys or providing tips that lead to drug and gun arrests. And it makes clear that supervisors will be held accountable for any policy violations. Among the changes:

- The officer's immediate supervisor must be advised whenever an officer and informant meet, including the location, time and duration of the meeting. The officer must contact the supervisor when the meeting is over.
- The officer must document all contact, including phone conversations, with a confidential informant.
- All payments to confidential informants must be witnessed by a supervisor — sergeant or higher. A lieutenant must be present for payments from \$100 to \$500. The unit commanding officer must be present for payments exceeding \$500.

➤ All pay vouchers and contact forms must be signed by the informant, officer, witnessing officer and supervisor, and then hand-delivered the next working day to the integrity-control officer.

➤ Supervisors must meet quarterly and in person with confidential informants.

Privately, a few narcotics officers groused that the new directive is unrealistic and will bury them in paperwork and make it harder to enlist informants. John McNesby, president of Lodge 5 of the Fraternal Order of Police, did not return two phone calls seeking comment.

Johnson, of the advisory commission, said that the new policy does seem ambitious and that the task of implementing, sustaining and monitoring it would be a challenge.

"I don't expect it to be a panacea," he said. "It's not going to be a cure-all, but it does set some clear guidelines as to the relationship between officers and confidential informants." ★