



Pennsylvania constables A Peace Officers Manual

James M Canning Sr



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The Pennsylvania Constable

The Pennsylvania Constable is the oldest form of law enforcement in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Constables were the first form of law enforcement in the Country.

Prior to the introduction of police, even before the formation of this nation, there was the Constable.

The first written laws concerning constables can be found in the original town charters of the many towns and settlements. It was from these charters that we have what is written in statutes today.

With the introduction of police, the role of the constable has been diminished or abolished in parts of the country.

However, if it were not for constables, there could be no police. Even today, it is written in the laws governing police that they get their powers from the office of Constable.

In Pennsylvania, constables are still a viable factor in law enforcement. However, though the law is clear in our ability, most constables relegate themselves to only serving the courts and not serving their community as directed by state statutes.

Our training is focused on serving the courts in civil matters or minor arrest by warrant only, although the law states we have criminal authority, we are not afforded that training.

In this manual, I attempt to provide the constable with the knowledge of their authority as written into law by Acts and by Pennsylvania statutes, and how to utilize that authority.

There have been many misconceptions about constables by officials, other law enforcement and the public, regarding the authority and duties of Constables. Where they get their authority, and how much authority they have. This is an attempt to clarify that.

This guide is fluid, meaning that case laws and legislation often change, and when they do, those changes will be added in future additions or amendments to this publication.

James M Canning Sr.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I first joined the US Marines in August of 1980. Two years later I married my high school sweetheart, Miss Barbara Ann Norton, this happened on July 3rd, 1982.

We have two sons together. I attended Corning Community College for two years. Plus, the Pennsylvania Corrections Academy, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency for constable training, Penn State for Animal Husbandry, and the law enforcement training for Humane Police Officer. Security training in Florida and various military schools covering many subjects.

I served in both the US Marines and the Army National Guard of several states. I have had multiple peace time deployments and two combat deployments, both as a Marine and as Soldier of the US Army National Guard, serving in Beirut Lebanon and Ramadi Iraq.

I was first appointed as a Constable in 2012. I then won my election as constable in 2015. Then in 2021 I won re-election and election as the High Constable of Athens Borough. The first High Constable in the state in many years.

In 2016 I was certified and served as a Humane Police Officer, while also working as a constable.

I'm a trained Private Investigator with certification from Penn Foster, an accredited Pennsylvania school, I've consulted on international security operations, such as the London Olympics in 2012, for which I was published internationally in June of 2012.

Disclaimer:

I, Constable Canning do not claim to be an expert, nor do you have to follow what is written, this is just a guide that may answer some questions that you may have.

However, all information contained within this guide is taken from the most recent and up to date PA laws under Title 44, Pennsylvania Statutes, prior laws, case laws concerning a constable's authority, and my experience as a constable.

James M Canning Sr.

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Community Public Safety Patrol

This training material is to be used as a basic general guideline for patrol procedures for local governments that may contract with you. Each community, township or borough presents a unique need for the way patrols are conducted.

This material and corresponding patrol training instruction was created under the supervision of James M Canning Sr., Pennsylvania State Constable.

This has been modified for use by constables contracting with local governments.

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