

TOWN OF VERNON

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Vernon Police Obtain Top Tier State-Mandated Accreditation Two Years Early

VERNON, Connecticut – The Vernon Police Department has earned full state accreditation from the Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POSTC). Police Chief John Kelley, Captain Lucas Gallant and Department Accreditation Manager Mark Palmer were recently recognized for the department’s achievement at a meeting of the POST Council.

Vernon attained full accreditation, known as Tier 3 accreditation, two years ahead of the state deadline of January 1, 2026.

The accreditation process is intended to ensure police departments operate with standardized procedures that represent the highest standards and best practices. Connecticut’s Police Accountability Law imposed a variety of requirements on Connecticut police departments, including that they attain state accreditation.

“Vernon has an excellent police department that for decades has maintained the highest of standards,” Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne said. “The accreditation process formalizes many of the policies and procedures Vernon police have followed. It’s a credit to our department and its commitment to accountability and best practices that it was able to attain full certification in such a short period of time.”

Chief Kelley said Vernon Police began working to attain state accreditation in 2022. Town Administration and the Town Council authorized the hiring of Mark Palmer as Vernon’s accreditation manager. Palmer brought to the position experience as a police chief and expertise with the accreditation process.

Palmer updated the Vernon Police Department’s operating procedures to ensure they complied with the 322 standards the department had to attain for accreditation. As a practice, Vernon police regularly review and revise policies to comply with changes in state law and best practices.

In November, a POSTC accreditation audit team examined all Vernon Police Department policies and verified department compliance with all state standards. An on-site inspection was also conducted in November, which confirmed the standards had been met and Tier 3 accreditation was recommended to the POST Council.

“Attaining Tier 3 state accreditation is a significant achievement for the Vernon Police Department and for the Town of Vernon,” Kelley said. “It represents the department’s and community’s commitment to professionalism and excellence in both policy and practice.”

Accreditation is an ongoing process and the police department will continue to evaluate and revise policies and practices and undergo annual evaluations by independent auditors, Kelley said.

Attaining Tier 3 accreditation represents the Vernon Police Department's "thorough self-evaluation" and "acceptance of the obligation to continue the quest for professional excellence by working toward fulfillment of any future standards," POSTC Chairman and Milford Police Chief Keith Mello wrote in Vernon's award letter.

"Our police department has a tradition of excellence, accountability and professionalism," Town Administrator and Emergency and Risk Management Director Michael Purcaro said. "This achievement is a tribute to Chief Kelley, Captain Gallant, Mark Palmer and all of the members of the Vernon Police Department."

About the Town of Vernon

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of more than 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in "New England's Knowledge Corridor" with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870-3670 or visit www.vernon-ct.gov.

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