

RENO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

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Legal Advisor: Karen Fraley /s/		
Approving Deputy Chief:		
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General Order Title: DETECTIVE DIVISION		

POLICY

The criminal investigation process is one of the most important law enforcement responses to the problem of crime. The Reno Police Department is committed to the investigation of criminal activity by uniformed and non-uniformed personnel. While an effective criminal investigative process involves a coordinated effort among many units within the Department, primary responsibility rests with the Detective Division.

PROCEDURES

Cases will be disseminated to the supervisor of each Detective Division sub-unit for assignment within that unit. Cases are assigned to each unit based on type of crime. The supervisor in charge of each unit will assign cases to his detectives based on their experience, expertise, and the supervisor's discretion.

Status or Disposition of Cases

To assist in case management and control, administrative designations are used to indicate the status or disposition of cases. Case clearance is an indicator of individual performance and can assist in evaluating the individual detective. The three general status categories are "open," "suspended or unassigned," and "closed."

Open Cases

"Open" indicates that a case is assigned to a detective and investigative efforts are active.

Suspended or Unassigned Cases

When a case is suspended or unassigned, it means that available leads and sources of information have been exhausted. Suspended or unassigned status is indicative of a case not

having been cleared. Suspended or unassigned cases are not closed. Therefore, if new information or evidence in the case should develop, investigative efforts may be resumed.

A case may be suspended in the following manner:

- Upon receipt of an assignment, a detective reviews the original offense report.
- Known or potential investigative leads are followed to their conclusion.
- New leads developed are followed to their conclusions.
- The victim/complainant/witness is re-contacted to ensure known information has been documented in reports.
- If no additional information is obtained, the case is marked "suspended." The detective prepares a follow-up form and submits both the case and the form to the supervisor for review.
 - If the supervisor concurs with the detective's decision to suspend the case, the supervisor initials the form and it is filed in the Records Section.
 - If the supervisor does not concur, the case is returned to the detective with recommendations.

The criteria for suspending investigative efforts involve continued application of solvability and degree of seriousness factors. Criteria may also include a lack of further leads or unavailability of investigative resources.

Closed Cases

"Closed" indicates that a case has reached a final disposition that meets either Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) criteria for disposition of UCR-reported offenses, or the Department criteria for disposition in those cases not reportable to UCR. A case may be closed by the successful prosecution of at least one person, by Exceptional Clearance, or by finding the case unfounded. The case will be marked "closed" by the detective who will then prepare a follow-up form. The detective then submits both the case and the form to the supervisor for review.

If the supervisor concurs with the detective's decision to close the case, the form is initialed and filed in the Records Section. If the supervisor does not concur, the case is returned to the detective with recommendations.

When a case is either suspended or closed, the victim or the victim's representative will be notified either by telephone or by mail of the revised case status.

Exceptional Clearance by UCR Criteria Only

Offense Clearance by District Attorney

Arrest on primary offense or secondary offense occurs when an arrest is made on an individual who has committed several offenses that can be cleared. If the District Attorney decides not to prosecute on the cases, this type of exceptional clearance will be recorded. A clearance by arrest can be recorded for cases that are to be prosecuted.

Death of Perpetrator

When the perpetrator of the offense dies during the commission of the crime or prior to arrest, the case may be exceptionally cleared.

Victim/Witness Refusal to Cooperate

This type of clearance can be used only when the identity of the offender is known and the only reason the case did not proceed through the judicial system was due to failure of key persons to cooperate in prosecuting the defendant.

Juvenile Not in Custody

This clearance occurs when a juvenile is identified as the perpetrator and the department either handles the matter in-house or through the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, and no prosecution is required.

Unfounded

This occurs when investigation shows that the crime did not occur as reported.

Case File Management

Case files should be maintained on cases in which investigative activities are ongoing. No original records or reports will be maintained by detective personnel. Original documents will be forwarded to the Records Section upon being approved by a supervisor. Copies of original records are made and these copies constitute case files. Case files are to be held by the assigned detective until such time as the case has been resolved or is designated as suspended or closed.

Upon suspension or closure, case files will be maintained in the Records Section in accordance with their standard operating procedures. Case files will be available for use by detective personnel and may be temporarily removed from the case file repository after signing a receipt for them.

Case Assignments

The objective of case review is to better apply available resources to the investigation of those offenses that are likely to reach a successful disposition.

When a case is received in the Detective Division it is reviewed by a supervisor to determine if the case meets the established criteria for assignment to a detective for investigation. Crimes are investigated around a workable investigative caseload. The Department has developed methods to identify and minimize attention given to offenses with a low probability of successful clearance; cases are assigned by the unit supervisor based upon one or more solvability factors identified in the offense report and by documented experiences of the agency. These solvability factors include but are not limited to the following:

- The suspect is named;
- The suspect can be identified;
- The address of the suspect is known;
- The suspect can be located;
- The license plate number of the vehicle used in the crime is known;
- The vehicle can be identified;
- There was traceable stolen property;
- There were identifiable latent fingerprints lifted from the scene;
- A significant modus operandi has been recognized in the case;
- It is reasonably suspected that there was a limited opportunity to commit the crime; and/or
- There is reason to believe that further investigative effort will lead to the solving of the crime.

The detective to whom a case is assigned is designated as the “lead detective.” The lead detective will bear primary responsibility for the proper investigation of the case and will be held accountable for the proper handling and disposition of the case.

The watch commander, or a field supervisor, will be responsible for calling out Detective Division personnel. The current detective call-out roster will be maintained in the Department’s “J” files.

The Detective Division Commander will periodically assign detective personnel to attend briefings for the purpose of passing on information, answering questions and concerns of patrol personnel, and improving relationships among divisions.

Investigative Task Forces

The Department recognizes that resources from various agencies are needed to address crime trends and compile information. There are occasions that require the pooling of resources to achieve a mutual goal. Under these circumstances, a task force is formed.

1. Task forces are temporary and formed for a special purpose and to accomplish a specific goal. This purpose will be narrowly defined and will include specific goals and objectives. Purposes for which a task force may be formed include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - The investigation of one or more particularly complex crimes requiring extraordinary expenditures of manpower and other resources;
 - The investigation of serial crimes, e.g., sexual assaults, homicides, robberies, etc., and/or
 - The investigation and interdiction of unlawful narcotics trade.
2. A task force made up of components of the Department will operate under the authority of the Office of the Chief of Police. The Office of the Chief of Police will maintain control of, and responsibility for, the actions of the task force.
3. It is understood that geographical boundaries are seldom adhered to for crimes that lead to creation of a task force. Therefore, when a task force is created, and it is recognized that

investigative or other efforts will affect law enforcement agencies other than the Reno Police Department, the Office of the Chief of Police will be notified. The Office of the Chief may notify the other affected agencies of the intent to form a task force. At the discretion of the Office of the Chief, the other affected agencies may be asked to join the task force. However, the operation of the task force will remain a function of the Reno Police Department.

4. The commander of the division having investigative responsibility over the task force will be in charge of the task force if formed internally. The person in charge of a task force formed outside of the Department, but involving Department personnel, will be designated by the agency that formed the task force.
5. The task force supervisor will be designated during the construction of the task force. This person will have immediate supervisory control over the task force and assigned personnel. This supervisor will submit timely reports on the operations, needs, and results of efforts expended by the task force while it is operational. These reports will specify whether the task force is accomplishing its intended objectives and the approximate stage of completion of the project. At this supervisor's discretion, other officers may be assigned specific tasks and will report back to the supervisor.
6. The Office of the Chief of Police and/or Division Commanders of suggested members or divisions of internal task forces must be involved in the planning and implementation of the task force. Identification and assignment of resources will be a joint undertaking between the task force supervisor and the person(s) with authority over the resources.
7. At such time as a task force has met its established goals, or at such time that it becomes evident that the goals will not be met by continuation of the task force, a total evaluation, including an assimilation of available data, will be performed. A report as to the success or failure of the task force, the total expenditure of manpower and other resources during the life of the task force, and the reason(s) for the continuation or discontinuation of the task force in cases where goals may not have been met, will be generated.

Case Assignment Logs

When a case has been assigned to a detective, it will be entered onto the incident and case management area of the Department computer system. This entry will permit the tracking of the case by date assigned, report due date, case number, and detective assigned.

Interviews and Interrogations

1. Interrogations by connotation are custodial-type conversations. As such, they require officers to adhere to legal obligations and rights that apply to suspects or to individuals, *i.e.*, Miranda.
2. Witnesses will be interviewed without unnecessary delay. In reports, the interviewing detective will always note the condition of the witness, if other than normal, at the time of the interview.

3. Interviewing on-scene is sometimes difficult due to conditions and other circumstances. Interviews should be conducted at a location that allows the parties to feel comfortable.
4. Eyewitness testimony must be taken with consideration for the differences in perception by individuals. Also, distance from an incident, obstructions, noise, and lighting will also affect perception. Detectives must note factors such as the type of lighting during the incident and whether the witness wears corrective lenses and if so, was the witness wearing them at the time of the incident.

Follow-Up Investigations

Follow-up investigations may begin during or after preliminary investigation. Follow-up investigation may involve additional actions necessary for the identification and apprehension of an offender leading to final disposition of a case. Follow-up investigation may also include obtaining information in support of an arrest made by patrol personnel.

Patrol officers are encouraged to follow-up on their preliminary investigations for the purposes of case closure, arrest, and recovery of property. It is recognized, however, that certain cases cannot be resolved during the initial phase of an investigation. Cases of this nature are referred to the Detective Division for secondary or follow-up investigation, since investigative personnel possess the training and equipment to enhance investigation of specific types of crimes.

1. Detectives will call upon their experience, creativity, imagination and common sense when conducting follow-up investigations. While there is no specific formula for crime investigation, there are certain procedures that may be followed to ensure a thorough inquiry into each case assigned. These procedures include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Review and analyze reports prepared by the initiating officer as well as other Department records pertaining to the investigation;
 - Conduct additional interviews when necessary. Conduct additional interrogations of suspects or informants. Seek additional information from other officers and/or informants;
 - Examine the criminal history of suspects and/or witnesses;
 - Review results of examinations conducted by FIS or other facilities;
 - Arrange for dissemination of information as appropriate through BOLOs or teletypes;
 - Plan, organize, and conduct searches as necessary;
 - Collect physical evidence or supervise collection performed by other officers;
 - Complete work necessary to prepare the case for court presentation, and assist in the prosecution of the case;
 - Determine the involvement of suspects in a case with possible involvement in other crimes, and either initiate action in these other investigations or communicate the information to the appropriate unit or agency;
 - Identify and apprehend suspects; and
 - Locate and return stolen property to its rightful owners.

2. For certain investigations, the use of an investigative checklist is recommended as a preventative measure that ensures no important phase of an investigation is overlooked.
3. Instruments such as the polygraph and psychological stress evaluator can be useful investigative aids. Due to the complexity of the examination process, these types of interviews and/or examinations will only be conducted by qualified examiners with documented training in the use of such devices.