

Investigations and Police Reports

322.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Police investigation and report preparation is a very important part of each member's job. In part, police reports are to help document sufficient information to refresh the member's memory and allow for others in the justice system, as well as the public, to read about and understand an incident or investigation. Police reports also allow members to conduct follow-up investigation and can aid in successful prosecution. This department has a formal Report Writing Manual and shall serve to set standards for when and how reports are to be completed. If the RWM and this policy conflict, requirements in this policy shall be followed. It is the policy of the SPD to conduct thorough non bias investigations and to document those investigations accurately in an appropriate police report.

322.2 REPORT PREPARATION

- A. Members shall assure that their reports are sufficiently detailed for their purpose and reasonably free of errors prior to submission.
- B. Reports shall properly document all pertinent investigative steps, processes, evidence, investigative details, statements, and actions, by members or others, that may tend to prove or disprove a violation of law or provide appropriate clarity to an incident.
 1. What is meant by reports in this policy are the Alpha or Bravo reports, SPD forms, citations, referrals, supplemental documents, or memorandums, that help document police investigations, incidents, or actions.
- C. It is the responsibility of the assigned member to complete and submit all Alpha or Bravo reports, along with associated forms or documents taken during the shift before going off-duty, unless a supervisor has approved the report to be completed during another shift.
- D. In all cases, reports to include supplemental reports, shall be completed within 24 hours of taking the report or completing initial investigation or actions, even though the entire investigation may not be fully completed. Reports requiring prompt follow-up action on active leads, or arrest reports where the suspect has been booked at county jail, shall not be delayed. On rare occasions, a supervisor may approve a holdover for up to a maximum of four days for the completion of a report (which includes the review and initial approval of the report).
- E. Handwritten reports, forms, citations, referrals, and associated documentation must be prepared legibly. Members who dictate reports shall use appropriate grammar, as content is not the responsibility of the typist. Members who generate reports on computers, by hand, or via dictation are subject to all requirements of this policy and the Report Writing Manual.
- F. All reports shall accurately reflect the identity of the persons involved, all pertinent information seen, heard or assimilated by any other sense and any actions taken. Members shall not suppress, conceal or distort the facts of any reported incident, nor

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Investigations and Police Reports

shall any member knowingly make a false report orally or in writing. Generally, the reporting employee's opinions should not be included in reports unless specifically identified as such and is done to explain investigatory processes or reasoning.

322.3 REQUIRED REPORTING

- A. An employee shall investigate and document via an appropriate type of police report all offenses when an employee has reason to believe that a felony, misdemeanor, or other public offense has been, or reportedly has been committed, typically within the jurisdiction of the Sahuarita Police Department. Members shall document all felony violations via an Alpha report.
 - 1. **Exception:** If all parties involved in a misdemeanor incident, or a minor traffic collision involving only a civil violation (as defined in Lexipol 502), do not want a report and a supervisor approves that no report is required, then no report need be taken, unless the incident falls under one of the criteria listed below. No officer or member shall attempt to, nor successfully persuade a person to not report a crime or file a police report.
- B. Members shall investigate and document with an Alpha police report the following crimes or incidents.
 - 1. Misdemeanor crimes of violence, threatened violence, or sex crimes
 - 2. Domestic violence, domestic violence related threats, violations of a court order, violations of orders of protection, or violations of injunctions against harassment.
 - (a) Service or attempted service of an order of protection or an injunction against harassment may be documented in a "synopsis sized narrative."
 - 3. Driving Under the Influence, Failure to Yield (vehicle pursuit), or Title 28 violations for which the suspect is booked at jail
 - 4. Hit and Run traffic collisions
 - (a) Hit and run traffic collisions on private property shall be documented via an alpha report and a Sahuarita Crash Report (SCR). An Arizona Crash Report (ACR) shall be completed if a hit and run traffic collision on private property results in or is likely to result in a fatality.
 - (b) Hit and run traffic collisions on the roadway/right-of-way shall be documented via an alpha report and an ACR.
 - 5. Theft from a business
 - 6. Crimes that occur to a town facility, property, or to any on-duty Town employee
 - 7. Misdemeanor crimes at a town school or that involve a school student or staff member while they are traveling to or from home or school in association with a school function
 - 8. Missing or runaway persons. There is no minimum amount of time required to be reported as a missing or runaway person. The Missing/Runaway Persons Policy, Lexipol 316, provides criteria for when a missing or runaway person incident can be documented via a "synopsis sized narrative."

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Investigations and Police Reports

9. Crimes against children or the elderly in which the age of the victim is an element of the crime
 10. Private person or citizen arrest
 11. Natural death, suicide, attempt suicide, or other significant mental health issue
 12. As directed by a supervisor or SPD policy
- C. Members who release a person via citation for a misdemeanor offense not listed in 1 through 12 of this section may document the incident using the synopsis style report outlined in the Report Writing Manual to document key facts. In order to assure proper statistical collection and tracking, these reports must receive an appropriate RMS alpha clearance code. Key facts may need to include:
1. All reasons/justification for making contact that clarify if contact was consensual or a detention
 2. How a person was positively identified
 3. Any statements or information associated with culpability
 4. Documentation sufficient to recall one's memory and present adequate information during a court or jury trial

322.4 CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPEDITIOUS REPORTING

- A. In general, all employees and supervisors shall act with promptness and efficiency in conducting investigations and the preparation and processing of all reports. Incomplete reports, unorganized reports, or reports delayed without supervisory approval demonstrate unacceptable performance.
- B. Reports shall be processed according to established procedures and priorities. Supervisors shall utilize the RMS case management system to track and manage assigned reports.
- C. Whenever reasonably possible, reports shall be completed, reviewed, and initially approved during the shift in which the employee conducts the initial/primary investigation. Members and supervisors shall diligently strive to complete, review, and initially approve reports within 24 hours. On rare occasions, a supervisor may approve a holdover for up to a maximum of four days for the completion of a report (which includes the review and initial approval of the report).
 1. Whenever possible, any assigned investigating officer or member shall complete all misdemeanor investigations assigned to them and any required follow-up. Misdemeanor case follow-up will only be assigned to the investigations bureau at the direction of the investigation bureau sergeant or a lieutenant. If an officer cannot complete a misdemeanor investigation due to logistical reasons (vacation, training, days off, illness, significant difficulty in contacting involved parties, etc.), a patrol sergeant will work to have another patrol officer or member complete the investigation, before requesting investigations bureau assistance. This includes cases requiring follow-up outside the Town limits. Officers shall work to complete misdemeanor cases as soon as reasonably possible, typically

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Investigations and Police Reports

during the same week the case is initiated. Patrol sergeants, officers, and members shall work as a team to facilitate the completion of patrol investigations in a timely manner.

2. If an officer or member cannot complete an investigation during the same workweek the case was initiated, a sergeant may approve the investigative extension, but shall approve the holdover via the RMS. Officers or members shall complete the SYNOPSIS and as much of the INVESTIGATION or SUPPLEMENTAL narrative as possible during their workday and workweek in an effort to maintain an up to date draft report of the investigative steps and processes of the investigation. Officers or members are not to wait until completion of a multiple day or week investigation to begin drafting their narrative. If an investigation extension is approved, the officer or member shall try to complete the investigation within the following workweek whenever reasonably possible.
3. If a victim, suspect, witness, involved other, or property (vehicle, etc.) is unable to be contacted or located during the initial investigation, or needs to be contacted or located again, the investigating officer or member shall assure that an ATL/BOLO is completed and appropriately distributed. An ATL/BOLO is an official police document and an attachment to be submitted along with the original or supplemental report.
4. Officers or members shall assertively try and locate outstanding victims, suspects, witnesses, involved others, or property (vehicles, etc.) for at least two weeks in an effort to conduct a more complete investigation. Dependent upon the seriousness of the case, officers or members may continue attempts to locate persons or property beyond the two-week period, but are responsible for conducting the investigation in an appropriate amount of time.
5. If a patrol investigation takes more than two weeks to complete, all investigative steps and progress up to the two week time point shall be submitted in a police report prior to any further extensions. Additional investigation may continue, but will need to be documented via a supplemental report(s).
6. Patrol bureau personnel may have cases with felony or felony and misdemeanor charges. Not all felony cases are assigned to detectives for initial or follow up investigation. Patrol personnel are expected to handle felony investigations to completion, according to their skill sets, whenever reasonably possible. Officers and members are to assure each element of a crime (misdemeanor or felony) is appropriately investigated and documented.
7. When all reasonable investigative steps have been completed or attempted, and the suspect is still outstanding, but probable cause exists for misdemeanor or felony charges, the report shall be submitted to the appropriate prosecutor for review. A common police report narrative or supplemental DISPOSITION in cases like these may be, "Closed. Forward to prosecutor to review charges."
8. Non Primary - Assisting Officers or members - Officers or members who assist a primary officer or member may be required to complete a supplemental investigation and report. The supplemental DISPOSITION for non primary

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Investigations and Police Reports

officers who make an arrest should be "Closed by arrest. Forward to prosecutor to review charges." The criteria listed in bullets 1-7 of this section also apply to officers or members responsible for supplemental investigations and reports.

D. SSD INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU PERSONNEL

1. Whenever reasonably possible, detectives shall complete any investigation assigned to them in a timely manner and complete all original or supplemental crime reports within five days of conducting investigative steps or processes, whether or not the investigation is fully completed.
2. If a detective cannot complete their investigation within five days the detective will need to obtain holdover approval from a detective sergeant or SSD commander or lieutenant, which will be documented in the RMS. Detectives shall complete the SYNOPSIS and as much of the INVESTIGATION or SUPPLEMENTAL narrative as possible during their workday or workweek in an effort to maintain an up to date draft of the investigation. Detectives are not to wait until completion of a multiple day or week investigation to begin drafting their narrative. If a report extension is approved, the detective shall complete the report within the following work week whenever reasonably possible.

E. INCIDENTS ASSOCIATED WITH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS

1. Crimes of violence or threatened violence (i.e., assault, bullying, harassment, etc.) should continually be assessed for the need of additional investigative resources whenever reasonably available.
 - (a) School Resource Officer (SRO)
 - (b) Patrol
 - (c) Detectives
 - (d) Crime Scene Specialist (CSS)
2. A second reviewer and/or a detective sergeant will assure that a threat assessment shall be conducted as soon as reasonably possible on all incidents involving crimes of violence or threatened violence.
 - (a) A threat assessment will minimally include input and/or information from the initial primary case officer, a detective or detective sergeant, a SPD manager (supervisor or higher rank), and a school administrator.

322.5 GENERAL POLICY OF HANDWRITTEN REPORTS, CITATIONS, FORMS, ETC.

- A. Some incidents and report forms lend themselves to block print rather than typing. Report forms from this department, or required by other agencies or jurisdictions, whether completed by hand or by typing, shall be completed appropriately, fully, and legibly to include any narrative portion of those reports.

322.6 REPORT REVIEW AND CORRECTIONS

- A. Reports requiring supervisor or superior officer approval shall be reviewed for content and accuracy to include documentation on each element of a crime. If a correction

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Investigations and Police Reports

is necessary, a reviewing supervisor or superior officer shall explain to the authoring member the reason(s) for needed corrections, edits, or additional information.

1. Reports requiring initial review by a supervisor or superior officer:
 - (a) All arrests (cite and release, SPD booking and jail booking)
 - (b) All crime reports associated with a public or private school
 - (c) Crimes of violence, threatened violence or domestic violence (to include any of these associated with a public or private school)
 - (d) Death investigations
 - (e) Missing or runaway persons
 - (f) Reportable use of force by members and vehicle pursuits
 2. The following reports require secondary review by a member other than the initial reviewing supervisor or superior officer (typically reviewed by Field Services Division (FSD) Lieutenants):
 - (a) Arrests (cite and release, SPD booking and jail booking)
 - (b) Alpha reports associated with a public or private school
 - (c) Crimes of violence, threatened violence or domestic violence (to include any of these associated with a public or private school)
 - (d) Reportable use of force by members and vehicle pursuits
 3. Reports requiring secondary review by Investigations Sergeants and/or Lieutenant:
 - (a) Death Investigations
 - (b) Missing or runaway persons
- B. Once the corrections, edits, or additional information have been completed, the report shall be resubmitted for approval and the finalization process conducted by the Records Bureau. It shall be the responsibility of the originating member to assure that any report returned for correction is completed in a timely manner.

322.7 REPORT CHANGES OR EDITS

- A. Reports that have been approved by a supervisor and submitted to and approved via any required secondary review process and then finalized by the Records Bureau for filing and distribution shall not be modified or altered.
- B. Any new information associated with the investigation or report, or meant to possibly clarify information in any already finalized report, shall only be included by submitting a supplemental report.
- C. Reviewed reports that have not yet been submitted and finalized by the Records Bureau may be corrected or edited by an employee only in accordance with this policy, but shall follow the regular approval and finalization process after such corrections or edits have been made.

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Investigations and Police Reports

322.8 POLICY ISSUANCE OR REVIEW

12/04/2023 - Reviewed by Chief John D. Noland - SP#002