



Approved:  
*Chief Marcia Harnden*

Subject:

# 602. Report Preparation

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## 602.1: PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines governing the preparation of police reports. Specific information on how to prepare various reports can be found in the [Albany Police Department Report Writing Manual](#).

## 602.2: POLICY

**It is the policy of the Albany Police Department that employees prepare reports when appropriate to sufficiently document crimes and other incidents which occur in the City of Albany in preparation for criminal prosecution or other use at a later date.**

## 602.3: OBJECTIVES

The objectives of preparing accurate police reports include, but are not limited to:

- a. To maintain records and reports which will comply with all federal, state, county, and city ordinances;
- b. To provide a count of the number and type of incidents reported and the services provided to the community;
- c. To provide the proper database for monthly, quarterly, and annual workload comparisons;
- d. To provide necessary information for conducting valid staffing analysis;
- e. To provide a report system which will enhance the collection of information and reinforce the services the Albany Police Department provides for the community.

## 602.4: REPORT PREPARATION

- a. Employees should ensure that reports are sufficiently detailed for their purpose and free from errors prior to submission.

- b. 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.
- c. Employees shall not suppress, conceal, or distort the facts of any reported incident, nor shall any employee make a false report orally or in writing.
- d. Generally, the reporting employee's opinions should not be included in reports unless specifically identified as such.

#### 602.4.1: REQUIRED REPORTS

Incident reports are required in all the following situations on the appropriate department approved form unless otherwise approved by a supervisor:

- a. **Criminal Activity Reporting** – When a member responds to a call for service, or because of self-initiated activity becomes aware of any activity where a crime has occurred, the member shall document the incident regardless of whether a victim desires prosecution. Activity to be documented in an incident report includes:
  - 1) All arrests;
  - 2) All felony crimes;
  - 3) Non-felony incidents involving threats or stalking behavior;
  - 4) Situations covered by separate policy, including:
    - A. [Use of Force: Policy 240](#);
    - B. [Domestic Violence: Policy 530](#);
    - C. [Child Abuse: Policy 515](#);
    - D. [Adult Abuse: Policy 534](#);
    - E. [Hate Crimes: Policy 540](#).
- b. **Non-Criminal Activity Reporting** – The following incidents shall be documented in an Incident Report as described in Section 602.5.2:
  - 1) Any time an officer points a firearm at a person;
  - 2) Any use of force against any person by a member of this Department (refer to [Use of Force: Policy 240](#));
  - 3) Any duty weapon firearm discharge (refer to [Firearms: Policy 270](#));
    - A. Use of the department Ruger 10/22 for the sole purpose of euthanizing an animal, is not considered a duty weapon firearm discharge. Dispatching animals with the Ruger 10/22 shall be documented in a Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) Event Report to include date, time, location, reason, and disposal of animal.

- 4) Any time a person is reported missing, regardless of jurisdiction (refer to [Missing Persons: Policy 510](#));
  - 5) Any found property or found evidence;
  - 6) Any traffic crash above the minimum reporting level (refer to [Traffic Collision Investigation: Policy 310](#));
  - 7) Suspicious incidents which may indicate a potential for crimes against children or indicate that a child's safety is in jeopardy;
  - 8) All protective custody detentions;
  - 9) Suspicious incidents which may place the public or others at risk;
  - 10) Whenever the employee believes the circumstances should be documented, or at the direction of a supervisor.
- c. **Death Cases** – Death investigations require specific investigation methods depending on circumstances and should be handled in accordance with [Death Investigations: Policy 550](#). An officer handling a death investigation should notify and apprise a supervisor of the circumstances surrounding the incident and a determination will be made on how to proceed. The following cases shall be appropriately investigated and documented using the approved report:
- 1) Sudden or accidental deaths;
  - 2) Suicides;
  - 3) Homicide or suspected homicide;
  - 4) Unattended deaths (No physician or qualified hospice care during the period immediately preceding death);
  - 5) Found dead bodies or body parts.
- d. **Injury or Damage by City Personnel** – Incident Reports shall be taken if an injury or **property** damage occurs to a member of the public, which is a result of an act of a City employee.
- e. **Miscellaneous Injuries** – Any injury reported to this Department shall require an Incident Report when:
- 1) The injury is a result of a drug overdose;
  - 2) Attempted suicide;
  - 3) The injury is major/serious enough that it may result in death;

- 4) The circumstances surrounding the incident are suspicious in nature and it is desirable to record the event.

The above reporting requirements are not intended to be all-inclusive. A supervisor may direct an employee to document any incident he/she deems necessary.

#### **602.4.2: EXPEDIENCE**

- a. Members and supervisors shall act with promptness and efficiency in the preparation and processing of all reports.
- b. An incomplete report, unorganized reports or reports delayed without supervisory approval are not acceptable.

#### **602.4.3: HANDWRITTEN REPORTS**

- a. Some incidents and report forms lend themselves to block print rather than typing. In general, the narrative portion of those reports where an arrest is made or when there is a long narrative should be typed.
- b. Supervisors may require, with the foregoing general policy in mind, block printing or typing of reports of any nature for departmental consistency.

#### **602.5: REPORTING PROCEDURES**

- a. A unique case number is automatically assigned to every report entered into RMS.
- b. Employees shall ensure that reports contain a clear, concise, complete, accurate, and objective account of the incident investigated and any action taken.
- c. All requests for police services requiring action or dispatch by the Department and/or any law enforcement action initiated by a member of the Department will be documented in one of the following reporting methods:

#### **602.5.1: CAD EVENT REPORTS**

- a. The purpose of the CAD Event Report is to briefly record a minor call for service and document the departmental responses to those incidents. There is no RMS entry. The CAD Event Report is contained entirely within the CAD system.
- b. A CAD reference number is generated for each call for service or activity of the Albany Police Department. The event may be captured solely in a CAD Event Report if no significant action was taken, no additional paperwork is attached, and no follow up will be necessary.
- c. The following types of calls may meet the criteria to be documented in a CAD Event Report when no crime is evident:

- 1) Alarms, open doors/windows, security checks.
  - 2) Assists persons, and/or motorists.
  - 3) Possible shots heard and/or fireworks where nothing is found.
  - 4) Hazards – road/other.
  - 5) Juvenile complaints where nothing is found or is unfounded.
  - 6) Prowler unfounded.
  - 7) Suspicious person/vehicle/circumstances (when unable to locate, no crime is committed, or a field contact is completed).
  - 8) Area Check UTL GOA.
  - 9) Disturbances/trespasses where the offender cannot be located, and the victim does not desire prosecution.
- d. Reporting employees are responsible for ensuring that accurate and thorough information is contained in each of the CAD Event Reports upon clearing/completing their call with the appropriate disposition.
- e. Incident Reports may be completed instead of CAD Event Reports at the discretion of the reporting employee or upon direction from a supervisor.

#### **602.5.2: INCIDENT REPORTS**

- a. The purpose of the Incident Report is to thoroughly record an event in which action is taken by a department member or necessary information needs to be documented or entered into RMS.
- b. Reporting employees must complete all necessary report modules, ensure that appropriate documents are attached, and submit them to the appropriate supervisor for review and approval.
- c. Procedures for completing various types of incident reports (i.e., Law Incident Reports, Arrest Reports, Supplemental Reports, Traffic Crash Reports, etc.) are in the [Report Writing Guide](#).

#### **602.5.3: OUTSIDE AGENCY ASSISTANCE**

- a. With approval of a supervisor, Albany Police Department employees may complete a report for an outside agency when the reporting person is within the Albany Police Department jurisdiction and is unable to complete a report with the appropriate outside agency.
- b. In these instances, the reporting employee shall request that the Records Section route a copy of the completed report to the agency with jurisdiction as soon as practical.

**602.5.4: REPORTS BY PHONE, MAIL, OR INTERNET**

In the following circumstances criminal incident reports may be taken by internet, telephone, or mail:

- a. Property crimes with:
  - 1) Lack of suspect information;
  - 2) No physical evidence;
  - 3) Or at the direction of the employee's supervisor.
- b. Person crimes, at the direction of the Watch Commander or designee.

**602.5.5: INVESTIGATIONS WORKING FILES**

- a. Investigator working case files will be purged upon the completion of case investigation. Once a case is fully investigated and a final disposition is made by the assigned investigator, the supplemental reports will be approved by the Detective Sergeant and forwarded to the Records Unit for permanent filing.
- b. Copies of some major case files are stored in binders in the Investigations Unit for quick reference of investigating major crimes.

**602.6: CANCELLED REPORTS**

When a report is cancelled, the officer shall write a brief narrative explaining the reason for cancellation.

**602.7: PENDING REPORTS**

- a. If any employee is unable to complete assigned reports prior to the end of their work shift cycle (prior to any regularly scheduled day off), the employee shall complete the preliminary information from the report (i.e. "LW" or "LS"), complete any appropriate attachments (e.g., Missing Person form, Death Investigation form), and provide a summary of the incident in the original CAD narrative.
- b. In the narrative section of the Incident Report, the employee shall indicate that a report is pending by typing, "Shell report narrative to follow."
- c. Pending reports will be left in "Open/Active" status in RMS.
- d. If an employee is scheduled for a day off on the day immediately following their shift, reports may only be placed in pending status with the approval of a supervisor.

**602.7.1: EXCEPTIONS TO PENDING REPORTS**

- a. Except in unusual circumstances, the following types of reports shall be completed by the end of the employee's work shift cycle (prior to any regularly scheduled day off) and shall not be left in pending status:
- 1) Any incident in which the suspect is still lodged (adult or juvenile);
  - 2) Any felony person crime which requires non-patrol follow-up investigation;
  - 3) Child abuse cases;
  - 4) Elder abuse cases;
  - 5) Sex crimes;
  - 6) Suspicious or accidental deaths;
  - 7) UUMV cases requiring LEDS entry;
  - 8) Missing person cases requiring LEDS entry;
  - 9) Any report which may generate unusual or increased public attention.
- b. Supervisor approval is required to allow any of these reports to be placed in pending status.

**602.8: SUPERVISOR REVIEW**

- a. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that reports completed by their subordinate employees are reviewed in a timely manner for accuracy and content.
- 1) CAD Event Reports – Supervisors will review all CAD Event Reports of their subordinate employees to ensure that activity is appropriately documented, and any issues are promptly addressed.
  - 2) Incident Reports – Supervisors will review all Incident Reports submitted by their subordinate employees to ensure accuracy and thoroughness and will reject reports which need correction or revision.
- b. Supervisors will forward reports appropriately and will assign open cases in RMS Case Management for their subordinate employees.

**602.9: REPORT CORRECTIONS**

- a. If a correction to a report is necessary, the report should be sent back to the authoring employee for correction as soon as practical.
- b. It shall be the responsibility of the originating member to ensure that any report returned for correction is processed in a timely manner.

**602.10: REPORT CHANGES OR ALTERATIONS**

- a. Report narratives that have been approved by a supervisor and submitted to the Records Section for filing and distribution shall not be modified or altered except by way of a supplemental report.

- b. Reviewed reports that have not yet been submitted to the Records Section may be corrected or modified by the supervisor or authoring employee only with the knowledge and authorization of the reviewing supervisor.

#### **602.11: RECORDS SECTION RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Records Section is responsible for routing reports as directed, entering reports into Laserfiche, completing the "Records Section Review" portion of the RMS report, and ensuring records are appropriately retained in accordance with the established record retention maintenance schedule.

#### **602.12: NOTES**

- a. Employees should be sure to take sufficient notes during investigations and other activities to ensure that sufficient information is available for the briefing of other employees, as necessary, and the completion of appropriate reports.
- b. Employees' police notebooks should be used for professional notes only. Personal notes should not be made in the police notebook.

#### **602.13: REPORT WRITING MANUAL**

- a. The Albany Police Department Report Writing Guide shall be made available to all employees as a reference for the completion of various reports.
- b. The Administrative Lieutenant is responsible for ensuring that the Report Writing Guide reflects current practices and is updated as necessary.