


<p><b>Billerica Police Department</b></p> 	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> ADM-20	<b>PAGES</b> 7	<b>EFFECTIVE</b> 3/27/16
	<p><b>Accreditation Standards:</b> 82.1.4, 82.2.1, 82.2.2, 82.2.3, 82.3.2</p> <p><b>General Orders:</b></p>		
<b>Incident Reporting</b>			

## I. General Considerations and Guidelines

One major function of criminal justice agencies is documentation. Police agencies have become very effective at documenting incidents and events. The demand for documentation by the legislature, courts and citizens continues to increase.

In order to provide organization to the origin, filing and retrieval of documentation, this department has obtained a computerized records management system which assigns a unique identification number to incidents and events logged by the communications staff. This numbering system allows for the orderly filing and quick retrieval, both electronically and manually, of reports and other documents and items associated with those reports.

Additionally, our crime statistics are shared with the state and federal governments through National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Crime statistics are compiled, along with statistics from other criminal justice agencies, to produce reports of crime trends and other useful statistics. The data is published by the state and federal governments.

## II. Policy

It is the policy of the Billerica Police Department that:

1. Reports of incidents shall be documented pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, and;
2. Employees shall file reports to document incidents, events and activities as directed by this policy.

## III. Definitions

- A. Incident: An event that requires law enforcement action, documentation, or dispatching of agency personnel in response to citizens' requests for law enforcement services. This includes any incident, whether criminal or non-criminal, which involves a response to the scene, an investigation or the preparation of an oral or written report.
- B. NIBRS: National Incident Based Reporting System– an electronic submission of crime statistics, which was formerly known as Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).
- C. ARMS: Automated Records Management System – this department's records management software.

## IV. Procedures

### A. Case Management Numbering System – Police Reports **[82.2.3]**

1. This department maintains a computer-generated case numbering system. A unique case number is generated and assigned to document calls for service, initiated activity, directed activity, administrative functions, and other police activities.

2. The numbering system is as follows:

Each case is assigned a number formatted **YY-0000** Beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup> of every year the assigned number will be reset to one (1) and will increment by one (1).

3. The case number is the foundation for all police record keeping activity. The case number is linked to arrests, citations, court, property and evidence, accidents, and other records functions within the records management system.

#### B. Assigning Incident Numbers – Dispatch Log Entries

1. Incident logging is a function of communications (Dispatch). Communications personnel will create incident entries in response to police operations or administrative activity. For more information, see the department policy on **Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)**.

2. The numbering system is as follows:

Each incident is assigned a number formatted **YY-MM-DD-000000** Beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup> of every year the assigned number will be reset to one (1) and will increment by one (1).

3. Incident log records shall be created for the following types of situations:

- a. Citizen Initiated:

- 1) Citizen Reports of Crimes **[82.2.2(a)]**
- 2) Citizen Complaints **[82.2.2(b)]**
- 3) Calls for service where a public safety employee is dispatched or assigned **[82.2.2(c)]**

- b. Employee Initiated:

- 1) Criminal and non-criminal cases initiated by law enforcement employees **[82.2.2(d)]**
- 2) Incidents involving Arrests, Citations, and Summonses **[82.2.2(e)]**

- c. Directed:

- 1) Process Service (i.e., arrest warrants, restraining orders, etc.)
- 2) Notifications
- 3) Prisoner Transports

- d. Administrative:

- 1) Fingerprinting
- 2) Asset forfeitures
- 3) Equipment failures or damage

- e. Other incidents where documentation is prudent, requested by an employee, or directed by a supervisor.

4. In logging incidents, the incident entry shall include, at the minimum, the information listed as follows. For more information on logging incidents, see the department policy on **Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)**.

- a. Service calls and crimes by type **[82.3.2(a)]**

b. Service calls and crimes by location **[82.3.2(b)]**

C. Written Reports

1. Reports: Some incidents require written reports because, by their nature, they need to be documented, or a report for an incident may be required by statute. In some cases, providing written documentation is just a good public service. Police employees of this agency shall prepare a written incident report for all incidents of: **[82.2.1(a)]**
  - a. Arrests;
  - b. Motor vehicle crash where damage to any one vehicle exceeds \$1000 or if there is injury to any person or property damage (RMV Crash Report); when crash involves a town vehicle (incident report along with RMV Crash Report).
  - c. Crimes;
  - d. Whenever an officer orders a vehicle towed;
  - e. Any incident that results in the search of a vehicle or building;
  - f. Incidents where, in the opinion of the officer, a written report is necessary; and
  - g. Statutorily Required Reports:
    - 1) Domestic Violence;<sup>1</sup>
    - 2) Identity Theft;<sup>2</sup>
    - 3) Child Abuse and Neglect, <sup>3</sup> and;
    - 4) Elder Abuse and Neglect.<sup>4</sup>
2. Reporting Forms: Employees have the following reporting forms at their disposal to facilitate incident reporting: **[82.2.1(b)]**
  - a. Department Incident Reporting Form
    - 1) This department uses a computerized system to guide officers in the generation of incident reports, i.e. property and evidence modules, location data, master name module etc. These modules can assist employees with preparing written incident reports as well as incident screening for investigative follow-up.
  - b. Department Incident victim/witness statement form:
    - 1) This form should be used when necessary to supplement the officer's Incident report.
  - c. Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) Motor Vehicle Crash Report Form
    - 1) This form is designed, printed, and distributed by the RMV (i.e., MACCS).
    - 2) This form should be completed for all motor vehicle crash investigations that meet the criteria set forth by MA General Law.
  - d. Environmental Police Boating and Recreational Vehicle Accident Form: This form is provided by the Environmental Police for reporting investigations of all crashes involving boats and recreational vehicles.
  - e. Officers have at their ready several department forms that must be used, tow forms, missing persons forms, stolen vehicle forms etc... Other forms are available and can help officers obtain essential information at the scene; officers

are encouraged to use these forms. All forms are accessible from the department's intranet website.

3. Required Information: All reports require basic information, not only to document the "who, what, where, when and why" of an incident, but also to facilitate retrieving the record. Required information should be included in the report whenever possible:  
**[82.2.1(c)]**
  - a. Date
  - b. Time
  - c. Complainant, victims, witnesses:
    - 1) Names
    - 2) Addresses
    - 3) Age, gender, and race (required for NIBRS reporting)
    - 4) Home and work telephone numbers
  - d. Location of the incident
  - e. Property, including stolen, found, recovered, and evidence **[82.3.2(c)]**
  - f. A description of what happened
  - g. Reporting employee's observations
4. Report Writing: The following are some general guidelines that employees should follow when writing the report narrative to avoid confusion on the part of the reader:
  - a. Reports should be written in the first person ("I," "me").
  - b. Write in chronological order.
  - c. Start with date, time and explanation of how you became involved.
  - d. Use active voice, which shows the subject as the actor. (i.e., "*Officer Smith arrested the subject,*" as opposed to "*The subject was arrested by Officer Smith.*").
  - e. Use past tense for incidents or actions that have already occurred.
  - f. Use short, clear, concise words.
  - g. Use first and last names to ensure that the report positively identifies the correct person.
  - h. Use words that have clear meaning and leave little chance of being misinterpreted.
  - i. Check for spelling.
  - j. Minimize the use of abbreviations.
  - k. Use proper names and titles.
  - l. **Do not** use radio call signs and police jargon.
  - m. Make sure quotes are correct and accurate.
  - n. Employees should not include opinions.

- o. Supplemental reports by employees to a primary employee's report should not repeat the whole sequence of events. The writer should report his/her actions and observations.
5. Completing Reports: Ideally, an incident report should be completed immediately following the incident when the details are fresh in the employee's mind. This, however, is not always practical. **[82.2.1(d)]**
- a. Generally: Employees should make an effort to complete the report prior to the end of the shift, but, in all cases, a report must be submitted prior to the end of the employee's work week, or within four days. If a complete report is not possible due to an investigation, a preliminary report should be submitted within these time parameters and a supplemental addendum added as the investigation progresses.
  - b. Arrests: An arrest report (which includes the statement of facts) must accompany the charging instrument (application for complaint or criminal citation) and is required at arraignment. Arrest reports should be completed following an arrest, but must be completed prior to arraignment.
  - c. Criminal Complaint, Application for Summons or Clerk Magistrate Hearing, and Citations: A police report (which includes the statement of facts) and must accompany these charging instruments to court.
6. Submitting, Processing and Supervisory Review **[82.2.1(E)]**
- a. Reporting Employee
    - 1) Upon completing a report, the employee must submit the report to his/her shift supervisor. If time does not permit the employee's supervisor to review the report (a late arrest, end of shift, supervisor vacation, sickness, etc.), the report should be submitted to another supervisor.
    - 2) A report returned (kicked back) by a supervisor shall be reviewed and corrected by the employee, and resubmitted.
    - 3) If an employee disagrees with a supervisor's suggested corrections, the employee should meet with the supervisor and discuss the points at issue.
    - 4) If the matter is not resolved, it should be brought to the attention of the next step in the chain of command.
  - b. Supervisor
    - 1) A supervisor need not submit his/her own reports to another supervisor for review. However, any supervisor's report may, at the discretion of that supervisor or upon the direction of a superior, be reviewed by another supervisor.
    - 2) A supervisor shall review the employee's report. The supervisor should review the report for:
      - a) Spelling and grammar;
      - b) Required information;
      - c) Crime elements, defendant and victim rights, proper department procedure; and
      - d) Readability.

- 3) A supervisor may not change the factual content of another employee's report.
  - 4) If the report is acceptable as submitted, the report shall be forwarded to the Patrol Commander for Final Approval.
  - 5) Errors, omissions, or other issues detected should be brought to the employee's attention to correct or address. When the issues have been addressed, the report shall be resubmitted for review by a supervisor.
  - 6) If a supervisor is on leave (sick, vacation, injured, etc.) for a work cycle or more, another supervisor will be charged with reviewing the report.
- c. Records Function: Upon completion of the review process, the completed report shall be forwarded to the records function for filing and processing. For further information, see the department policy **Records Management**.
- D. National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) [82.1.4]
1. Collecting Criminal Data: NIBRS data is inputted in the incident reporting process. For each incident, NIBRS data will be inputted by the reporting Officer based on the crime type(s) specified during the incident. A NIBRS data review will be completed by the Technical Services Officer after initial supervisory review.
  2. Submitting NIBRS Data: The Technical Services Officer shall process NIBRS data as requested by the Massachusetts Crime Reporting Unit using the NIBRS data export software in the ARS software. The NIBRS data shall be uploaded to the Massachusetts Crime Reporting Unit Web Site <https://masscrime.chs.state.ma.us>.
  3. Quality Control
    - a. During the reporting process all personnel should ensure that the proper system codes are added to the report.
    - b. Prior to exporting data from ARMS the Technical Services Officer shall run the "NIBRS Code Comparison" report in ARMS to ensure that no NIBRS reviews were missed during the month to be exported.
    - c. The NIBRS export software will check each entry for errors and establish a NIBRS error log. The Technical Services Officer shall correct the errors listed on the error log prior to uploading the data to the Massachusetts Crime Reporting Unit.
    - d. NIBRS data errors identified by the Massachusetts Crime Reporting Unit are posted on their website <https://masscrime.chs.state.ma.us>. They are obtainable by clicking on the "Data status" tab after logging in. The Technical Services Officer shall check this website for errors each month and make the necessary corrections in ARMS and resubmit the data until the error(s) are resolved. The corrected entries will be re-submitted during the next NIBRS submission.
    - e. At the end of the calendar year the Technical Serviced Officer shall ensure that all NIBRS data is submitted and completed by the time specified by the Massachusetts Crime Reporting Unit and the FBI. Failure to comply will result in Billerica's crime data not being published by the FBI for that year.
  4. Accessing Crime Statistics Reports
    - a. A compilation of state NIBRS reports is available at the Massachusetts Crime Reporting Unit <https://masscrime.chs.state.ma.us/LEA>

- b. National crime statistics are published by the FBI as “Crime in the USA,” and in other publications available on the FBI web site <http://www.fbi.gov> and <http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/>

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<sup>1</sup> M.G.L. c. 209A, § 6.

<sup>2</sup> M.G.L. c. 266, §37E.

<sup>3</sup> M.G.L. c. 119, §51A.

<sup>4</sup> M.G.L. c. 19A, §15(a).