INDIANA STATE POLICE	***STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE*** State Form 39870(R/ S- 06)	Reference Number INV-025
	Subject Cold Case Investigations	
	Special Instructions Replaces INV-025 dated April 4, 2024	Effective Date **October 24, 2025**

I. PURPOSE

Establish criteria for selection of cold cases for further investigation.

II. POLICY

Unresolved homicides (cold cases) shall meet specified criteria and receive Special Investigations Section Commander approval before being reopened.

III. DEFINITION

A. COLD CASE - any case whose probative investigative leads have been exhausted.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. The careful selection of an unresolved homicide case is paramount in successfully resolving the case. Solvability factors shall be considered before the case is selected.

B. The investigation of an unresolved homicide may be considered for a cold case investigation when the definition has been met. When the definition has been met other factors should also be considered including, but not limited to:

1. Known cause of death – With a thorough, well documented, and photographed autopsy;

2. Witnesses – May over a period of time, begin to relax their fear or loyalty to the perpetrator and if located, be willing to cooperate; however; if all of the witnesses have died or cannot be found, the chances for a successful conclusion will be diminished;

3. Suspects – Who are known, had motive or evidence linking them to a homicide are an additional factor that increases the probabilities for successful conclusion;

4. Informants –In the investigation of cold cases, informants are invaluable. Friends, family, co-workers, acquaintances, etc. may over time become a valuable resource in presenting or obtaining evidence either physical or verbal. The handling and use of informants shall be conducted within the guidelines set forth in INV-011.

5. Evidence – The amount and type of evidence is extremely important in the probability of resolution of a cold case. The proper collection and storage of evidence is essential; without which the potential for successful conclusion will be limited;

6. Forensic technologies –If the collection and storage of evidence has been done properly, the use of technology, not available when a homicide occurred, may greatly increase the chances of a

successful resolution of the case.

C. Case selection process

1. Priority may be given to cases contained in the files of the Indiana State Police, however, consideration shall be given to homicide cases from other law enforcement agencies; if asked to do so and the case meets the selection criteria.

2. Appropriate cold case team detectives shall review the case files for cases with solvability factors. This selection and review shall be accomplished under the direction and supervision of cold case commanders.

3. During the selection process, consultation with laboratory and evidence personnel is extremely important. The physical evidence is a very important solvability factor. The team must be sure the evidence collected, at the time of the homicide, has been properly stored; the chain of custody is still intact; and, in cases where there is trace evidence, there is enough for modern laboratory techniques to be utilized.

4. Case selection requires the approval of the Special Investigations Section Commander .

D. This procedure is to be used in conjunction with all relevant Department regulations, rules, policies, and procedures.