



## Newport News Police Department - Operational Manual

### OPS-420 - FIELD INTERVIEWS

Amends/Supersedes: OPS-420 (08/28/2019)

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#### I. GENERAL


- A. Officers will conduct a field interview when there is reason to believe a person is about to or has committed a crime or when a crime has occurred, and the person may have information of value to the investigation.
- B. The field interview shall be based on the person's actions, presence near the crime scene, or any other suspicious circumstances supporting the officer's inquiry.
- C. When conducting a field interview, officers will adhere to all applicable constitutional requirements relating to effecting the stop, detaining persons, and conducting interviews (see [OPS-403 Constitutional Requirements & Judicial Guidelines for Investigations](#)). [1.2.3(a)]

#### II. PROCEDURE

- A. Field interviews shall be conducted professionally, following these principles:
  - 1. Persons being field interviewed shall be detained for a limited time. The reason for the field interview should be to:
    - a. Obtain the person's identification;
    - b. Verify the identification;
    - c. Request cooperation in the investigation of a crime;
    - d. Verify any account of their presence at the location stopped and other information they provide.
    - e. The person shall be addressed politely and informed of the reason for stopping.
    - f. When conducting field interviews, officers shall:
      - g. Enter the information into the field interview module in the Records Management System (RMS), recording the circumstances and the persons stopped;
      - h. Intelligence information will be handled as set out in [OPS-468 Intelligence Operations](#).
- B. This policy does not prohibit any Department member from requesting information from any person about criminal activity or other police-related matters while on duty.
- C. Officers will complete a field interview on calls for service and officer-initiated contact with the public where the officer feels the contact information may be of assistance later (e.g., trespassing, larcenies, burglaries).
- D. Field Interview Documentation Requirements
  - 1. Suspect Documentation

When an officer is involved in the follow-up investigation of a criminal offense and a suspect is identified, every effort shall be made to obtain probable cause and charge the suspect with the offense. However, if the officer's investigation fails to eliminate the suspect and the case is to be inactivated or closed by other means, the officer will identify the suspect, type of offense, relevant case number, and all elements of the suspect's method of operation during the commission of that offense in one of the following methods:

- a. If the officer conducting the following up is doing so as the lead investigator, they will document this information in an Incident-Based Report (IBR), either the initial report or a supplemental report.
  - b. If the officer conducting the follow-up is not the lead investigator, they will document the information in the field interview module, linking the contact with the corresponding IBR number.
  - c. If the officer conducting the follow-up is doing so at the direction of the case agent (i.e., canvassing), they will document the information as directed by the case agent, who may require the information to be submitted in a To/From Letter.
2. Juveniles and Truancy
- a. Officers shall try to locate and identify juveniles who do not have an excused absence from school. These students should be handled as set out in [OPS-435 Handling of Juveniles](#) completing the applicable JVR areas of the IBR for truancy.
  - b. Officers may also come in contact with juveniles who have an excused absence (such as students suspended for disciplinary reasons). If an IBR is not completed in the RMS, Officers should complete a field interview with all pertinent information and action taken.
3. Alias Information
- a. The word alias refers to a name a person is “also known as” or “aka.” An alias can be similar to an individual’s given name or completely different.
  - b. When an officer learns of an alias, the information will be recorded in the field interview module, along with the person’s given name and any additional information available.
4. Contacts with Persons on Probation/Parole
- a. A person on probation or parole has been granted a legal status that allows them to complete a sentence to incarceration in the community subject to certain conditions and supervision. If these conditions are violated, a person’s parole could be revoked.
  - b. Various situations will occur of which parole officers should be made aware. When documenting a field interview with a person the officer knows is under the supervision of Probation & Parole, the officer will document this in the reason for contact section. If the officer suspects a violation of the person’s condition of release, the officer should notify Probation & Parole that they conducted a field interview.
5. Reports of Criminal Activity
- a. Occasionally, officers receive information concerning suspicious or criminal activity from a person (other than a police informant) who they consider reliable (such as a neighbor, friend, or relative). While not enough information to substantiate completing an IBR or obtaining a warrant, it could be valuable when viewed with other information that becomes available later. Officers should record such information in the field interview module. [82.2.2]
- NOTE: Officers should make an effort to identify associated incidents in RMS and link the field interview to the incident number.
- b. Information received from informants should be processed per [OPS-465 Informants](#).

  
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Chief of Police