

# Report Preparation

## 323.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Report preparation is a major part of each officer's job. The purpose of reports is to document sufficient information to refresh the officer's memory and to provide sufficient information for follow-up investigation and successful prosecution. Report writing is the subject of substantial formalized training and on-the-job training.

### 323.1.1 REPORT PREPARATION

Employees should ensure that reports are sufficiently detailed for their purpose and free from errors prior to submission. It is the responsibility of the assigned employee to complete and submit all reports taken during the shift before going off-duty unless permission to hold the report has been approved by a supervisor. Generally, reports requiring prompt follow-up action on active leads, or arrest reports where the suspect remains in custody should not be held.

Handwritten reports must be prepared legibly. If the report is not legible, the submitting employee will be required by the reviewing supervisor to promptly make corrections and resubmit the report. Employees who dictate reports shall use appropriate grammar, as content is not the responsibility of the typist. Employees who generate reports on computers are subject to all requirements of this policy.

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. 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. Generally, the reporting employee's opinions should not be included in reports unless specifically identified as such.

## 323.2 REQUIRED REPORTING

Written reports are required in all of the following situations on the appropriate Department approved form unless otherwise approved by a supervisor.

### 323.2.1 CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

When a member responds to a call for service, or as a result 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 a written report includes:

- (a) All arrests
- (b) All felony crimes
- (c) Non-Felony incidents involving threats or stalking behavior
- (d) Situations covered by separate policy. These include:
  - (a) Use of Force Policy

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- (b) Domestic Violence Policy
- (c) Child Abuse Policy
- (d) Senior and Disability Victimization Policy
- (e) Hate Crimes Policy
- (f) Suspicious Activity Reporting Policy
- (e) All misdemeanor crimes where the victim desires a report

Misdemeanor crimes where the victim does not desire a report shall be documented using the Department-approved alternative reporting method (e.g., completion of a Field Interview Card, broadcasted over the police radio, or updated via the Call for Service "comments" section).

#### 323.2.2 NON-CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

The following incidents shall be documented using the appropriate approved report:

- (a) Any use of force against any person by a member of this department (see the Use of Force Policy)
- (b) Any firearm discharge (see the Firearms Policy)
- (c) Anytime a person is reported missing, regardless of jurisdiction (see the Missing Persons Policy)
- (d) Any found property or found evidence
- (e) Any traffic collisions above the minimum reporting level (see Traffic Collision Reporting Policy)
- (f) Suspicious incidents that may indicate a potential for crimes against children or that a child's safety is in jeopardy
- (g) All protective custody detentions
- (h) Suspicious incidents that may place the public or others at risk
- (i) Whenever the employee believes the circumstances should be documented or at the direction of a supervisor

#### 323.2.3 DEATH CASES

Death investigations require specific investigation methods depending on circumstances and should be handled in accordance with the Death Investigations Policy. The handling officer shall notify and apprise a supervisor of the circumstances surrounding the incident to determine how to proceed. The following cases shall be appropriately investigated and documented using the approved report:

- (a) Sudden or accidental deaths.
- (b) Suicides.
- (c) Homicide or suspected homicide.

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- (d) Unattended deaths (No physician or qualified hospice care in the 20 days preceding death).
- (e) Found dead bodies or body parts.

#### 323.2.4 INJURY OR DAMAGE BY CITY PERSONNEL

Reports shall be taken if an injury occurs that is a result of an act of a City employee. Additionally, reports shall be taken involving damage to City property or City equipment.

#### 323.2.5 MISCELLANEOUS INJURIES

Any injury that is reported to this Department shall require a report when:

- (a) The injury is a result of drug overdose
- (b) Attempted suicide
- (c) The injury is major/serious, whereas death could result
- (d) 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.

#### 323.2.6 MANDATORY REPORTING OF JUVENILE GUNSHOT INJURIES

A report shall be taken when any incident in which a child 18 years or younger suffered an unintentional or self-inflicted gunshot wound. The Records Unit shall notify the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) of the incident as required by CDPH (Penal Code § 23685).

#### 323.2.7 ALTERNATE REPORTING FOR VICTIMS

Reports that may be submitted by the public via online or other self-completed reporting processes include:

- (a) Graffiti (spray painting, writing or drawing on a building, wall, fence, etc.)
  - (a) All other vandalism (defaced or damaged property, such as a vehicle tire being slashed, etc.)
- (b) Lost property (property that is missing, such as an item being left behind in a restaurant or an item falling out of a pocket / purse)
- (c) Theft of a bicycle, with the value of the bicycle being below \$950 and it not having been taken from a garage or carport

In addition, online reporting may only be accepted under the following conditions:

- (a) The suspect was not seen or cannot be described
- (b) There is no physical evidence to be examined or collected, such as fingerprints or DNA

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- (c) The incident occurred within the city limits of Santa Monica

Members at the scene of one of the above incidents should not refer the reporting party to an alternate means of reporting without authorization from a supervisor. Members may refer victims to online victim assistance programs (e.g., Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website for identity theft, Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) website for computer crimes).

#### 323.2.8 STOLEN VEHICLE REPORTS

#### **323.3 GENERAL POLICY OF EXPEDITIOUS REPORTING**

In general, all officers and supervisors shall act with promptness and efficiency in the preparation and processing of all reports. An incomplete report, unorganized reports or reports delayed without supervisory approval are not acceptable. Reports shall be processed according to established priorities or according to special priority necessary under exceptional circumstances.

##### 323.3.1 GENERAL POLICY OF HANDWRITTEN REPORTS

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.

Supervisors may require, with the foregoing general policy in mind, block printing or typing of reports of any nature for Departmental consistency.

##### 323.3.2 GENERAL USE OF OTHER HANDWRITTEN FORMS

County, state and federal agency forms may be block printed as appropriate. In general, the form itself may make the requirement for typing apparent.

#### **323.4 REPORT CORRECTIONS**

Supervisors shall review reports for content and accuracy. If a correction is necessary, the reviewing supervisor should complete the Report Correction form stating the reasons for rejection. The original report and the correction form should be returned to the reporting employee for correction as soon as practical. It shall be the responsibility of the originating officer to ensure that any report returned for correction is processed in a timely manner.

#### **323.5 REPORT CHANGES OR ALTERATIONS**

Reports that have been approved by a supervisor and submitted to the Records Unit for filing and distribution shall not be modified or altered except by way of a supplemental report. Reviewed reports that have not yet been submitted to the Records Unit may be corrected or modified by the authoring officer only with the knowledge and authorization of the reviewing supervisor.

#### **323.6 ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES**

The Santa Monica Police Department has established an electronic online report writing system requiring an electronic signature procedure for use by all employees of the Santa Monica Police Department. The Technology Administrator shall be responsible for maintaining the electronic

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report writing system and ensuring that each employee creates a unique, confidential password for his/her electronic signature.

- Employees may only use their electronic signature for official reports or other official communications.
- Each employee shall be responsible for the security and use of his/her electronic signature and shall promptly notify a supervisor if the electronic signature has or may have been compromised or misused.
- Employees shall not share access to Department systems nor shall they share their passwords with any other member.