

# Seattle Police Department Manual

## 15.180 – Primary Investigations

Effective Date: 04/01/2015

### 15.180-POL

This policy applies to primary investigations. A primary investigation begins when police action is initiated and is critical to the success of any subsequent investigative efforts. The scope of a primary investigation may be very restricted or may constitute the entire investigation of a crime.

- See [15.080 – Follow-Up Unit Notification & Follow-Up Investigation](#) for information on requesting that a follow-up unit respond to a scene.
- See [14.060 – Serious Incident Plan](#) for information on responses to serious incidents.
- See [6.220 – Voluntary Contacts and Terry Stops](#) for information on non-probable cause investigative contacts.

#### 1. Officers Shall Conduct a Thorough and Complete Search for Evidence

All sworn personnel are responsible for knowing how to collect the most common physical evidence that might be encountered on a primary investigation. This includes latent fingerprints.

Only evidence that is impractical to collect or submit to the Evidence Unit shall be retained by the owner.

- Officers shall photograph all evidence that is retained by the owner (See [7.090 – Photographic Evidence](#)).

(See [7.010 – Submitting Evidence](#))

#### 2. Sergeants Are Responsible for the Proper Utilization of Evidence Technicians

Circumstances when sergeants might call an evidence technician include:

- A section of wallboard with a handprint needs to be removed

# Seattle Police Manual

- A section of carpet with a bloodstained footprint needs to be removed
- A toolmark impression needs to be lifted from a surface that cannot be removed
- Photographs of a scene need to be taken
  - The extent of processing required is significantly more than a single officer can handle effectively

Evidence technicians may be utilized on an initial response, pending the deployment of a follow-up unit, to assist in identifying and locating evidence, and to assist in collecting evidence that might be destroyed or lost before the follow-up unit arrives.

Officers maintain primary responsibility for their assigned calls, regardless of the presence of an evidence technician.

### **3. Officers Shall Take Statements in Certain Circumstances**

- Officers shall take victim statements in all domestic violence investigations.
  - Witness statements are mandatory in all domestic violence felony investigations.
- Officers shall take statements from victims, witnesses, and complainants in all juvenile arrest investigations.
- Officers shall take statements from victims, witnesses, and complainants in all felony arrest investigations.
- Officers are encouraged to take statements in other investigations, as they deem necessary.
  - It is particularly important to get statements from victims and witnesses who do not have a local, permanent address.

Officers shall document incidents of people refusing to give statements in the Report.

(See [15.370 – Sexual Assault Investigations](#) for interviews of sexual assault victims)

### **4. Officers May Use Canvass Cards at Major Incident Scenes**

# Seattle Police Manual

Officers may use Canvass Cards (form 16.9) to collect witness information at the scene of a major incident. Canvass Cards shall be submitted to the unit that is investigating the incident.

## **5. Officers Shall Document all Primary Investigations on a Report**

If a Report Number already exists and there are no new charges, officers shall use the existing number. If there are new charges, officers shall obtain a new number.

Officers shall indicate whether the primary offense is a felony or a misdemeanor by entering an "F" or "M" in the appropriate field. If the primary offense is non-criminal, officers shall leave that field blank.

All reports must be complete, thorough, and accurate.

Officers shall document whether victims of non-custody incidents want to pursue charges, as feasible.

(See [15.020 – Charge-By-Officer](#))

## **6. Officers Shall Document Permanent Addresses and Telephone Numbers for Suspects, Complainants, Victims and Witnesses in the Entities Section of the Report**

If a person is temporarily staying at a local address, officers shall list the temporary address in the narrative.

If a person provides more than one address, officers shall list the additional address(es) in the narrative.

Officers shall identify military personnel by their unit number and the name of their ship, station, or installation.

If a person does not have an address, officers shall state in the narrative that the person is transient.

- A last-known address is required for a case to be submitted for prosecution.

## **7. Officers Shall Not Book Suspects on Both Misdemeanor and Felony Charges**

(See [11.040 – Booking Adult Detainees into a Detention Facility](#))

# Seattle Police Manual

## **8. For any In-Custody Case, Officers Shall State the Crime(s) for Which the Suspect is Being Booked in the Report Narrative**

Officers shall include the SMC or RCW violation code(s).

When booking a suspect for one or more felonies, officers shall use the terminology "Investigation of \_\_\_\_\_."

## **9. Involved Officers Shall Complete Statements for Felony Arrests**

## **10. All Primary Investigations Require a MIR and Disposition**

## **11. Officers Shall Document Information Obtained After the Report has Been Submitted Using the Same Report Number**

## **12. All Officers Involved in an Investigation Shall Cooperate in any Subsequent Prosecutions or Official Inquiries Where Their Testimony May Be Needed**