



Seattle Police Department Policy Manual



6.130 – Informant Management

Effective Date: 03/20/2013

6.130-POL

This policy applies when utilizing confidential informants for investigative or intelligence purposes.

Confidential Informant (CI) - A person who provides information or services to the Department in return for money or other benefit including consideration from a prosecutor, court or other governmental agency. A CI may take part in an investigation or prosecution without benefit if the intention is to keep their identity confidential throughout.

1. Only Authorized Personnel Shall Utilize CIs

The only units authorized to use CIs are:

- Human Trafficking Unit
- Major Crimes Task Force
- Narcotics
- Gun Violence Reduction Team
- Investigation Support Unit

The Assistant Chief of the Investigations Bureau may approve exceptions to this policy.

2. Officers Shall Receive Training Prior to Using CIs

The sergeant of the officer's unit shall provide them training on use of CIs.

3. Detectives Shall Follow the Procedures for Use of CIs

The Confidential Informant Guidelines shall contain all training materials and reference information on the use of CIs. These guidelines shall be kept updated by the Investigative Bureau and shall be available for authorized personnel through the Compliance Section.

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Any deviation to procedures outlined in the Confidential Informant Guidelines must be approved by the authorized detective's lieutenant or above.

4. Detective Sergeants Shall Screen all Potential CIs Prior to Their Use

A unit sergeant must approve the use of a CI prior to their investigative use. The approval shall include an in-person meeting between the CI and the sergeant prior to approval.

Additionally, CIs under DOC supervision or any other court-restricted status require approval from the overseeing agency. Approval documentation must be placed in the CI's file.

5. Unit Sergeants Shall Verify the Completion of all CI File Paperwork

The sergeant of each authorized investigative unit shall review and approve all CI files prior to use of the CI.

- A unit sergeant may approve use of a CI prior to completion of their file if they can articulate risk to the investigation caused by delay. This shall be documented in a memorandum and placed into the CI's file as soon as practical.

6. Department Employees Shall Keep the Identity of CIs Confidential

7. Detectives Shall Not Utilize Persons Under 16 Years of Age as CIs

8. Detectives Shall Obtain Approval to Utilize Persons 16 or 17 Years of Age as CIs

The detective shall obtain approval from the Assistant Chief of the investigations bureau prior to use of these persons as CIs.

9. Certain Activities Shall Be Restricted Between Department Employees and CIs

Detectives shall only meet or deliver payment to CIs with another law enforcement officer present.

Exception: The detective's sergeant may pre-approve a solo meeting.

Department employees shall not condone or encourage CIs to engage in unlawful activity.

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Department employees shall not knowingly maintain social relationships or otherwise become personally involved with CIs without pre-approval by the Chief of Police.

Department employees shall not buy, sell, receive, or transfer for personal gain, anything of value to or from a person the employee knows to be a CI.

- This rule does not apply to a legitimate, routine retail or wholesale purchase from a licensed business that a CI is employed by or owns.

10. Detectives Shall Not Offer Consideration to CIs Without Proper Approval

A detective shall not offer consideration to an informant who has been charged with a crime without the approval of Assistant Chief of the Investigations Bureau and the prosecuting attorney of the crime the CI was charged with.

Detectives shall contact their sergeant or a prosecuting attorney for review of any search or arrest warrant affidavits generated from CI-provided information prior to submission to the courts.

11. Investigative Units Shall Secure and Maintain Chain of Custody for all CI Files in Their Possession

Units shall secure CI files in a centralized location and restrict access to authorized personnel only.

- The unit shall maintain a log which will include entries for each time access is made into the CI file storage location

Detectives will create individual CI files and each detective involved in the use of a CI will be responsible for keeping an individual file on the CI current and complete.

12. The Investigative Unit May Purge Inactive CI Files

Prior to purging these files, a detective must verify:

- There has been no contact with the informant within five years and,
- They must receive approval from the Assistant Chief of the Investigations Bureau.

13. Detectives Shall Not Utilize Problem Informants Without Approval From the Unit Lieutenant

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Detectives shall refer to and follow the Confidential Informant Guidelines for policies and procedures related to problem informants.

14. The Office of the Assistant Chief of the Investigations Bureau Shall Maintain a Central File

The Assistant Chief's office shall maintain a centralized and secured record of all department CIs containing:

- Informant Name Cards (form 1.1.5) and unit catalogs
- Problem Informant Cards (form 1.1.7)
- Duplicate CI information

15. The Audit, Policy, & Research Section (Compliance Section) Shall Audit CI Files Twice Each Year

Each investigative unit shall be subject to an audit twice a year. Unit audits shall be at least 120 days apart.

16. The Department Shall Regulate Payments to CIs

CIs may receive cash payments for any of the following:

- Information
- Evidence
- Contraband
- Actual expenses incurred by the CI
- Introductions between detectives and other CIs

All CI payments require:

- Satisfactory completion of the CI's services/activities
- A completed Justification for Payment of Funds (form 1.1.6)
- An entry into the CI Activity Report
- Any other vouchers, receipts, or payment control reports or logs required by the detective's unit of assignment

17. Detectives Shall Obtain Approval to Share CI Information with Outside Agencies

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Detectives shall obtain permission from their unit lieutenant prior to sharing CI information with outside agencies.

- Detectives may only share information without approval if the information serves an immediate public safety emergency. The detective shall notify their Section Captain as soon as practical after sharing information in these circumstances. The detective shall document all shared information in a memorandum placed in the CI's file.