

21.00.080 INFORMANTS (CALEA 42.2.7)

The Department authorizes use of informants as part of the criminal intelligence gathering system, and to further criminal investigations.

Informant Development

An informant is an individual who wishes to remain anonymous, but through prior association with the Police Department has been established as a reliable source of information. Informants may be paid or unpaid for the information they provide. Informants are considered to be a departmental resource.

Use of Informants

Informants who are used as part of the Department's criminal intelligence gathering system will remain anonymous. Personal data will be released to potential handlers on a clearly defined "need to know" basis.

The Commander of the Special Operations Group (SOG) will coordinate use of informants by Patrol officers or Investigations Section Detectives for criminal investigations of any type. The informant file will be maintained at the SOG office and the SOG/Narcotics Unit supervisor will insure all security. Information stored within files initiated by Department employees will be in compliance with policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Department.

A separate file will be maintained for each informant containing the following:

- ❖ Full legal name and alias names
- ❖ DOB/sex/race/height/weight/hair and eye color/scars, marks, tattoos
- ❖ Residence and work addresses with phone numbers to each
- ❖ Subject's current occupation and past training
- ❖ A listing of each vehicle, including description, year, make, model, color, license and general condition
- ❖ A listing of all hangouts
- ❖ A listing of associates by name, address, DOB, and vehicle description
- ❖ A criminal history and M.O. information on the informant which includes:
 1. A rap sheet, criminal and traffic, should be attached
 2. A copy of an original fingerprint card should be included
- ❖ A current photo of subject
- ❖ Complete debriefing information that the C.I. provides will be in writing and investigated to determine the factual content and reliability, and whether an investigative case will be initiated

Additional information from an informant will be added to the C.I. file when it is received.

Informant files are maintained by the SOG/Narcotics Unit Supervisor and investigators whose duties require such access. Access to informant files will be established on a "need to know" basis as determined by the SOG/Narcotics Unit Supervisor.

Methods to ensure file maintenance and security include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Ongoing review of existing security procedures
- ❖ Evaluation of potential/developing security deficiencies
- ❖ Modification of security procedures as required
- ❖ Public disclosure of information contained in informant files will be restricted according to the guidelines as set forth in RCW 42.17.310, subsection (D) and (E)
- ❖ The combination on any safes containing files and/or money will be changed at least every 2 years

Under circumstances where informant information must be shared with outside investigators/agencies, informant identity may be preserved by the SOG/Narcotics Unit Supervisor who will oversee discretion of the exchange of information.

Informants will be paid at the prevailing rate adopted by the Special Operations Group.

Informant payments require supervisory approval in advance and are entered into the C.I. file. Informant expenses of substantial or continuing amounts must receive supervisory approval. Informant expenses are to be logged in the C.I. file.

Informant payments require a receipt signed by the informant. It is recommended a witness be present while signing receipt. Where circumstances prohibit an informant's signature and an amount of \$50.00 or less is involved, a signature may be waived provided two officers are present; they must sign and date the transaction on the receipt, and supervisor notification must be made at the earliest convenience.

All expenses/reimbursements are to be accounted for on issued receipts. The receipt will detail the purpose of the expense and location. All expenditures are to be recorded in a daily log indicating purpose and location. Department funds will be produced on demand. An accounts ledger will be completed on a daily basis. Informant funds will be secured and access restricted to the SOG/Narcotics Unit Supervisor or their designee.

Informants of the opposite sex should be contacted with two officers present. All informant contacts are to be documented in the daily log, C.I. files, and other appropriate reports. Confidential informants must be 18 years old or over, except with Command staff approval.

At the discretion of the SOG/Narcotics Unit Supervisor, informants will, prior to utilization, be required to read and acknowledge the Department's informant acknowledgment form.

Juvenile informants and their legal guardians must sign a hold harmless agreement before utilization, and must read and acknowledge the Department's information acknowledgment form.

Juvenile informants shall be used only in cases where no other alternative is available and then only with approval of Command staff. The safety of the juvenile shall be the paramount concern. If there is a potential safety risk involved, they will not be used. An officer shall not be criticized for ending an investigation where it is done because of considerations of the juvenile informant. Consultation with the appropriate prosecutor should be completed prior to approval of the use of a juvenile informant.

Patrol Officers who develop informants must follow the above guidelines and coordinate with the SOG/Narcotics Unit Supervisor to insure the informant is reliable, credible, and their identity remains confidential.