Report Preparation

344.1 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.

344.1.1 REPORT PREPARATION

Employees should ensure that reports are sufficiently detailed for their purpose and free from errors prior to submission. Reports requiring prompt follow-up action on active leads, or arrest reports where the suspect remains in custody shall be completed by the end of watch unless a supervisor has approved the delayed submission of the report. These reports will be reviewed and approved the same day by an on duty supervisor. If the officer's supervisor is not available, any sworn supervisor can review and approve the report.

All other reports shall be completed during the employee’s work week before going off-duty for days off, unless a supervisor has approved the delayed submission of the report.

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.

344.1.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

Supervisors shall review and approve their employee’s reports without delay and, in most cases, on the day of submission. When workload prevents the supervisor from clearing their approval queue, they should request another supervisor handle the review and approval.

344.2 REQUIRED REPORTING

Written reports are required in all of the following situations on the appropriate department approved form unless otherwise approved by a supervisor.
344.2.1 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:
   1. Use of Force Policy
   2. Domestic Violence Policy
   3. Child Abuse Policy
   4. Adult Abuse Policy
   5. Hate Crimes Policy
   6. Suspicious Activity Reporting Policy
(e) All misdemeanor crimes where the victim desires a report

The requirement for written documentation for misdemeanor crimes may be satisfied by a Department approved alternative reporting method (e.g., Alliance event log entry) in cases where there is limited or no suspect information, no evidence and/or workable leads or in instances where the victim does not desire prosecution.

344.2.2 NON-CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

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

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

344.2.3 DEATH CASES

Best Practice
Death investigations require specific investigation methods depending on circumstances and should be handled in accordance with the Death Investigations Policy. The handling officer should 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.
(d) Unattended deaths (No physician or qualified hospice care in the 20 days preceding death).
(e) Found dead bodies or body parts.

344.2.4 INJURY OR DAMAGE BY CITY PERSONNEL

Best Practice
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.

344.2.5 MANDATORY REPORTING OF JUVENILE GUNSHOT INJURIES

State MODIFIED
A report shall be taken when any incident in which a child under 18 years suffered an unintentional or self-inflicted gunshot wound. The Records Bureau shall notify the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) of the incident, on a form provided by the state. Forms may be obtained from the CDPH website (Penal Code § 23685).

344.3 GENERAL POLICY OF EXPEDITIOUS REPORTING

Best Practice MODIFIED
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.
344.3.1 GENERAL USE OF OTHER HANDWRITTEN FORMS

Discretionary

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

344.4 REPORT CORRECTIONS

Discretionary

Supervisors shall review reports for content and accuracy. Supervisors should make minor changes to correct for spelling and grammar errors. Any correction made by a supervisor, not related to grammar or spelling, that changes the overall substance of a report, should be reviewed with the originating officer. If a correction by the originating officer is necessary, the reviewing supervisor should electronically return the report to its author, stating the reasons for rejection. The original report 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.

344.5 REPORT CHANGES OR ALTERATIONS

Best Practice

Reports that have been approved by a supervisor and submitted to the Records Bureau 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 Bureau may be corrected or modified by the authoring officer with the knowledge and authorization of the reviewing supervisor.

In rare circumstances, the approving supervisor may make corrections to reports that have already been approved and not yet submitted to the Records Bureau. In any case where a change is made to an already reviewed and approved report, an electronic message will be sent to the appropriate Division Chief notifying him/her of the reason for the change.

344.6 ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

Best Practice

The Indio Police Department has established an electronic signature procedure for use by all employees of the Indio Police Department. The Field Services Assistant Chief shall be responsible for maintaining the electronic signature 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.