

# **COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**Subject: CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS**

**Date of Issue: 01-01-1999**

**Number of Pages: 8**

**Policy No. I010**

**Review Date: 06-01-2007**

**Distribution: Departmental**

**Revision Date: 10-05-2022**

## **I. Purpose**

To establish a procedure by which the Criminal Investigative Division can properly perform its functions. These investigative functions include recovering stolen property, processing crime scenes, conducting interviews, preparing, and reviewing cases for court, and conducting post-conviction investigations when necessary. The duties, procedures and guidelines that are set forth in this policy shall comply with all applicable departmental policies, federal and state laws.

## **II. Statement of Policy**

It shall be the policy of the Covington Police Department to maintain a Criminal Investigations Division for the purpose of fully investigating crimes and to gather intelligence information. This directive contains acceptable procedures to be used by officers of the Covington Police Department in the investigation of criminal activities. Due to the complexity of criminal investigations, the contents of this directive should not be considered all inclusive. Officers should exhaust every effort to bring an investigation to a successful conclusion.

## **III. Authority**

The Captain of the Criminal Investigative Division shall be responsible for coordinating and overseeing the investigative operations of the Covington Police Department. The captain shall always ensure that the Chief of Police is informed concerning all major investigations. The captain shall determine off days for all investigators based on the assessment of activity and manpower coverage. The Chief of Police must approve the captains off days.

## **IV. Attendance at Patrol Division Roll Call**

Whenever an investigator is on-duty during shift change in the patrol division, he shall attend the roll call for the oncoming shift if he has information to pass on or needs help with an investigation.

**V. Assignment of Patrol Officers to Investigative Division**

- A. Whenever investigative workloads increase or when a special operation is underway, the Captain of Criminal Investigative Division may request the Chief of Police for additional manpower. The Chief of Police may assign patrol officers to the Investigative Division for a period of time as needed to fulfill the objective.
- B. Officers applying for specialized positions should have two years law enforcement experience with this department. This criterion may be waived by the chief of police, at his discretion.
- C. To be selected, an officer must have had no disciplinary actions in the past year.
- D. Each candidate may be interviewed for position desired. In addition, the candidate's supervisor may be interviewed, and training file may be examined.
- E. Recommendations will be submitted by the commander to the chief of police who will make the final decision.
- F. Patrol officers assigned to the Investigative Division shall report in plainclothes according to the dress code established for investigative personnel.
- G. The rate of pay for reassigned officers shall remain the same as uniformed officers with the proper recording of overtime.
- H. Patrol officers shall receive adequate training by CID personnel before being assigned cases.
- I. Patrol officers shall abide by the policies and procedures established by the Investigative Division and the department.

**VI. Assignment of Patrol Officers to Task Forces**

- A. When openings occur, the Chief of Police may assign officers to the DEA Task Force. Assignment will be for a period of time that will not exceed five years.
- B. Officers applying for specialized positions should have two years law enforcement experience with this department. This criterion may be waived by the chief of police, at his discretion.
- C. To be selected, an officer must have had no disciplinary actions in the past year.
- D. Each candidate may be interviewed for the position desired. In addition, the candidate's supervisor may be interviewed, and training file may be examined.
- E. Recommendations will be submitted by the commander to the chief of police who will make the final decision.
- F. Officer will follow the dress code established for that unit.
- G. The rate of pay for reassigned officers shall remain the same as uniformed officers with the proper recording of overtime.
- H. Officers shall receive specialized training to adequately prepare them for their duties and responsibilities.

## **VII. Case Management**

- A. The Captain of the Criminal Investigative Division or his designee shall assign cases to investigators. Once assignment has been made, the investigator has full responsibility for the case; however, this does not preclude the assignment of more than one investigator to an investigation. The purpose of such assignment is to make one person accountable for each case. In situations requiring specialized skills and abilities (i.e., drug investigation, juvenile offenses, homicides), the captain may assign the case to a particular investigator who possesses the special skills necessary to properly conduct the investigation.
- B. When a case is assigned, information specific to the case shall be recorded in the Case Management section of Spillman, and shall include:
  - 1. Investigator assigned.
  - 2. Date of assignment.
  - 3. Case number.
  - 4. Date cleared.
  - 5. Victim's name.
  - 6. Case status (active, inactive, cleared, exceptionally cleared).
    - a. Active – refers to a case where there is presently an ongoing investigation and or meets requirements of solvability factors.
    - b. Inactive – refers to a case where the facts do not meet requirements of solvability factors.
    - c. Cleared – an arrest has been made.
    - d. Exceptionally cleared – victim does not want to prosecute, or upon discovery that a crime did not occur after the report was filed, or offender is deceased, etc.

## **VIII. Notifying Victims of Case Status**

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Investigation Division to inform the victim of the case status within 3 days after assignment. The victim shall also be notified whenever additional information is obtained and when the case status has changed. The date and time of notification shall be noted and placed in the investigator's case file.
- B. In cases where a follow-up investigation is being done, the investigator shall contact the victim, complainant, and witness to:
  - 1. Inform them of the case status.
  - 2. Obtain additional information to clear up points of conflicts.
  - 3. To show concern toward the welfare of the victims and other involved parties.

C. Active incident reports received by the secretary will be placed in a case file which will include the following:

1. Case number stamped on file.
2. Incident report.
3. Case cover sheet.
4. Investigator's report.

These cases will be forwarded to the assigned investigator for follow up. Once the case has either been cleared or made active, it is the investigator's responsibility to have all detailed notes on major cases typed by the secretary.

D. Cleared incident reports shall be screened by the investigator and returned to the secretary.

#### **IX. Technical Aids**

A. When an investigator is assigned a case and he or she feels that a voice stress analysis and/or a polygraph may be a useful tool in his/her investigation, they may request one. Voice stress analysis tests will be performed by investigators at the Covington Police Dept. There may be times when polygraph and/or voice stress analysis tests will be performed by other outside agencies, upon the approval of the Chief of Police or the Captain of CID.

B. It will be the investigator's responsibility to make all the necessary arrangements for the examination. In the event an examination must be cancelled, the investigator shall notify the outside agency as soon as possible.

#### **X. Follow Up Investigations**

The following procedures shall be utilized when conducting follow-up investigations on incidents occurring in the corporate limits of Covington.

- A. Investigators shall review and analyze all incident reports prepared by the Patrol Division.
- B. Interview and take written or taped statements from all witnesses, victims, and suspects.
- C. Review departmental records that may aid in bringing the investigation to satisfactory conclusion.
- D. Interview patrol officers and other sources to seek additional information relevant to the investigation.
- E. Submit all applicable evidence for testing and analysis to the appropriate crime lab, review all results and prepare for court. See [I060- Crime Scene Processing.doc](#)
- F. When necessary, a B.O.L.O. shall be given to the Patrol Division and forwarded to other agencies.

- G. When a search is necessary, it shall be planned and organized as follows:
  - 1. Assistance from the patrol division will be initiated through the watch commander and/or patrol supervisor.
  - 2. Investigator in charge shall coordinate with the patrol supervisor concerning personnel assignments and duties.
  - 3. Patrol supervisor will assign personnel according to instructions and needs provided by the investigator.
- H. All reports, statements and other pertinent information shall be completed prior to presenting the case in court.
- I. The investigator shall make himself available to the District Attorney's office to assist in preparing cases for prosecution.
- J. The investigator should make a concerted effort to identify and apprehend all suspects.
- K. The investigator is responsible for collecting all evidence.
- L. Establish possibility of MO similar to other cases
- M. Criminal history checks of all suspects.

**XI. Cold Case Investigations**

- A. The term "Cold Case" refers to a criminal investigation or a "case" that remains unsolved after all leads have been exhausted. A "Cold Case" is considered unsolved until a suspect has been identified, charged, and prosecuted for the crime. These cases may or may not have a suspect named at the time of the crime or developed during the original investigation.
- B. The following crimes may be reviewed as cold cases:
  - 1. Any unsolved homicide.
  - 2. Any undetermined death.

Criteria for the evaluation of cold cases may include:

  - 1. Any homicide or undetermined death at least six months old.
  - 2. Personnel originally assigned to the case are no longer members of the department, retired, etc.
  - 3. Availability of old witnesses.
  - 4. Identification of new witnesses.
  - 5. Evidence accessibility
- C. Investigative actions or activity may include, but not be limited to:
  - 3. Review summary from the initial investigation.

4. Re-evaluate leads if any exist and summarize those leads.
  5. Establish new leads using new investigative techniques.
  6. Conduct interviews with initial and previous investigators to identify information not noted in the case file.
  7. Conduct interviews with previously identified witnesses for new information due to friendship changes and identification of new witnesses or evidence.
  8. Attempt to secure the participation of previously uncooperative witnesses.
  9. Identify family members who may share valuable new information.
  10. Review evidence and identify more modern techniques such as Latent Fingerprint Enhancement, Image Enhancement, and DNA Analysis to determine their value to the case.
  11. Review news media coverage of the incident, if any.
  12. Place all gathered information in chronological order to attempt to determine a timeline of events.
  13. Utilize available resources to obtain information on all cases with similar modus operandi being handled by other agencies to rule out serial murders.
- D. All actions and activities conducted by investigators pertaining to a cold case will be recorded in a summary and placed in the original case file for documentation purposes and future review by other investigators. All original documents will be maintained in the individual case file and evidence will be securely stored in the evidence room.

## **XII. Post-Conviction Investigations**

- A. When there is exculpatory evidence identified which suggests a suspect's innocence it is the department's duty to provide that evidence to the District Attorney for review. It is also the duty of this agency to continue investigating the incident and identify and arrest the person(s) responsible.
- B. Once a determination is made to conduct a post-conviction investigation, based on one or more solvability factors being present the Captain of CID, or his designee not involved in the original investigation, shall complete a review, and assign the post-conviction investigation to a Detective who was also not involved in the original investigation.
- C. Detectives assigned to post-conviction investigations shall be responsible for:
  1. Reviewing all initial and supplemental reports to ensure all known investigative leads were properly investigated.

2. Reviewing all evidence collected (trace, biological, fingerprint, video, photo, etc.) to determine if evidence has been maintained by the department. The detective will also ensure all evidence is compared to database evidence, has been submitted to the appropriate laboratory, and all possible investigative leads were followed up based on the laboratory reports received.
  3. Reviewing all documented testimonial evidence (victim, witness, and suspect interviews).
  4. Contacting victim(s), witness (es), and suspect(s) and conducting follow-up interviews based on the investigative review conducted.
  5. Conducting a canvass of the area in which the crime was committed if it is likely that the incident was witnessed (in residential areas).
  6. Completing public service announcement(s) that gives a brief synopsis of the crime being investigated and asks for assistance from the public (local newspaper, radio, Crime Stoppers, Departmental website).
  7. Completing an investigative supplemental report documenting the review and any follow-up completed on the assigned case.
  8. Consulting with the Newton County District Attorney regarding the findings of the investigation and providing them with a copy of the investigative casefile.
- D. The Captain of CID or his designated supervisor for the case may "suspend" the post-conviction investigation if he feels that the follow-up investigation has exhausted all leads.
- E. All actions and activities conducted by investigators pertaining to a post-conviction investigation will be recorded in a summary and placed in the original case file for documentation purposes. All original documents will be maintained in the individual case file and evidence will be securely stored in the evidence room.

### **XIII. Investigator's Case File**

- A. Each investigator shall be responsible for maintaining a file on each active case assigned to him. The investigator's case file shall contain the following:
1. A copy of the incident report.
  2. A copy of the arrest/booking report (when applicable).
  3. Case information sheet.
  4. A detailed report of the investigative effort.
  5. Date and time of notification of victim, witnesses, complainant.
  6. Statement(s) of victim(s) and witness(es), when applicable.

7. Crime lab report.
- B. Case files are available only to personnel assigned to the Criminal Investigative Division and the Chief of Police.
  - C. Case files shall be filed in the file cabinet by case number. All active misdemeanor cases shall be placed in an inactive status when all possible leads have been exhausted.
  - D. Serious felony cases shall remain active indefinitely at the discretion of the Investigative Division Captain. Case files on homicides, kidnappings, and rape shall remain active until an arrest is made.
  - E. Investigative records will be maintained according to the Records Retention Schedule established by the Georgia Secretary of State's Office.

***This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.***

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

*Stacey L. Cotton*  
Stacey L. Cotton  
Chief of Police