



CRYSTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

Department Policy Manual

TITLE: Report Writing
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PURPOSE

The preparation and timely submission of police reports are essential to the police mission. Police reports document and justify police activity in the community, keep the public informed, reduce liability and allow appropriate follow-up activities to be conducted by other department members. Other city departments and supervisors, victims, prosecutors, media, and citizens closely observe reports generated by the police department. These reports are used to continue investigations, charge subjects with offenses, prepare for trial, serve as evidence, protect witnesses, inform jurors and properly sentence defendants.

Proper reports must have complete information. The following information shall be included in all reports whenever possible:

- A. WHO – the information should include the reporter, the victim, the criminal, the witness, accomplices, those who can give further information, and the person who discovered the crime.
- B. WHAT – facts of the case, description of available evidence and its disposition, crimes committed, the tools used, the weapons used, the action taken, further actions that need to be taken.
- C. WHERE – location of the crime committed, where it was discovered, location of the witnesses when they observed the crime, source of the tools or weapons used, destination of the criminal. (2004 Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook: The jurisdictional guidelines provide for most local reporting. Whenever possible, the local law enforcement agency of the geographical area in which the crime occurred should report the data.”)
- D. WHEN – time the crime was reported, time the crime was committed, time it was discovered, time of police arrival, time the suspect was seen at the crime scene.
- E. HOW – by what means the crime was committed, how entrance to the scene was gained by the criminal, means of escape, details of discovery, utilization of the tools.
- F. WHY – the motive of the crime, reason for choice of tools or location of crime, reason for reporting the crime.
- G. WITH WHOM – the comrades of the criminal when he/she committed the crime, associates of the criminal under ordinary circumstances, friends of the witnesses when they observed the act.
- H. HOW MUCH – amount of damage done, items or property stolen, degree of injury sustained, value of stolen property, estimation of the knowledge or experience needed to commit the crime. (2004 Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook: “The recovery of property should be reported only by the agency from whose jurisdiction it was stolen, regardless of who or which agency recovered it.”)

REPORT TYPES

Officers shall write reports for the following offenses/incidents (including attempts):

- Criminal Homicide
- Criminal Sexual Conduct
- Robbery
- Assaults (including domestic assaults)
- Burglary
- Larceny/Theft
- Damage to Property
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Arson
- Traffic crashes on public roadways – refer to Accident Policy (5.1) for further explanation
- Other incidents involving suspicious acts or circumstances that relate to officer safety or should be reviewed by the administration or investigations unit
- All activity on/to rental property

When responding to one of these calls for service, officers shall follow department procedure for report writing concerning these calls. A report shall be written and turned into the supervisor at the end of that current shift.

INITIAL COMPLAINT REPORT (ICR)

The Crystal Police Department will generate initial complaint reports, or ICRs, through the Hennepin County CAD system. This will serve as the first documentation of any criminal or service-related activity carried out by this department. An ICR number is assigned to the incident and will be used as a preliminary reference to all reports related to the incident. An ICR is created by the dispatched or the CAD system on all dispatched calls or by officer-initiated activity. Common ICRs created by officers include traffic citations, self-initiated activity, search warrants, SWAT call-outs, community relations and building tours.

(2004 Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook: “Separation of Time and Place Rule” Occasionally, an individual or a group will perpetrate a number of offenses over a short period of time. If there is separation of time and place between the commission of several crimes, the reporting agency must handle each crime as a separate incident and must classify and score each offense individually.

PROCEDURE

The following items on an incident report are to be completed as indicated. All other reports shall be completed as necessary to fulfill their design purpose.

- A. Identify the victim or complainant
 1. The victim is identified as the person who suffered the loss or is aggrieved or injured party
 2. This is to include last name, first name, and middle name. If an individual has no middle name, this should be indicated with the notation (no middle name or NMN). If the complainant has a middle initial only, indicate the initial in the quotation marks. If the middle name is unknown, indicate “UNK” after the first name.
 3. Date of birth, race and sex
 4. If the victim is a business, list the complete business name
- B. Reported by – if the reporting person is also the victim, check both boxes. If the reporting party is other than the victim, enter the full name, address and home and business phone numbers. The

reporting party is generally the individual who provides the initial information regarding an incident.

1. If in doubt who the victim is or who the reporting party is, the officer should ask the advice of his or her supervisor.
 2. Address – complete address, city, state and ZIP code should be provided.
 3. Date of Birth – whenever possible, the dates of birth of all individuals listed in a report should be recorded. In the event an officer is unable to obtain the date of birth, the officer should indicate whether the person is an adult or juvenile and the individual's approximate age.
 4. Phone numbers – home, business, and cell phone numbers should be listed on all cases. Unless an individual requests the information not be included in the report. If there is no phone number to record, the officer should indicate “none”.
 5. In the event a victim calls to report a similar incident that can be directly tied to a previously reported incident, the original case number should be used for that victim.
 6. If it cannot be determined that the incident is directly related to the previous incident, a new original case number should be issued.
- C. If one individual or a group commits a number of offenses, such as in a high-speed pursuit with a stolen vehicle, or a retail store reports a theft in progress and this results in a pursuit, this would require only one case number despite involving more than one crime.
- D. If an officer learns that the reports are mistaken or in need of correction, the officer shall at the first, practical moment and in no event later than the work shift in which the mistake is discovered, the officer shall take steps to correct the information through a supplemental report explaining how the erroneous material came to exist and how the member discovered the mistake and corrected it. The member shall then, as soon as possible consult with their on-duty supervisor or their division captain to determine to whom the inaccurate report has been disseminated and make sure that those individuals received the corrected supplemental in a timely manner and are made aware of the error that exists in the original report they received.
- E. A supplemental report will be written for the recovery of a stolen vehicle, location of a missing person, or runaway to include the recovery/location date, time and details and the disposition of the vehicle/subject.

SUBMITTED ON TIME

All department members are required to submit reports in a timely manner to obtain affirmative supervisory approval for any reports not completed by the set deadlines.

- Patrol officers and any other members preparing initial crime or incident reports will complete such reports prior to the end of their work shift in which the event was reported or discovered. This included members working contract overtime, who take police actions. Off-duty officers taking police actions will complete the reports the same day they took the action.
- Reports that are returned to an officer for correction with a notation of “needing correction” must be corrected and resubmitted during the same work shift that the returned report was received.
- In no event should reports be left undone over a time period the member responsible for the report is on vacation or otherwise not expected to be easily available for questions that may arise concerning that incident.

SUPERVISOR'S REVIEW OF REPORTS

All supervisors are expected to periodically review reports written by the officers reporting to them or the members assigned to them. Supervisors will initial reports they review.

- All supervisors are required to take action when they discover a report that is incomplete, disorganized or confusing, illegible, inaccurate, not submitted on time or otherwise unacceptable. If a report is written by an officer reporting to or assigned to them, the supervisor should assist in correcting any problems discovered and documentation of any supervisor's action should be placed in the member's performance file.

MULTIPLE REPORTS

In instances where there are multiple victims of multiple crimes, the reporting officer should make every attempt to determine whether multiple case numbers are necessary. A single, criminal incident may include several crimes and several victims, but should only be issued a single case number.

2004 Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook:

In the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, the offense of criminal homicide, forcible rape, and aggravated assault are crimes against person. For these crimes, one offense is counted for each victim (separate case number for each victim).

Robbery, burglary and larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson are crimes against property. For those crimes, score one offense for each distinct operation – except in the case of motor vehicle theft for which one offense is counted for each stolen vehicle.

TAKING STATEMENTS

All officers shall, when possible, take statements from victims and suspects when investigating serious crimes against persons, domestic assaults and other Part I crimes when a probable cause felony arrest has been made. When the individual is an in-custody suspect, the officer shall read the Miranda Warning prior to taking of a statement. Circumstances describing taking or not taking a statement from the person(s) involved will be outlined in the officer's report.

Officers will use a standard introduction to the statement, to include, but not limited to, case number, full name of individual being interviewed, date and time, and location. If other police personnel are also included in the interview so the transcriptionist is able to determine who is talking.

If the statement was taken over the phone, this information will be indicated in the introduction.

When a statement is refused by the victim or the suspect, the refusal should be noted in the officer's report.

Consideration should be made regarding the arresting officer's interviewing experience before taking statements for serious crimes whether it would be beneficial to wait and have the on-call detective conduct the statement.

DICTATION

Officers, when writing a report, should use the digital dictation system to document the incident. If an officer is capable, they may also use the word processor to type up a report to more rapidly get the information into a typewritten form.

The following issues need to be considered to ensure a good quality recording:

- The digital recorder should be on the proper recording setting.
- Officers must be mindful of background noises that will render any part of the recording inaudible. Officers will repeat any portions disrupted by background noises, radio traffic, etc.
- Officers will spell names of individuals involved, business names, medication/drugs, and addresses that are questionable.
- Officers will indicate specific date and time being referred to in the narrative – refrain from using “On the above date and time.”

NOTE: A copy of the 2004 Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook is available to all Crystal Police Department personnel and is located in the 1st cabinet on the counter in the records area.