

POLICIES and PROCEDURES MANUAL:

Subject: **GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE GUIDELINES**

Introduction

Many criminal matters reported to the police require an investigation beyond that which can be accomplished during the initial police contact. The purpose of this procedure is to establish general guidelines to assist all officers as they conduct assigned investigations.

Definitions

1. Case referral: The act of referring a criminal investigation to another member of this department or to another agency.
2. Investigating officer: Any sworn member of the Barstow Police Department who has been assigned to conduct an investigation.
3. Solvability factors: Any of several factors, which indicate the solvability of a particular crime.

General

Regardless of the nature of the crime, every investigation begins with the initial response. Every officer assigned to handle a call for service involving a crime is the initial investigating officer, sometimes called the primary officer. The actions of, and reports taken by the initial investigating officer often play a significant role in the ultimate solvability of every criminal case. The initial investigation and thorough documentation are equally import in the overall investigation

Initial Investigation:

The initial investigation, sometimes also referred to as the preliminary investigation, consists of several steps. Arrival at the scene, contact with the reporting party or victim, identification and interview of witnesses, and a search for suspects and evidence are important steps in each investigation. A search beyond the apparent crime scene is also important. This search includes looking for evidence left behind by the suspect as s/he fled the scene, as well as the identification of witnesses who may have witnessed acts committed by the suspects. All crimes should be investigated as thoroughly and completely as possible—the goal of course, the identification and arrest of the suspect(s).

Even the absence of information or evidence is an important part of an investigation. Witnesses who claim not to have seen anything should be documented as well as those who did witness the crime. A lack of forced entry or a crime scene, which has been thoroughly cleaned, should be noted in the report. The

Reference:

Effective Date April 11, 2002	Revision No. 2	Page 1 of 3	Section 801
----------------------------------	-------------------	-------------	-------------

POLICIES and PROCEDURES MANUAL:

Subject: **GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE GUIDELINES**

absence of a dust pattern or tool marks, where you would expect to find such evidence are important factors to be documented.

### Solvability Factors:

Solvability factors play an important role when supervisors make decisions concerning continued investigation into a reported crime. During the initial investigation, officers will learn information to help determine the solvability of the case. Officers should consider these factors and document all they can. These solvability factors should be included in the report so that appropriate decisions can be made concerning future investigation into the case.

Solvability factors include:

1. Was there a witness to the crime?
2. Was a suspect arrested?
3. Is a suspect named?
4. Can a suspect be located?
5. Can a suspect be described?
6. Can a suspect vehicle be identified?
7. Is any stolen property identifiable?
8. Is there a significant or unique MO?
9. Is significant physical evidence present?
10. Is there a good possibility of a solution?
11. Is further investigation needed?

### Follow-up investigations

Some cases, just by the serious nature of the crimes involved, warrant additional follow-up investigation. Some examples are homicide, rape, and armed robbery. Since every crime is different, and since we have limited resources, supervisors must use good judgment when assigning cases for follow-up investigation.

Some follow-up investigations will be assigned to the initial investigating officer, some will be assigned to the Investigations Bureau, while others will be assigned to officers in special assignments such as narcotics or SRO. Supervisors must consider solvability factors, estimated length of the investigation as well as the complexity and location of the investigations.

When supervisors review an officer's report, they must review it for the potential for clearance and the arrest of a suspect as well as completeness and accuracy. This is a fundamental supervisory responsibility.

Reference:

Effective Date  
April 11, 2002

Revision No.  
2

Page 2 of 3

Section 801

POLICIES and PROCEDURES MANUAL:

Subject: **GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE GUIDELINES**

When an investigation requires additional follow-up, the supervisor should assign the initial investigating officer to conduct the follow-up investigation unless the investigation is clearly beyond the resources available to the officer.

Case Referral to the Investigations Bureau

The Investigations Bureau simply cannot take every investigation that warrants a follow-up investigation. Supervisors need to work together to find a balanced approach to meet the needs of the community and at the same time insure the efficient operation of all Department functions. The Detective Sergeant has the option to assume investigative control of any criminal investigation, which meets established goals and criteria. Sometimes even minor cases can dovetail with more serious matters and should be handled as one investigation. The Detective Sergeant also has the discretion to decline investigative responsibility, consistent with department goals and established criteria.

Reference:

Effective Date  
April 11, 2002

Revision No.  
2

Page 3 of 3

Section 801