

# Report Preparation

## 322.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to those members of the Department who complete investigations and reports as a part of their duties.

## 322.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Elkton Police Department that members shall act with promptness and efficiency in the preparation and processing of all reports. Reports shall document sufficient information to refresh the member's memory and shall provide enough detail for follow-up investigation and successful prosecution.

## 322.3 EXPEDITIOUS REPORTING

An incomplete report, unorganized reports or reports that are delayed without supervisory approval are not acceptable. Reports shall be processed according to established priorities or to a special priority made necessary under exceptional circumstances.

## 322.4 REPORT PREPARATION

Reports should be sufficiently detailed for their purpose and free from errors prior to submission and approval. It is the responsibility of the member to complete and submit all reports taken during the shift before going off-duty unless permission to hold the report has been approved by a supervisor (Md. Code PS § 3-514). Generally, reports requiring prompt follow-up action on active leads or arrest reports where the suspect remains in custody should not be held.

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. Members shall not suppress, conceal, or distort the facts of any reported incident, nor shall any member make a false report orally or in writing. Generally, the reporting member's opinions should not be included in reports unless specifically identified as such.

### 322.4.1 HANDWRITTEN OR TYPED REPORTS

All incident / offense reports and supplements are to be completed in the CODY records management system.

County, state and federal agency forms may be block printed unless the requirement for typing is apparent. Supervisors may require block printing or typing of reports of any nature for department consistency.

Handwritten reports must be prepared legibly. If the report is not legible, the submitting member will be required by the reviewing supervisor to promptly make corrections and resubmit the report.

Members who generate reports on computers are subject to all requirements of this policy.

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#### 322.4.2 ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

Members of the Elkton Police Department will be issued specific and individual logins for CODY. Members will not use another officer's login to submit or approve reports. Use of logins will be used as authentication of the of the author of the report.

#### 322.5 REQUIRED REPORTING

In all of the following situations, members shall complete reports using the appropriate department-approved forms and reporting methods, unless otherwise approved by a supervisor.

The reporting requirements are not intended to be all-inclusive. A member may complete a report if he/she deems it necessary or as directed by a supervisor.

##### 322.5.1 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 of arson or stalking behavior.
- (d) Situations covered by separate policy. These include:
  - (a) Use of Force Policy.
  - (b) Domestic Violence Policy.
  - (c) Child Abuse Policy.
  - (d) Adult Abuse Policy.
  - (e) Hate Crimes Policy.
  - (f) Suspicious Activity Reporting Policy.
- (e) All misdemeanor crimes where the victim desires a report.

Misdemeanor crimes where the victim does not desire a report shall be documented using the department-approved alternative reporting method (e.g., a dispatch log).

Reports will be completed before the end of the assigned shift unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.

##### 322.5.2 NON-CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Non-criminal activity to be documented includes:

- (a) Any found property or found evidence.
- (b) All protective custody and welfare detentions.

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- (c) Any time a person is reported missing, regardless of jurisdiction (see the Missing Persons Policy).
- (d) Suspicious incidents that may indicate a potential for crimes against children or that a child's safety is in jeopardy.
- (e) Suspicious incidents that may place the public or others at risk.
- (f) Any use of force by members of this department against any person (see the Use of Force Policy).
- (g) Any firearm discharge (see the Firearms Policy).
- (h) Any time a member points a firearm at any person. If multiple officers are involved in the incident (e.g. search warrant, felony traffic stop), one report is sufficient.
- (i) Any traffic accidents above the minimum reporting level (see the Traffic Accidents Policy).
- (j) Any report of an unsecured building (or open door) and a sweep was performed by officers for safety/security.
- (k) Whenever the member believes the circumstances should be documented or at the direction of a supervisor.

#### 322.5.3 MISCELLANEOUS INJURIES

Any injury that is reported to this department shall require a report when:

- (a) The injury is a result of drug overdose.
- (b) There is an attempted suicide.
- (c) The injury is major or serious, and potentially fatal.
- (d) The circumstances surrounding the incident are suspicious in nature and it is desirable to document the event.

#### 322.5.4 DEATHS

Death investigations require specific investigation methods, depending on the circumstances. They should be handled in accordance with the Death Investigation Policy. The handling member should notify and apprise a supervisor of the circumstances surrounding the incident to determine how to proceed. The following incidents shall be appropriately investigated and documented:

- (a) Unattended deaths (no physician or qualified hospice care during the period preceding death)
- (b) Sudden, accidental or suspicious deaths
- (c) Suicides
- (d) Homicide or suspected homicide
- (e) Found dead bodies or body parts

#### 322.5.5 TOWN PERSONNEL OR PROPERTY

Incidents involving Town personnel or property shall require a report when:

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- (a) An injury occurs as the result of an act of a Town employee or on Town property.
- (b) There is damage to Town property or equipment.
- (c) Motor vehicle collisions involving a Town of Elkton vehicle.
- (d) At the request of the Town of Elkton Administration.

### **322.6 ALTERNATIVE REPORTING FOR VICTIMS**

Reports that may be submitted by the public via online or other self-completed reporting processes include:

- (a) Lost property.
- (b) Misdemeanor thefts of property, other than firearms or materials threatening to public safety, when there is no suspect information or serial number or ability to trace the item.
  - 1. Misdemeanor thefts of cellular telephones may be reported even though they have a serial number.
- (c) Misdemeanor vandalism with no suspect information and no hate crime implications.
- (d) Vehicle burglaries with no suspect information or evidence.
- (e) Stolen vehicle attempts with no suspect information or evidence.
- (f) Annoying telephone calls with no suspect information.
- (g) Identity theft without an identifiable suspect.
- (h) Online or email fraud solicitations without an identifiable suspect and if the financial loss classifies the crime as a misdemeanor.
- (i) Hit-and-run vehicle accidents with no suspect or suspect vehicle.
- (j) Supplemental property lists.

Members at the scene of one of the above incidents should not refer the reporting party to an alternative means of reporting without authorization from a supervisor. Members may refer victims to online victim assistance programs (e.g., the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website for identity theft; the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) website for computer crimes).

### **322.7 REVIEW AND CORRECTIONS**

Supervisors shall review reports for content and accuracy. If a correction is necessary, the reviewing supervisor should electronically decline the report and state the reasons for rejection. It shall be the responsibility of the originating member to ensure that any report returned for correction is processed in a timely manner.

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#### **322.7.1 CHANGES AND ALTERATIONS**

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

#### **322.8 STATE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

##### **322.8.1 TEMPORARY DETENTION OR INVESTIGATIVE STOP SEARCHES**

Certain temporary detention or investigative stops involving the wearing, carrying, or transporting of a handgun in violation of Md. Code CR § 4-203 that result in a search or seizure require the officer performing the search to file a written report with this department within 24 hours of the incident. The report shall be completed using the form prescribed by the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services and shall be provided to the Records Department and include:

- (a) The name of the person searched.
- (b) The circumstances surrounding and reasons for the search or seizure.