Suspicious Activity Reporting

433.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for reporting and investigating suspicious and criminal activity.

433.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Involved party - An individual who has been observed engaging in suspicious activity, as defined in this policy, when no definitive criminal activity can be identified, thus precluding the person's identification as a suspect.

Suspicious activity - Any reported or observed activity that a member reasonably believes may have a nexus to any criminal act or attempted criminal act, or to foreign or domestic terrorism. Actual or perceived characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, or disability should not be considered as factors that create suspicion (although these factors may be used as specific suspect descriptions). Examples of suspicious activity may include but are not limited to:

- Suspected pre-operational surveillance or intelligence gathering (e.g., photographing security features, asking questions about sensitive security-related subjects).
- Tests of security measures and response to incidents (e.g., "dry run," creating false alarms, attempts to enter secure areas without authorization).
- Suspicious purchases (e.g., purchasing large quantities of otherwise legal items, such as fertilizer, that could be used to create an explosive or other dangerous device).
- An individual in possession of such things as a hoax explosive or dispersal device, sensitive materials (e.g., passwords, access codes, classified government information), or coded or ciphered literature or correspondence.

Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) - An incident report used to document suspicious activity.

433.2 POLICY

The Elkton Police Department recognizes the need to protect the public from criminal conduct and acts of terrorism and shall lawfully collect, maintain, and disseminate information regarding suspicious activities, while safeguarding civil liberties and privacy protections.

433.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Special OperationsBureau Commander and the authorized designee(s) will manage SAR activities. Authorized designees should include supervisors who are responsible for the department participation in Criminal Intelligence System(s) as outlined in the Criminal Organization policy.

The Special Operations Bureau Commander will have the following duties:

(a) Remain familiar with those databases available to the Elkton Police Department that would facilitate the purpose of this policy.

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(b) Maintain adequate training in the area of intelligence gathering to ensure no information is being maintained that would violate the law or civil rights of any individual.

(c) Ensure a process is available that would allow employees to report relevant information. The process should be designed to promote efficient and quick reporting, and should not be cumbersome, duplicative or complicated.

(d) Ensure that Elkton Police Department personnel are made aware of the purpose and value of documenting information regarding suspicious activity, as well as the databases and other information resources that are available to the department.

(e) Ensure that SAR information is appropriately disseminated to personnel in accordance with their job responsibilities.

(f) Coordinate investigative follow-up, if appropriate.

(g) Coordinate with the appropriate agency or fusion center.

(h) Ensure that, as resources are available, the Elkton Police Department conducts outreach that is designed to encourage community members to report suspicious activity and that outlines what they should look for and how they should report it (e.g., website, public service announcements).

433.4 REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

Any department member receiving information regarding suspicious activity should take any necessary immediate and appropriate action, including a request for tactical response or immediate notification of specialized entities, when applicable. Any department member who is not a peace officer and receives such information should ensure that it is passed on to an officer in a timely manner.

If the activity is not directly related to a reportable crime, the information will be recorded on a SAR, which will document information about the involved party and the circumstances of the incident. If an officer comes across such information while investigating an unrelated crime or incident, he/she will make no mention of the suspicious activity in the original incident/arrest report, but will document the suspicious activity on a SAR and include the incident/arrest report number.

433.5 HANDLING INFORMATION

Records Department will forward copies of SARs, in a timely manner, to the following:

- Special Operations Bureau supervisor
- Authorized designees

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