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Report Writing Responsibilities Supervisors, Officers & Police Service Aides (Re-issue DB 16-125)

The purpose of this bulletin is to clarify member responsibility as it relates to the preparation and approval of police reports. Preparing factual and thorough incident reports is one of the most important duties of a professional police officer and PSA. The San Francisco Police Department expects professional incident reports from its members, sworn and non-sworn.

Thorough investigation(s) memorialized in well-prepared incident reports are essential to follow-up investigations and eventual prosecution. Officers and PSA's are responsible for preparing incident reports that are complete and accurate when memorializing an incident. A properly completed incident report creates the foundation for any further legal action.

Supervisors are responsible for reviewing incident reports to ensure that all pertinent information is contained in the report. Prior to approving any incident report, supervisors shall review each report thoroughly and take the time to provide training (constructive criticism) whenever possible.

The following is a list of common errors which could undermine officer credibility and potential prosecution:

- Elements of crime not articulated to support charges.
- Reasonable suspicion or probable cause not articulated in narrative.
- Exhaustive canvassing for witnesses not completed/noted.
- Exhaustive canvassing for evidence (video) not completed/noted and/or proper documentation of BWC.
- Omission of witness contact (follow-up) information.
- All charges not listed.
- Evidence missing/not listed and/or failing to articulate chain of custody for evidence.
- Narrative written in passive voice *i.e.* "was arrested by me" as opposed to "I arrested."
- Narrative written in present tense instead of past tense *i.e.* "Jones tells me that the suspect punches her and flees" as opposed to "Jones TOLD me that the suspect had PUNCHED her and then FLED."
- Failing to document supervisory oversight or approval of charges.
- Failing to document reason(s) for not adhering to Department policy.
- Failing to Mirandize suspects and obtain statements unless directed otherwise in accordance with Dept. policy.
- Failing to use the proper title of the Incident or Crime classification.
- Failing to obtain and include written statements from all involved officers.

- Failing to ensure all pertinent and available evidence is scanned and digitally attached to the incident report in Crime Data Warehouse, while also ensuring that no sexually explicit material is included.
- Failing to articulate search and seizure consistent with Department policy and current laws.
- Failing to articulate use of force consistent with Department policy and current laws.
- Failing to spell check and grammar check report.

Supervisors shall adhere to **DGO 1.04 (A)(2)(a) Duties of Sergeants** which states, “*Sergeants shall review their subordinates’ arrests and reports for appropriateness and completeness.*”

The Airport Bureau Record section is responsible for scanning the evidence and digitally attaching it to the ILEADS-RMS report system.


WILLIAM SCOTT
Chief of Police

Per DB 17-080, both sworn and non-sworn members are required to electronically acknowledge receipt and review of this Department Bulletin in HRMS.