

4.03
CRAIG POLICE DEPARTMENT
Office of Chief of Police
General Order

Date Issued:	<u>May 15, 1997</u>	Revision Date:	<u>June 8, 2009</u>
Subject:	Report Writing Guide	Reference:	
To:	All Officers		

I. POLICY:

This guide is designed to provide members of the department with a concise set of instructions concerning the proper report forms to be used under a given set of circumstances as well as instructions as to the execution of each report form. The forms themselves and other material contained herein, including the descriptions of persons and property, will serve as interviewing aids in many instances.

From the standpoint of members of the department, it is important that every assignment to a call for police service be recorded. This protects the department and the officer handling the investigation from unwarranted accusations that improper police action was taken or that nothing was done at all.

Reports are necessary to serve as the official memory of the department, but beyond this they serve to insure that the report of an investigation is available for use by other members of the department who may be called upon to investigate the matter further.

Even more important, supervising officers must give supervision and guidance to their subordinates in individual investigations. One way to accomplish this is to record the action taken on a report, which is turned over to the reporting officer's superior for review and approval. In addition to reviewing the propriety of actions taken in individual cases, supervisory personnel will use reports to evaluate the work performance of members under their command.

The data compiled from individual reports provide a basis for analyzing crime and determining manpower needs and assignments, and aid in budget preparation.

II. REPORTING SYSTEM

- A. A record shall be made of any law enforcement action taken by Craig Police Department employees whether in response to a request for service or a self-initiated action.
- B. A record will be made for every reported incident in the following categories:
 - 1. Citizen reports of crimes;
 - 2. Citizen complaints;
 - 3. Citizen requests for services when:

- a. An officer is dispatched
 - b. An employee is assigned to investigate
 - c. An employee is assigned to take action at a later time
4. Criminal and non-criminal cases initiated by law enforcement officers; and
 5. Incidents involving arrests and summons.
- C. All incidents shall have the following information recorded in the Computer Aided Dispatch Systems maintained by Colorado State Patrol Communications and is considered an official record:
1. The date and time of the initial reporting;
 2. The name of the citizen (if available) requesting the service, whether victim or complainant;
 3. The nature of the incident; and
 4. The nature and time of the action taken (if any).
- D. When reports are not filed, the Computer Aided Dispatch entry shall serve as a sufficient record of action.

III. REPORT WRITING

- A. A documented report shall be made on all cases in which officers respond to a call and are required to perform an official function. Any investigation done by the officer shall be documented.
- B. A case report consists of a face sheet and narrative.
- C. Written reports shall be made on complaints where a violation of Federal, State or Municipal law has occurred. This shall include, but not limited to:
1. Any crime against persons to include missing persons and runaways;
 2. Any crime against property;
 3. Any physical arrests made;
 4. Any property confiscated;
 5. Any property held for safekeeping in a Craig Police Department secured area;

6. Any vehicles impounded; and
 7. Any other incident in which the circumstances must be documented to show what actions were taken by the officer.
- D. Written reports need to be completed on incidents that are either criminal in nature or have that potential based on the totality of the circumstances. Officer discretion may become a factor when circumstances indicate that a complainant/victim does not wish to pursue or cooperate with an investigation. In these cases, documentation may consist of information placed in the CAD incident screen.
 - E. Any incident that requires follow-up or the documentation of a number of facts shall dictate that a written report be completed.
 - F. Reports shall be completed by the end of each shift unless approved by the shift Sergeant for late completion.
 - G. Under no circumstances, without the approval of the Sergeant, shall an officer fail to complete reports before starting days off.
 - H. Reports must be as complete, concise and as accurate as possible.
 - I. Personal beliefs, biases, or prejudices of the officer, which may influence the report, shall not be included. If the officer wishes to state an opinion, it should be indicated as such in the report.
 - J. Officers shall include as much personal information about victims, suspects, complainants and witnesses as is necessary to make a complete report.
 - K. Cases that have time frame requirements for filing charges, additional follow-up needed, adult felony suspect in custody, or for any other reason require more immediate attention should be annotated as priority cases by placing by typing in “urgent” or “priority” when downloading recordings for records.

IV. WRITTEN REPORTS

- A. A report shall be made on all cases the Department may need a written account of an incident, which was investigated. This shall include, but not limited to:
 1. Any incident report;
 2. Any offense report;
 3. Any custody report;
 4. Any accident report (both long and short form);

5. Any property form; and
6. Any other form which is put into the case file.

NOTE: If a summons is written for a Municipal Ordinance violation, i.e., Curfew, Underage Possession, etc., notes on the back of the summons may be used in lieu of a dictated report.

V. REPORTING PROCEDURE

- A. Officers shall generally dictate reports but do have the option of writing the report with supervisory approval. If he/she chooses to dictate the report, the following procedure will be followed:
 1. Each officer will receive a handbook containing Cheat Sheets for report writing with the ATIMS software, and outlines of required information for the successful completion of specific types of offense reports, i.e., Criminal Mischief, Theft, etc.;
 2. The officer will dictate the report referring to the handbook previously mentioned;
 3. The dictated report will be downloaded into recordings for records for transcription.
 - a. If a report must be transcribed as soon as possible due to a time issue, etc., the recording will be termed a priority recording and will be so indicated by typing “urgent” or “priority” when downloading the recording.
 4. The recording will be transcribed as soon as possible.
 5. Records personnel upon completion of the transcribed report will transfer the report to the officer for approval. The officer will submit the report for approval. Once approved by Records, the recording will be deleted.
 6. The officer must review the report as follows:
 - a. In ATIMS (Advanced Technology Information Management System), go to the Incident and Case Screen
 - b. My Pre-Approved Cases;
 - c. My Approval Rejected;
 - d. My Approval Submitted;
 - e. Officers will approve transcribed reports by submitting a report for approval.

- f. If corrections are necessary, the officer will make these changes prior to submitting the report;
- g. The Administrative Sergeant and Captains will review reports and forward them to Records for final approval. Patrol Sergeants may also review reports. All reviewers may make minor typographical and grammatical corrections, providing the substance of the report or a direct quote is not altered.
- h. Records will complete final approval of the report after NIBRS information has been verified.

B. Supplemental Reports

1. In the Incident and Case screen, type the case number in the incident number field
2. Press F2
3. Click on the “S” in the command line
4. Proceed typing supplemental as applicable.

C. If an officer chooses to write his/her own report, the procedure is as follows:

1. In ATIMS (Advanced Technology Information Management System)
 - a. For Offense and Incident Reports go to the Incident and Case Screen and enter information in all appropriate tabs.
 - b. Enter Offense Report/Supplemental;
 - c. Complete all necessary segments as determined by the Incident and Case Screen;
 - d. When the officer has completed the report, it should be submitted for approval in the Approval Screen;
 - e. The Division Commanders and Administrative Sergeant will review reports prior to final approval;
 - f. Records will complete final approval of the report after NIBRS information has been verified.

D. Records personnel will complete counter reports. See Special Order 2001-7.

E. NIBRS (National Incident Based Reporting System) statistics shall be submitted to the State and National Uniform Crime Reporting System monthly. Records personnel will verify accuracy of NIBRS data.

1. Refer to the U.S. Department of Justice - Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook for the correct UCR classification of offense reports.

VI. SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The field supervisor of the reporting officer may review warrantless affidavits and reports for the following:
 1. Completeness
 2. Satisfactory investigation report with a clear, concise description of events in the narrative section.
 3. For evaluation purposes.
- B. Whenever a supervisor finds discrepancies in an officer's report, he/she will counsel the reporting officer as to proper entries and require that the officer make the necessary corrections. These corrections should be made prior to the officer ending the tour of duty.

VII. ROUTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTS

When the dictation/transcription process is complete, reports will be reviewed and edited by the reporting officer. After review, the officer will submit the report for approval.

Records personnel will be responsible for routing reports to the respective agencies: District Attorney, City or County Court, Social Services, Probation, etc.

Approved By:



Walter K. Vanatta
Chief of Police