



California State University, Los Angeles
Department of Public Safety

NUMBER: IV-38 APPROVED: _____
Joseph Curreri, Chief of Police

EFFECTIVE: January 7, 2012

SUPERSEDES: May 1, 2007 Reviewed/Revised: January 7, 2012

SUBJECT: **Report Writing**

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this order is to provide officers with report writing guidelines when preparing reports, and to augment Department Order II-5.

II. POLICY:

It shall be the policy of this Department to complete a written crime report for all crimes that occur within our jurisdiction that are reported. Officers will promptly and properly complete reports when crimes/incidents are brought to their attention. Victims will not be discouraged from making a crime report when a crime has occurred.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Crime report: A report that is prepared that documents the facts, circumstances, and all relative information regarding a reported crime, which provides the reader the ability to fully understand what has transpired.
- B. Incident report: A report that is prepared for non-criminal incidents that are brought to the attention of the University Police staff. Examples of such reports include, but are not limited to, lost property, found property, or other non-criminal incidents. Courtesy crime reports for other law enforcement agencies are routinely taken as incident reports.
- C. Traffic Collision report: A report that is prepared wherein a traffic collision has occurred and a full traffic collision or summary cause investigation is completed. All injury collisions will be investigated by use of a traffic collision report, and a full traffic collision investigation will be conducted.
- D. Traffic Property Damage Only report: A report taken which meets the State of California guidelines for use of a Property Damage Only (PDO) report form.
- E. Accident/Injury report: A report that is taken which documents the facts and circumstances regarding any (non-vehicular) accident or injury occurring on the University. Examples are, but not limited to, slip and falls, tripping incidents, falls, tree falls on a vehicle, or other accidents that cause damage to property or injury to persons where the University may have a

vested interest, etc. These incidents will be recorded by use of an Accident Report Form as well as the reports used in the Automated Records Management System (ARMS).

- F. Factual foundation for a report: A factual foundation for the offense being reported. In order for a report to be taken for a specific offense, the elements [as defined in the Penal, Vehicle, Educational Codes, or other statutes] must be met. The mere fact that a reporting party believes an incident is a specific crime, does not necessarily constitute their belief as being factual. Officers must ensure that crimes/incidents are properly reported to ensure accurate Part I and II reporting to the Federal Bureau of Investigations occurs.

IV. PROCEDURES:

- A. The duties of a police officer include determining if a report should be taken. Any of the following require that a report of some type be taken:
1. The incident is a crime;
 2. The incident is not a crime, but causes a substantial interest to the Department or the University;
 3. The report is a courtesy report for another agency;
 4. An injury, accident, collision, or other type of incident has occurred; or,
 5. Other issues such as University security issues or officer safety information.
- B. When an officer is in doubt as to whether a report should be taken, or as to what type of report should be taken, the officer should contact their supervisor immediately. If there is no supervisor immediately available, the officer should obtain all information to complete a report in the future, if it is later determined a report is required. The on-duty Command Officer can also be contacted to provide guidance regarding whether a report should be taken, and if a report is to be taken, the type of report required.
- C. Any staff member assigned to complete any report will document the incident in an accurate and chronological manner. All reports will contain the pertinent information that allows for the timely investigation or other follow-up as required. Further, all assigned reports, including, but not limited to crime reports, in-custody reports, and incident reports shall be completed and approved prior to the conclusion of the officer's shift.

V. NARRATIVE REPORT FORMATING:

- A. Each report will have a standardized format that officers will use when preparing reports. The format has several purposes. First, it assists the reader in being able to easily identify key points of a report. Next, it aids officers in obtaining the necessary information for the report. And, finally, it can aid in courtroom testimony at a future date by the officer.
- B. All reports will contain the names, addresses (home and work), telephone numbers, date of births, height, weight, as a minimum within the reports for

all persons mentioned within the report. Law enforcement officers or members of this Department that are mentioned in reports will not have their home address, home telephone number, social security number, or date of birth listed in the report, and will be listed in the “Other Officers Mentioned” section. Those officers listed will not be entered into the ARMS system.

C. The following titles and abbreviations of parties will be used within a report that are entered into ARMS:

1.	Victim:	V
2.	Suspect:	S
3.	Witness:	W
4.	Reporting Person:	RP
5.	Discovered Crime:	DC
6.	Other:	O
7.	Injured Party:	IP
8.	Party to a T/C:	P
9.	Registered Owner:	RO

D. Each person listed in any report will be given a title based on their involvement within a specific crime/incident being reported. Law enforcement personnel who assist in a crime investigation will be listed as “other” in the crime report, unless the person is the reporting officer.

E. Involved parties within Department reports:

1. Victim:
A person who is reporting that a crime has been committed against them in some manner.
2. Suspect:
A person who has, or is likely to have been involved with the commission of a criminal offense. [Persons who are merely mentioned as possible suspects **are not** to be listed as suspects, but will be listed as an “other”.]
3. Witness:
A person who has witnessed an offense, or a person who provides information regarding a reported offense who is other than the reporting party. Examples of information maybe be, but not limited to, vehicle or suspect description, other observations, etc.
4. Person reporting:
A person, who is not a victim, which reports a crime or incident to law enforcement personnel. Examples would be, but not limited to, a person who discovers or observes a crime, or a person who is reporting an incident based on information provided by others.
5. Other:
This category is for persons mentioned within a report that do not fall in to any other category for report purposes. This is the section

wherein a report writer would list a person who is merely mentioned as a possible suspect of a crime.

6. Driver:
A person who is operating any motor vehicle as defined in the California Vehicle Code.
7. Passenger:
Any person who is within any motor vehicle as defined in the California Vehicle Code, and is not the driver.
8. Additional Party Identifiers:
The California Vehicle Code has several other party identifiers that are used within collision reports. Report writers should be familiar with those codes.

F. The following information, at minimum, will be required within reports:

1. All actions and observations made by the officer took during the course of his/her investigation.
2. All victim services provided. These services will include at a minimum:
 - a. Domestic violence information;
 - b. Emergency protective order information;
 - c. Prosecution procedures;
 - d. Case status;
 - e. Case number and reporting officer;
 - f. Contact person at department; and,
 - g. Counseling services available.
3. The services listed in paragraph V.F.2 above will be listed in the narrative of the report.
4. All statements made by persons interviewed, to include suspects, victims, witnesses, or other parties interviewed.
5. Crime scene examinations, evidence collected, and photographs taken.
6. Whether fingerprint processing was or was not conducted, and, if not conducted, the reason why.

G. Report headings:

1. Major report headings are quick and easy reference points for readers of reports. They provide a location where a person can immediately reference to ascertain what evidence has been collected; if photographs were taken; what a crime scene looked like; or, who additional parties to the report are.
 - a. Required major report headings:
 - 1). Reporting officer;
 - 2). Other officers mentioned;
 - 3). Source of Activity;
 - 4). Evidence;

- 5). Property Recovered;
- 6). Photographs;
- 7). Crime Scene Examination;
- 8). Details
- 9). Other headings that officer deems appropriate; and,
- 10). Case closure.

- b. The report headings in paragraph V.G 1 (a) (1) through (10) respectively, will be listed within all crime reports, with the exception of traffic citation reports. In those cases regarding traffic violations wherein a report is written, generally, evidence, crime scene, and photographs are not required. There may be instance wherein a reporting officer may choose to use these headings. The Traffic Collision Manual provides the format and headings for traffic accident reports.

H. Report status/closure:

1. All reports will have a status/closure:
2. Report status/closures are listed and discussed below:
 - a. Hold: Case is placed on hold by the Watch Commander. These cases will be completed by the officer on their next work day. All held reports require a hold slip.
 - b. Open: Assigned to patrol or investigations for follow-up.
 - c. Suspended: Case closed due to all investigative leads being exhausted.
 - d. Closed A: Closed by arrest (includes traffic citations where a report is also written).
 - e. Closed X: Closed by exception. (Exception cases refer to cases where no prosecution is desired (even if the suspect is known); traffic reports where prosecution is not being referred; and, all non-criminal reports.
 - f. Closed U: Closed unfounded. (Unfounded reports are reports that upon investigation, there is clear evidence that the crime was not committed. Officers should pay particular attention to the fact an additional crime may have occurred which would still require an incident to be reported).

I. Use of major report headings:

1. Each crime report will contain a report narrative. Report narratives are a continuation of the face sheets of the crime report. Report narratives must include all relevant and pertinent information known to law enforcement at the time of the report.
2. Narrative reports will contain the following title heading. If a specific title heading does not apply, "Does not apply" will be placed below the major case heading. "Does not apply" will not be used when an officer has checked the crime scene for evidence and

found none; when no photographs are taken, or when a crime scene could not be located. In those cases, the officer will make the appropriate comment below the major case heading.

Example:

“No crime scene could be located to process or photograph.”

3. Reporting Officer: Reporting officers name will be listed as the first line in the narrative report.

Example:

REPORTING OFFICER:

Cpl John Smith, ID #1234, Cal State LA, University Police,
323-343-3700.

(Note: Other officers mentioned will be listed under a separate heading and listed in the same manner as the reporting officer).

4. Source of activity: Source of activity is normally reserved for traffic related reports.

Example:

SOURCE OF ACTIVITY:

At 0400 hours, June 15, 2003, I was on-duty working patrol in full police uniform and driving a marked police vehicle, conducting police patrol in the area of Circle Drive and Campus Way, aboard the California State University LA, Los Angeles, Ca, when I observed a red 1989 Ford Falcon, Cal Lic # 2XXX111, with expired registration.

5. Evidence: All items of evidence seized during the preliminary or subsequent follow-up investigations will be listed in this section. The first item seized will be listed as “Item #1”, then the second item seized will be “Item #2”, etc. The location where the evidence was found will be listed on the same line as the item of evidence. The location of where the evidence is booked is also required to be listed directly after the location where the item was found. If all items were found at the same location, officers may make one generic entry, instead of after each item, reflecting this fact.

Example:

EVIDENCE:

Item #1. One Green Nokia 6300 cellular telephone, serial number A123456. (Seized at crime scene at 1234 Main St., Alhambra, CA by Officer Jones.) Item was booked into the Evidence Repository, Evidence Locker #1234, at the CSULA.

Item #2. One Uni-royal 4 Ply Steel belted radial tire, Size R15-70PR270-30. (Seized at the crime scene at 1236 Main St., Alhambra, CA by Officer Jones.) Item was booked into the Evidence Repository, Evidence Locker #1234, at the CSULA.

(Generic example): All items seized were located at the crime scene at 1234 Main St., Alhambra, CA by Officer Jones. All items were booked into the Evidence Repository, Evidence Locker #1234, at the CSULA.

6. Property recovered: This heading is included so officers can list items recovered during the course of their criminal investigation. It is not to take the place of the property/evidence forms contained within ARMS.

Example:

PROPERTY RECOVERED:

Item #1. One Sony digital camera, Mod# 1234, Serial # Z23456, valued at \$900.00.

Total Recovery Value: \$900.00 (The total recovery value will be the summarized total of all items recovered.)

7. Photographs: Officers are always encouraged to take photographs of crime scenes, recovered stolen property, vehicle damage, etc., and in fact should be taking photographs of the crime scene that they are investigating. One or two photographs may make the difference if and when the case goes to court. When photographs are taken, the officer must record those photographs properly within the narrative. Photographs that are taken, although they are evidence, will be also listed in the section entitled “photographs”. An example of a photographic entry within the narrative is listed below:

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Two 35mm depicting facial injuries received by V/Smith. Photographs were taken at the crime scene at 1234 Main St., Alhambra, CA. (Photographed booked into evidence as described in “evidence section” above.)

8. Crime Scene Examination: This area is reserved for the officer’s description of the crime scene, as well as a location where the officer will indicate he/she processed the scene for evidence.

Officers must be clear when describing a crime scene so as to give the reader a visual depiction of where the crime occurred. Officers must ensure that they tell the report reader exactly how a scene was processed. For example, “I dusted the driver and passengers’ doors in an effort to locate any fingerprints. No prints were developed as a result of processing these areas. If evidence was found, the officer would make mention of that fact in the crime scene examination. The following is an example of what a crime scene examination entry might look like:

CRIME SCENE EXAMINATION:

No items located example:

The location where this crime occurred is at 1234 Main St., Alhambra, CA. This location is a large vacant lot that is situated mid-block of a residential housing track. The area has neatly trimmed grass and is used by residents of the neighborhood as a community park. Officers from the CSULA, University Police Department (Smith, Jones, Wilson), walked the entire park looking for expended shell casings, weapons, additional injured persons, and any other items of evidence. No victims or items of evidence were located.

Items located example:

The location where this crime occurred is at 1234 Main St., Alhambra, CA. This location is a large vacant lot that is situated mid-block of a residential housing track. The area has neatly trimmed grass and is used by residents of the neighborhood as a community park. Officers from the CSULA, University Police Department (Smith, Jones, Wilson), walked the entire park looking for expended shell casings, weapons, additional injured persons, and any other items of evidence. Found and seized at the location by Officer Jones was one .22 caliber expended shell casing; two .22 caliber live rounds of ammunition, and one knife with suspected blood residue on the blade. For further details, please refer to the evidence section of this report as well as Officer Jones’ supplemental report documenting his discovery of the items seized.

9. Other headings officer deems appropriate: Additional headings may be used by officers should the need arise. For example, officers may choose to add additional information that does not fit elsewhere in the report; however, the information is important to the case or to the follow-up investigation.

Example:

INVESTIGATIVE LEAD:

Smith said that there were several residential burglaries reported in the housing area in the last two weeks. A review of burglaries in the housing area for the period 03-12-03 to 04-05-03, reveals the following reports apply: DR#030045, 030057, 031203, and 031234.

10. Report status/case closure: Each report will have a report status/case closure. Prior to the report status/case closure, a brief description of the closure will reflect why the case is being closed as it is.

Examples:

CLOSURE:

All logical investigative leads have been exhausted. In the event additional leads are developed, a supplemental report will be generated. Based on the foregoing, this report is closed SUSPENDED.

This case will be forwarded to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for review and/or charges being filed against the suspect(s). Based on the foregoing, this report is closed ARREST.

This investigation revealed that no crimes were committed. Based on the foregoing, this report is closed UNFOUNDED.

All parties in this investigation have been identified. Based on the fact that a misdemeanor was not committed in my presence, coupled with the fact that the victim is non-desirous of prosecution, the report is closed EXCEPTIONAL.

This is a non-criminal information report with no further follow-up required. Based on the foregoing, this report is closed EXCEPTIONAL.

This is a courtesy report taken for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. A copy of this report will be forwarded to that agency for information/action as they deem appropriate. Based on the foregoing, the report is closed EXCEPTIONAL.

This report is forwarded to investigations for attempt contact with O-2 John Smith in an effort to ascertain his knowledge or complicity in the theft of the victim's car stereo. Based on the foregoing, this report will remain OPEN and continued to investigations.

This report is to be returned to patrol for further follow-up with Victim Smith in an effort to ascertain if she located the serial number for her car stereo. Based on the foregoing, this report is OPEN and continued to patrol.

VI. REPORT PROCESSING:

1. Upon completion of a report, officers will print a copy of their report and attach all pertinent documentation such as citations, DUI worksheets, etc., to the report. The report will then be placed in the watch report tray for supervisory review.
2. The on-duty watch commander will review all reports found within the watch report tray. The on-duty watch commander will return any reports to the officer for correction, should correction be required. If the watch commander approves the report, the report will be immediately forwarded to the records bureau for processing.
3. Officers are required to make corrections in a timely manner, which will normally be the day they receive the report back for correction. Any delays in correction will be reported to the on-duty watch commander who will determine if the delay is acceptable. All delays in forwarding reports to the records bureau will be reported by the watch commander to the records supervisor immediately. During after-hours and weekends, this notification will be made via e-mail.

VII. APPENDICES: Closure Matrix
Sample Report Narrative

Report Closure Matrix					
Incident	Open	Unfounded	Exceptional	Arrest	Suspended
Suspect arrested/to DA/CA for review				X	
Case determined to be unfounded		X			
Case requires patrol/investigative follow-up	X				
Suspect known, victim does not desire prosecution			X		
All logical leads investigated, no further action required					X
Suspect in crime known, but whereabouts not known*	X				X
Incident of significant nature-Investigative Review	X				
Driver cited for misdemeanor CVC violation				X	
Vehicle cited for parking violation			X		
Person cited in field on FRC for misdemeanor violation				X	
Courtesy report for other agency			X		

* Denotes: Depending on the type of crime, case may be closed Suspended or left open for further investigation

SAMPLE REPORT

REPORTING OFFICER:

Cpl John Smith, ID #1234, Cal State LA, University Police, 323-343-3700.

SOURCE OF ACTIVITY:

At 0400 hours, June 15, 2003, I was on-duty working patrol in full police uniform and driving a marked police vehicle, conducting police patrol in the area of Circle Drive and Campus Way, aboard the California State University LA, Los Angeles, Ca, when I observed a red 1989 Ford Falcon, Cal Lic # 2XXX111, with expired registration.

EVIDENCE:

Item #1. One Sony digital camera serial number #Z23456, Mod# 1234. (Seized at vehicle stop location at 1234 Main St., Alhambra, CA by Officer Smith.) Item was booked into the Evidence Repository, Evidence Locker #1234, at the CSULA.

Item #2. Two Polaroid photographs of Sony digital camera. (Photograph taken at 1234 Main St., Alhambra, CA by Officer Smith.) Items were booked into the Evidence Repository, Evidence Locker #1234, at the CSULA.

PROPERTY RECOVERED:

Item #1. One Sony digital camera, Mod# 1234, Serial # Z23456, valued at \$900.00.

Total Recovery Value: \$900.00

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Two 35mm depicting the Sony digital camera. Photographs were taken at the vehicle stop location at 1234 Main St., Alhambra, CA. (Photographed booked into evidence as described in "evidence section" above.)

CRIME SCENE EXAMINATION:

No crime scene examination was conducted as the original crime occurred in the City of Los Angeles on June 5, 2003.

DETAILS:

At 0400 hours, June 15, 2003, I was on-duty working patrol in full police uniform and driving a marked police vehicle, driving in the area of 1234 Main Street, Alhambra, CA, when I observed a red 1989 Ford Falcon, Cal Lic # 2XXX111, with expired registration that expired on January 1, 2003. I conducted a traffic enforcement stop in front of 1234 Main Street, Alhambra, Ca. I contacted the driver and sole occupant of the vehicle, John Wilson, who identified himself to me by his California driver's license. I then advised Wilson why I had stopped him, and Wilson immediately held up a Sony digital camera with his right hand, and said, "I confess, I stole this in Los Angeles on June 5, 2003." Wilson then handed me the digital camera. I conducted a computer check of the camera and learned that it was in fact reported stolen on June 5, 2003 by the LAPD, under LAPD case #123456703. (Refer to the attached computer printout). I had Wilson exit the vehicle and placed him under arrest for 496 PC (Possession of stolen property).

I searched Wilson prior to placing him in the rear of my patrol car. No other items of evidence were located. I then conducted a search of Wilson's vehicle incident to his arrest. No other items of evidence were located.

At 0425 hours, June 5, 2003, Detective John Johnson, of the LAPD Hollenbeck station, arrived at the traffic stop location. Detective Johnson conducted an interview of Wilson and requested that I forward my report to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for the 496 PC violation only, and that he would continue with his investigation regarding the burglary that had taken place in his jurisdiction.

At 0500 hours, June 5, 2003, I transported Wilson to the CSU Los Angeles, University Police Department for processing. Upon completion of the booking process, Wilson was transported to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Men's Central Jail by Officer Planner, with the booking approval of Lieutenant Compaq, of LASD. Smith was cited for 4000(a) CVC (Unregistered vehicle), Citation # LA#123456Z, and given a traffic court date July 17, 2003, 1945 Hill Street, Los Angeles, Ca.

At 0530 hours, June 5, 2003, I took two Polaroid photographs of the recovered Sony digital camera. (Refer to the evidence section above for further details.)

At 0545 hours, June 5, 2003, I booked the Sony digital camera into evidence. (Refer to the evidence section above for further details.)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

It is requested that a copy of this report be forwarded to the LAPD, Hollenbeck Station, to the attention of Detective John Johnson for information and/or action.

CLOSURE:

This case will be forwarded to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for review and/or charges being filed against the suspect(s) for 496 PC (Possession of stolen property). Based on the foregoing, this report is closed ARREST.