


MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

General Order

CHAPTER: 090		TITLE: Report Writing and Forms	
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 Sheriff of Monroe County			

- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for proper case reporting and form completion.
- II. **DISCUSSION:** This directive shall apply to all Monroe County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) personnel. The report writing procedure set forth herein concerns the manner of recording information relative to law enforcement incidents, which come to the attention of MCSO. This directive explains and governs the use of the official Report Form exhibited and is designed to guide the reporting deputies in preparing reports, which are brief but thoroughly descriptive and explanatory.

This directive does not amend, modify or change any office report or procedure that is not specifically covered herein.

This directive has been devised with a view toward cutting down the number of forms the field deputy must carry, and with the aim of making reports simpler and easier to prepare by the use of check boxes where possible.

With the proper use and application of the contents, along with common sense, reports can be above reproach.

III. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A. General Personnel Responsibilities

1. All members of MCSO shall be personally responsible for the prompt preparation and submission of reports and investigations as prescribed.
2. All members of MCSO shall affix their name to all official reports and forms submitted by them relating to matters subject to their investigation and/or assignment.
3. Supervisors shall be held responsible for the close scrutiny of reports submitted by their subordinates and for the correction of reports submitted to them with deficiencies, errors, incompleteness, etc.
4. Any supervisor receiving a report prescribed herein shall require compliance by his/her subordinates with the provisions of this manual. He/she shall specifically:
 - a. Require the use of the correct report form.
 - b. Require preparation and submission of all necessary reports at the end of the deputy's shift.

- c. Require full and complete report of all essential information pertinent to the case.
 - d. Inspect the report to ascertain that the information contained therein is consistent with the charge to be made, that all parties named are adequately identified, their participation specified and that all property mentioned in the report is properly described and evaluated along with serial numbers if available.
 - e. Check content of all reports received to ensure:
 - 1) correct spelling, grammar, verbiage, sentence structure and logical thought is used
 - 2) lost, stolen, found or recovered property is fully described, including reasonable value
 - 3) all copies of reports pages show legible impressions
 - f. Be responsible for the prompt and proper forwarding of all required reports.
- B. Restricting Reports:** Some reports require restriction based on the confidential or sensitive nature of the report. The report should be restricted by the supervisor reviewing/approving the initial report when it is determined a report should be restricted.
- 1. Types of reports that may requiring restriction include:
 - a. When an MCSO employee is the victim or suspect of a crime
 - b. Homicide investigations
 - c. Miscellaneous reports of a confidential or sensitive nature as directed by the Sheriff or designee
 - 2. How to restrict a report in Case Management:
 - a. Assign a Lead Investigator under the Report Status
 - b. Add Team Members under the Assignments tab and restrict access to the investigative team
 - 3. Access to restricted reports: The Lead Investigator will give authorized access to the report to his/her chain of command to include the following personnel:
 - a. Sheriff
 - b. Undersheriff
 - c. Major of Operations
 - d. General Counsel
 - e. Lead Investigator's supervisor
 - f. District/Division Commanders (Captain, Lieutenant or Director)
 - g. UCR Specialist
 - h. Other personnel as required by the Lead Investigator

C. Locking Reports: Cases shall not be locked unless prior approval is received from the Sheriff, Colonel or Bureau Commander.

D. Report Submission Requirements:

1. An Offense/Incident Report will be written and submitted when:
 - a. Information indicates a crime was committed
 - b. Document an arrest
 - c. Property is seized or impounded
 - d. The incident may be continual or the deputy feels it needs to be documented
 - e. The complainant insists a report be written
2. Should the victim and/or complainant express a desire not to file charges and/or not to have a report written, a report will be written and in the narrative it shall be noted that the complainant and/or victim refuses to cooperate or does not wish to pursue the investigation.
3. All subsequent investigations to our original case, will be documented on a supplemental report by using our original case number (i.e. recovered property/vehicle, warrant arrest, missing persons and long term investigations).
4. "No Report": a report is not automatically required in the following circumstances:
 - a. The complainant/victim is gone and cannot be located when the deputy arrives
 - b. The incident is purely a civil matter
 - c. Prior to the deputy leaving the scene of a call that fits one of the above criteria, he/she will request from a supervisor permission for a "No Report". A supervisor, after being briefly enlightened as to the case, will then approve or disapprove a "No Report" disposition. If a supervisor cannot be contacted, a report will be written.
 - d. Assist Other Agency (AOA), including but not limited to:
 - 1) traffic accident assists
 - 2) escorts
 - 3) prisoner transports for another agency
 - 4) administrative transport
 - 5) sick/injured person(s), if the deputy does not provide first aid or take any other action
 - 6) fire calls, if:
 - a) A Fire Department responds, and
 - b) The deputy takes no action
 - e. Noise complaints, if:

- 1) the complainant(s) is/are anonymous, or
 - 2) the complainant(s) is/are named and request(s) only that the noise be terminated, and if:
 - a) the noise is terminated, and
 - b) the deputy writes a field contact card noting the subject(s) responsible for the noise, and
 - c) Communications enters the field contact number in the "Comments" field of the Call for Service record, and
 - d) there is no altercation between the subject(s) responsible for the noise and complainant(s).
- f. Courtesy transport from a disabled vehicle, or other non-criminal transport.
- 1) When a deputy provides a courtesy transport to a member of the opposite sex or to a juvenile of either sex, the deputy will advise communications of the starting and ending mileage of the transport.
 - 2) In every case, a field contact card will be written for each individual transported and under "Comments" will be noted "Courtesy transport" and the beginning point and destination, along with any other appropriate remarks.
- g. "Walk-through" of bar or other business if there has been no breach of peace or other criminal activity. A "No Report" disposition will also be allowed should the deputy request/require a patron to leave, if:
- 1) there is no criminal activity, and
 - 2) a field contact card is written on each patron requested/required to leave
- h. Other circumstances including neighborhood disputes, barking dog complaints, and suspicious person/vehicle complaints if the suspicious person/vehicle cannot be located by the deputy.
- i. Found property that has no serial number or other identifying mark, and no apparent value:
- 1) When found property is discovered by, or turned in to a deputy, he/she is to examine it carefully for any serial number or other identifying mark, such as an owner-applied number.
 - a) If the deputy finds no such number and is reasonably certain that no such number exists in an area of the object which is not immediately visible, and if the property has no apparent value, the deputy is authorized to submit the property without an offense/incident report, according to procedures described below.
 - b) If the deputy is not certain that no serial number or other mark exists that could be used to determine at that time or at some point in the future whether the item was in FCIC/NCIC as "wanted", he/she is to contact the/an on-duty supervisor, who will make the final decision regarding whether to look further.

- c) If a serial number or other identifying mark is found on property with no apparent value, the deputy is to check FCIC/NCIC to determine whether the property is stolen or wanted for any other reason. If it is, the deputy is to follow established policy in writing an offense/incident report.
- 2) Submitting property determined to have no serial number or identifying mark:
- a) The deputy will notify Communications that he/she will be submitting property without a report, plus the name of any supervisor who may have been involved in that determination.
 - b) Communications will not "PROP W/O ID" and any supervisor's name in the Remarks section of the Call-for-service screen, and will enter the disposition code as 03 ("handled without report").
 - c) The deputy will submit the item(s) and a completed property receipt to the Property Division.
 - d) Items with no identifying numbers or marks but of obvious evidentiary and/or monetary value (i.e., drugs, some jewelry, etc.) are exempt from the provisions in this subsection. Offense/incident reports must be written when such items are found and submitted to the Property Division.
 - e) In the event, a member of another law enforcement agency or of the public, requests documentation of such item(s) being turned in to the Sheriff's Office, he/she is to be given a printout of the specific call for service, in accordance with established policies governing public access to law enforcement records.
- j. There will be occasions when a report SHOULD be written in the above listed circumstances. The responding deputy is responsible for recognizing such occasions and reporting accordingly.

5. Procedures

- a. In the following instances, the preparation of a case report by the field unit may be omitted if any of the following circumstances are evident when the deputy arrives on the scene of a call:
 - 1) The case is "unfounded" at the scene, as indicated in Item 4 below.
 - 2) The complainant is "gone on arrival" ("GOA") and there are no circumstances on the scene requiring the deputy to take any action.
 - 3) A report would be a duplication of a previous report covering the same incident.
 - 4) No law enforcement action is indicated because:
 - a) there is nothing to substantiate that the crime, violation or incident has occurred, and
 - b) there are no sick or injured parties, and
 - c) there is no loss or recovery of property, and
 - d) the incident is outside the jurisdiction of the Sheriff's Office

- e) the call must be totally groundless before it can be classified as "unfounded"
- 5) Civil matter, referred.
- 6) "False" Burglary/Robbery Alarm: False alarm, as a general policy, will be a "No Report" situation. The following are provided as examples for clarification. The deputy responding however, should keep in mind the circumstances involved and if they dictate, then the event be recorded for future use.
- a) A bank alarm which has been cleared by the established "code" procedure and contact with bank personnel has been accomplished will be a "No Report" call.
 - b) An alarm call which the deputy clears by having contact with persons at the premises or the responsible party responds to the premises will be a "No Report" call.
 - c) An alarm call to which the responsible party is contacted and refuses to respond may be a "No Report" call. (Does not apply to Banking Institutions).
 - d) An alarm call, which is cleared and no responsible party is contacted, or no responsible party can be contacted or located to respond, will be a report call.
 - e) In addition to the above, the Office will also allow a "No Report" status if we cannot locate a responsible party; and if:
 - (1) The responding deputy visually checks the building exterior and determines that the building is secure.
 - (2) The deputy advises Communications that the building is secure and Communication notes same under "comments" in CFS.
 - (3) The responding deputy completes a Monroe County Sheriff's Office courtesy inspection card and either places the card in the mail slot under the door or returns it to the administrative sergeant so notification can be made to the property owner the following day. The card is not to be left in plain view as notification that the alarm is malfunctioning. Cards are available from Community Relations Officers.
- b. The Communications Division will assign a case number to every request for law enforcement service including assists to other county agencies, municipal police departments and ambulance or fire department calls.
- 1) Dispatching of field units will include the case number in the original transmission. Case numbers will be needed whether or not a report is to be written.
 - 2) When a complaint is initiated by a walk-in complainant, the individual will be put in either personal contact or telephone contact with a deputy for case report completion.
 - 3) Communications Officers will indicate "No Report" on the "case card" by drawing a diagonal line across the face of the card from the lower left-hand corner to the top of the card.

E. Uniform Crime Reporting:

1. In an effort to standardize the reporting of crimes, the International Association of Chiefs of Police developed the Uniform Crime Reporting system for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. For practical purposes the reporting of offenses/incidents known is limited to certain crime classifications because they are the crimes which are most likely to be reported to the police and they occur with sufficient frequency to provide an adequate basis for comparison. They are also serious crimes by nature and/or volume.
2. As of January 1, 1971, in compliance with Florida State Statute 23.089, the Office of the Sheriff, Monroe County as well as all law enforcement agencies in the State, must submit their Uniform Crime Reports to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.
3. The following list of crime classifications is placed in this manual in their order of importance to the Uniform Crime Reporting system in an effort to familiarize the deputy in the field with the report classification procedures. It will assist the deputy in prioritizing categories of the incident or report. Classification of reports and arrests made will not necessarily be the most serious according to State Statute.
 - a. Homicide
 - b. Manslaughter
 - c. Forcible Rape
 - d. Forcible Sodomy
 - e. Forcible Fondling
 - f. Robbery
 - g. Aggravated Assault
 - h. Aggravated Stalking
 - i. Burglary (not Motor Vehicles)
 - j. Pocket Picking
 - k. Purse Snatching
 - l. Shoplifting
 - m. Theft from Building
 - n. Theft from Vending Machine
 - o. Theft from Motor Vehicle
 - p. Theft of Bicycle
 - q. Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts
 - r. All Other Larceny
 - s. Auto Theft

- t. Gambling
- u. Simple Assault
- v. Simple Stalking (D.V. only)
- w. Intimidation (D.V. only)
- x. Arson

F. Hotel Rule:

- a. The "Hotel Rule" as established by the Federal Bureau of Investigations, in the Uniform Crime Reporting Manual, and as accepted by Florida Uniform Crime Reporting is a system by which burglaries or B & E's of more than one hotel/motel room occurring apparently within the same time span and apparently perpetrated by the same subject(s), may be counted as one offense/incident.
- b. The following information has been gathered from both FBI and Florida Uniform Crime Reporting Manuals, past Office staff meetings and is included in this Manual in an effort to standardize the use of the "Hotel Rule" within this Office.
 - a. Necessary requisites governing use of the "Hotel Rule":
 - 1) The Incidents In question must be burglary (B & E), and/or theft.
 - 2) The incidents in question must have occurred in a series of hotel/motel rooms.
 - 3) The incidents in question must have occurred within a reasonable time proximity.
 - 4) The incidents in question must have been perpetrated by the same subject(s).

NOTE: Use of the "Hotel Rule" is restricted in that all of the above requisites must be present.
 - c. Examples of proper usage of the "Hotel Rule".
 - a. A thief enters or attempts to enter two or more rooms in a hotel or motel on one occasion and steals or attempts to steal property from each room. Each room is rented by a separate guest(s).
 - b. Multiple thefts from vehicles are committed by the same subject(s) on the same occasion in a private parking lot or a public garage. A private parking lot is to be defined as any area in which parking is restricted to a particular group of people, such as employees, patrons, or guests.
 - c. In the above instances, one case number will be used, a separate lead sheet prepared for each room or vehicle and said case number subdivided on each lead sheet in the following manner, 1000(A), 1000(B), 1000(C). Compliance with the above will allow the reporting of all pertinent information, but will permit the department to count only one incident of burglary (13 & E) or larceny under case number 1000.

G. Types of Reports: See each section for their uses and instructions:

- 1. Arrest/Notice to Appear

2. Probable Cause Affidavit
3. Narrative Continuation
4. Adult Notice to Appear
5. Juvenile Civil Citation Form
6. Offense/Incident Report
7. Property Receipt
8. Vehicle Acquisition/Receipt
9. Uniform Traffic Citation
10. Field Contact

H. Instructions for Completing Required Reports: SOP 090, Report Writing and Forms, specifies how to complete the necessary reports. This SOP can be found in PowerDMS by clicking on Documents and then the Standard Operating Procedures folder.