

DB001.1	
Criminal Investigation Procedures	
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Attorney General / Bergen County Prosecutor:	
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Last Updated: May 11, 2016	Ridgewood Police Department Policies and Procedures

The Ridgewood Department will investigate reports of criminal activity to the fullest extent possible in order to resolve complaints and to present defendants for prosecution as directed by other elements of the criminal justice system. All officers are assigned the responsibility of investigating criminal activity and are subject to the provisions of this policy. The Ridgewood Police Department Detective Bureau has the responsibility of handling criminal investigations that require special expertise, or because of their complexity or geographic considerations, do not lend themselves readily to completion by the Patrol Division.

DEFINITIONS

- **Preliminary Investigation** - Generally, the information collected by officers upon their initial response to an incident.
- **Follow Up Investigation** - The extension of a preliminary investigation to gain additional information.
- **Primary Investigator** - The officer assigned primary responsibility and accountability for an investigation.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS

A properly conducted and documented preliminary investigation may, at times, be sufficient to bring a case to a successful conclusion. Most preliminary investigation will be conducted by first responding officers of the Patrol Division. Officers conducting preliminary investigations will, as appropriate:

- Observe all conditions, events, and remarks;
- Maintain the crime scene and protect evidence;

- Locate and identify the complainant, all witnesses and suspects;
- Interview the complainant, witnesses and suspects;
- Arrange for notification and response of Detective Bureau personnel, if needed;
- Arrange for the collection of evidence;
- Affect an arrest, if possible; and,
- Report the incident fully and accurately.

DETECTIVE BUREAU: ON-CALL SCHEDULE

The Officer-In-Charge (OIC) of the Detective Bureau will formulate a monthly work and on-call schedule for all officers assigned to the Detective Bureau. The monthly "on-call" schedule will be posted at the police desk for reference by the Patrol Division.

Detectives will normally be called out, or assigned to investigate, the following types of cases:

- Death of a violent or suspicious nature;
- Rape or suspected rape;
- Assaults that result in serious bodily injury or death to the victim;
- Armed robbery;
- Kidnapping, extortion;
- Hostage situations;
- Car-jacking;
- Bombing or arson;
- Burglaries when there is extensive or unusual loss (high dollar value, cash, jewelry, etc.) **OR** physical evidence is at the scene that could lead to an apprehension;
- Bias incident involving any of the above crimes;
- Investigations of child abuse, where immediate follow-up is necessary;
- Serious accidents when a Detective is required to take a written statement;
- Any major disaster where detectives can assist in identification of victims or taking of statements;
- Sensitive investigations involving Governmental or elected officials that are victims of a crime; and/or,
- Any other incident involving follow-up investigations where the Patrol Division may need assistance, as determined by the OIC of the Bureau.

If the Patrol Officer in Charge feels that a Detective is required to help investigate, he/she shall contact the Detective Captain or OIC. If the OIC is not available, then the Officer in Charge may contact the On-Call Detective directly.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DETECTIVES

- Fully investigate any criminal matters assigned by the Chief of Police or the OIC of the Detective Bureau.
- Conduct follow-up investigations, including:
 - Review and analyze all previous reports prepared during the preliminary investigation, departmental records, physical evidence, and laboratory results;
 - Conduct additional interviews of victims, witnesses, and suspects;
 - Conduct surveillance activities;
 - Seek additional information through speaking with patrol officers, potential witnesses and informants;
 - Identify and apprehend suspects;
 - Determine involvement of suspects in other or related crimes;
 - Check suspects criminal history;
 - Prepare search warrants and affidavits;
 - Plan, organize and conduct searches;
 - Collect physical evidence;
 - Prepare criminal complaints;
 - Prepare cases for prosecution;
 - Initiate a “second contact” with individuals involved in the investigations as required during a follow-up or as information develops;
 - Maintain contact with investigators of other departments, including the Bergen County Prosecutor’s Office, as required during an investigation.
- Refer all information regarding vice, narcotics, organized crime and homeland security concerns to the OIC of the Bureau for further investigation or referral to the appropriate law enforcement agency (see *Complaints of Vice, Drugs and Organized Crime, DB006.1* and *Intelligence Squad, DB007.1*).
- Provide technical or investigative assistance to the Patrol Division upon request of the Tour Commander and as directed by the OIC of the Bureau.
- Conduct background investigations as directed by the OIC of the Bureau (refer to *Background Investigations* policy *DB004.1*).

- Internal affairs investigations as directed by the OIC of the Bureau (refer to *Internal Affairs Investigations* policy DB002.1).
- The use of polygraph examinations as directed by policy DB009
- Maintain liaison while requesting specialized assistance from other law enforcement agencies or elements of the criminal justice system, such as the Bergen County Prosecutor's Officer, New Jersey State Police, Bergen County Sheriff's Bureau of Criminal Identification, DEA, ATF, FBI, Secret Service, etc.
- Develop composite sketches of suspects and distribute, as directed by the OIC of the Bureau.
- Periodically attend Patrol roll call to provide information in regard to wanted suspects, vehicles, etc.
 - Police information sheets may also be distributed to patrol as needed.
- Develop information through interviews, interrogation and informants (see *Use of Informants*, DB005).
- Maintain liaison with area law enforcement agencies.
- Attend monthly meeting of area detective bureaus.
- Maintain neat, organized investigative case files

ASSIGNMENT OF CASES TO THE DETECTIVE BUREAU

- The Chief of Police, or his designee, shall review all reports of criminal activity on a daily basis. The reports that the Chief determines requires any type of follow-up investigation will be forwarded to the OIC of the Detective Bureau.
- Case assignments to investigators will normally be made on the basis of investigator skills, knowledge, expertise, and current caseload. Criminal investigations case assignments will be determined by the OIC of the Bureau.
- The OIC of the Detective Bureau shall be responsible for the accountability of the Department's Case Reporting Log, which is maintained by the Records Room. The log is designed to function as an investigative case status control system. Every police action requiring a case report shall be recorded into the log. The following information shall be obtained from the Police reports and recorded into the log:
 - Case number
 - Offense
 - Location
 - Date
 - Initial Officer

- Detective assigned
- Status of case
- Date case is closed

A. An investigative case file must be initiated and maintained on all cases assigned to a detective.

1. Case files should contain:

- a. Copy of the preliminary investigative report
- b. Records of statements
- c. Results of examinations or physical evidence
- d. Case status updates
- e. Any records, report, or information needed for investigative purposes

2. Each detective should keep assigned active case files current and stored in a manner such that, when off duty, the OIC of the Bureau, or another detective can find and refer to the case files, if necessary.

3. The OIC of the Bureau will oversee all aspects of the investigation and periodically receive a verbal update concerning the ongoing cases.

4. Once each week, the OIC shall conduct a case management meeting with the detectives. The detectives will be required to provide all pertinent information regarding their assigned cases.

5. The OIC shall make a determination of whether a certain case shall be closed or continued.

6. One of the following administrative designation shall be assigned to each case:

- a. OPEN – a case is still assigned and active
- b. FILED – all available leads have been exhausted, but the case has not been concluded and may be resumed at a later time
 - i) Prior to being placed in “filed” status, the assigned detective is required to contact the victim (or complainant) to assure that the original report has all relevant information and if any additional information has developed
 - ii) The information will be recorded on the appropriate sheet
 - iii) Should the detective determine that there is new information, he will notify the OIC of the Bureau, who will then determine if the case should remain active

- iv) If, at any time after the case has been “filed”, new information develops, the OIC may re-assign the case, preferably to the original investigating detective
- c. CLOSED – the case has been concluded
 - i) The OIC will make the final determination when to “close” a case
 - ii) The “closed” cases shall be transferred to the Records bureau and kept in a secure location.
- 7. The OIC will note the status of each case assigned, and report to the Chief of Police in a manner prescribed by the Chief.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE (BCPO)

- A. During any police investigation (or during prior planning, arrest, pretrial, etc.), any questions of law or criminal procedure will be addressed to the assigned Assistant County Prosecutor. Questions regarding police procedure will be addressed to the Shift Commander, OIC of the Bureau, or the Chief of Police.
- B. Detectives that are assigned to a criminal case that has been referred to the BCPO, as per their guidelines, will maintain a liaison with the investigator assigned to the case.
- C. Detectives will submit applications and affidavits for search warrants to the appropriate Assistant Prosecutor for review and approval prior to its execution.
- D. Where necessary in a contested case, the detective involved will meet with the County Prosecutor, or his designee, to discuss the case prior to trial.

PERSISTENT OFFENDERS

During the investigation, the detective bureau will attempt to determine if an individual is a habitual/serious offender, known as a persistent offender, by looking at past reports taken by this department and the criminal history of the offender. If the detective identifies the offender as a persistent offender, the OIC of the Bureau should be notified. The OIC of the Detective Bureau or his designee will then notify the BCPO of this fact if the criminal charges are indictable, to ensure success in the proper prosecution and sentencing of the offender. This information will generally be presented to the prosecutor’s representative during

Criminal Case Screening of criminal cases which are to be forwarded to the BCPO for prosecution. For the purposes of establishing criteria for the determination of persistent offender status, this agency will utilize the definitions set forth in NJSA 2C:44-3.

- A. Persistent Offender - A persistent offender is a person who at the time of the crime is 21 years of age or over; who has been previously convicted on at least two separate occasions of two crimes, committed at different times, when he was at least 18 years of age, if the latest in time of these crimes or the date of the defendants last release from confinement, whichever is later, is within 10 years of the date of the crime for which the defendant is being charged.
- B. Professional Criminal -A professional criminal is a person who committed a crime as part of a continuing criminal activity in concert with two or more persons, and the circumstances of the crime show he has knowingly devoted himself to criminal activity as a major source of livelihood.