

Watertown Police Department GENERAL ORDER



JOANNA W. VITEK
CHIEF OF POLICE

Effective Date: January 12, 2009	Rescinds: Amends: D-120, April 15, 2006	Number: D-120
Subject: Investigative Case Screening		Re-evaluation Date: January 2012
Distribution: All Personnel	Related CALEA Standards:	

This order consists of the following numbered sections:

1. Purpose
2. Policy
3. Definitions
4. Procedures

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish the policies and procedures of the Watertown Police Department, Investigative Case Screening Process. This process shall be the means for determining whether an investigation should be continued.

2. POLICY

It is the policy of the Watertown Police Department to investigate crimes to the extent practical. The decision to continue or discontinue a case shall be made on available information and may be based in part, on the desire and willingness of the victim to pursue the case, and the existence of any suspects. The determination shall be based in part upon the existence of sufficient solvability factors obtained through the initial investigation.

3. DEFINITIONS

A. SOLVABILITY FACTORS - Elements of information about a crime which have proven in the past to be important in the successful conclusion of a case. Case screening is designed to provide sufficient information about a case at the earliest possible time in the investigative process in order to permit a decision to be made regarding the value of continuing an investigation. The outcomes of case screening will be either: early suspension of unpromising cases or, a follow-up investigation of those cases with a reasonably probability of case clearance.

1. The objectives of the Investigative Case Screening Process are:

- a. To establish the policies and procedures for determining whether to assign a case for additional follow-up investigation or to suspend any further investigation.
- b. To establish the responsibility and accountability for the decision to assign or screen out a case.
- c. To manage the investigative caseload so that the potential for solving cases is improved.
- d. Assign for additional follow-up investigation only those cases with sufficient solvability factors, in order to increase the probability of case clearance.
- e. To provide procedures for notifying crime victims of the current status of their case.

4. PROCEDURES

A. Case Screening Criteria.

1. Solvability factors. Criteria that are to be used as a guide to determine whether a case will receive follow-up investigation includes, but is not limited to the following:

- a. Reliable witness
- b. Suspect names
- c. Suspect described
- d. Suspect location

- e. Suspect identified
 - f. Suspect previously seen
 - g. Suspect vehicle described
 - h. Traceable property
 - i. Significant m.o.
 - j. Useable physical evidence
 - k. Limited opportunity for anyone other than suspect to commit the crime
 - l. Offense may be solved with reasonable additional investigative effort.
 - m. Multiple offenses reported.
 - n. Over \$1,000 loss in property or damage.
- B. Case Screening Responsibility
- 1. The CID Sergeant will be responsible for:
 - a. Reviewing offense reports for completeness of the initial investigation and accuracy of the information contained on the offense report. Incomplete reports will be returned to Officer's supervisor.
 - b. Reviewing cases forwarded by officers under his/her command, to ensure that they have been followed up to the extent practical under the particular circumstances.
 - 2. If, under exceptional circumstances, and in the CID Sergeant's opinion an immediate follow-up investigation would substantially increase the likelihood of suspect apprehension or case clearance, the CID Sergeant may assign the case for an immediate follow-up investigation.
 - a. The officer taking the initial report will conduct investigation immediately at the time report is taken if circumstances under #2 apply.
- C. Investigation Supervisor
- 1. The responsibility of the CID Sergeant in the case screening process will be:
 - a. To review all offense reports forwarded to the investigative section.
 - b. To determine whether sufficient solvability factors and values are present in the case; and,
 - c. To either assign the case for follow-up investigation or suspend the case and notify the victim(s) of the status of the investigation. The supervisor of the officer will ensure contact.
 - 1). Upon assignment of the case by the CID Sergeant, an investigation shall be initiated and a follow-up report submitted within 30 days. This may be extended or waived at the discretion of the CID Sergeant.
 - 2). Unless otherwise directed, upon assignment of the case, the assigned investigator shall keep all records, statements, lab reports, and other case related materials with the case file. The CID Sergeant and CID Captain shall have access to the file at all times.
 - 3). The CID Sergeant shall review the status of all assigned cases within 30 days after assignment. Cases will be assigned an "Open" or "Closed" status. Open cases will remain under investigation. Cases may be closed by arrest, exceptional clearance, or suspended.
 - 4). Upon the closing of a case, all original documentation shall be submitted to Records pursuant to departmental guidelines. Files, which are subject to being recorded photographically or electronically, may be retrieved by authorized personnel and stored pursuant to the directions of the CID Sergeant or CID Captain.
 - 5). Any case that is assigned to a Detective, contact will be made with the victim within 48 hours of being assigned the case. If no contact is made, all reasonable attempts must be made.
 - d. To forward offense reports with sufficient information about the case screening decision to the Detective's Secretary.
- D. Exceptional Circumstances
- 1. While the case screening criteria are very specific, the Investigative Case Screening Process will be flexible enough to allow for exceptional circumstances including, but not limited to:
 - a. Offenses of significant importance to the community.
 - b. Potential danger to victim(s) or witness(es).

- c. Seriousness of offense.
 - d. Pattern, frequency, or m.o. characteristics of offense.
 - e. Management decisions to pursue a case regardless of solvability factors.
 - f. While there is a degree of flexibility in the case screening process, exceptional circumstances such as those described above shall be the exception, rather than a standard procedure.
- E. CID Sergeant
1. The responsibility of the CID Sergeant in the case screening process will be to resolve any problems or conflicts developing from the case screening process.
 2. Upon receiving a case, the CID Sergeant shall make a determination of the solvability of the particular case using the criteria contained in the information element sheet. Once assigned, the CID Sergeant shall maintain records indicating the status of the case. The case records should indicate the case number, date assigned, the investigator assigned, case status, days open and other information as determined by the CID Sergeant.
 3. The assigned investigator shall maintain the case file in a secure manner. The file shall include a copy of the preliminary investigative report and any written statements. In addition the file may include any lab results, follow-up reports, notes, statements, and other materials as determined by the investigating officer. The investigating officer's follow-up should include those steps necessary to adequately conclude the investigation.
 4. To the extent necessary and practical the investigating officer should:
 - a. Review and analyze previous reports, records, and/or technical reports and lab results relative to the investigation.
 - b. Conduct additional interviews and/or interrogations.
 - 1). This may include the interviewing or re-interviewing of the victim, witnesses and bystanders.
 - 2). Determine if any witnesses may be able to identify a suspect from a lineup.
 - c. Seek additional information from both departmental and non-departmental sources. These may include but are not limited to:
 - 1). Speaking with the officer(s) who were initially assigned the call.
 - 2). Obtaining information/data from the planning and research.
 - 3). Obtaining information from records.
 - 4). Obtaining information from informants.
 - 5). Obtaining information from organizations, businesses, institutions and others that may have dealt with potential suspects.
 - d. Ensure that the collection of evidence and the search of any relevant areas have been completed.
 - e. Maintain contact with victims and witnesses throughout the duration of the investigation.
 - f. Identify potential suspects and eliminate those who are no longer suspects.
 - g. Determine the suspect's potential involvement in other related crimes.
 - h. Check criminal history of suspects.
 - i. Thoroughly prepare the case for legal presentation.
 5. Upon conclusion or suspension of an investigation, the investigator shall forward the case file to the CID Sergeant. The CID Sergeant should purge the file of all redundant or non-related materials and forward the file to the Records Division.

JOANNA W. VITEK
 Chief of Police
 Watertown Police Department
 Watertown, South Dakota

INFORMATION ELEMENT

WEIGHT (circle)	SECTION 5 TO BE USED ONLY IF INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT CODING OR TO ACTIVATE AN INACTIVE CASE
	1. Suspect Information
10	A. Positive Identification
8	B. Tentative Identification
6	C. Poor Identification
	2. Vehicle Information
10	A. Positive Identification (tag and/or other)
8	B. Definitive Description
6	C. Poor Description
	3. Estimate Time Between Incident - Report
4	A. Less than one hour
3	B. One to twelve hours
2	C. Twelve hours and over
	4. Method of Reporting
2	A. Witness and/or victim
1	B. Officer on-view
	5. Information Received
	A. Confidential Informant and/or victim
10	1. Definitive information
8	2. Possible information
6	3. Poor information
	B. Information shared from other investigator and/or agency
10	1. Definitive information
8	2. Possible information
6	3. Poor information
	6. Modus Operand
5	A. Definitive pattern
4	B. Possible pattern
3	C. Poor pattern
	7. Fingerprints
10	A. Identified with suspect
1	B. Without suspect

**** TOTAL CUT POINT FOR CASE ACTIVATION IS 10**

Case: **Active**
Inactive (circle)

Other factors not listed which cause the case to be active
(Specify) _____

NOTE: This scale is to be used as a guideline only and is not intended to override nor interfere with the good judgment of a superior in assigning cases where there may be considerations not included in the scale.

CASE NUMBER: _____ INVESTIGATOR: _____

DATE: _____ SCREENER: _____

WPD- 392
(DATE)

(VICTIM NAME)
(VICTIM ADDRESS)

Dear (VICTIM NAME):

This letter is in reference to your recent vandalism that you reported on (DATE).

During the preliminary investigation, the officers were unable to locate any witnesses to the crime or to collect any evidence that might assist in identifying any potential suspect(s). During the follow-up investigation, the officers were unable to develop any further leads. I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about the status of your case.

Are you aware of any additional information that might be helpful to the officers in solving your case?

If there is no additional information, your case will be placed into an inactive status. Although your case is not actively worked, it will remain open in the event that any new leads develop.

If you become aware of any additional information regarding this matter, please bring it to the attention of the Watertown Police Department at (605) 882-5238 and ask for (INVESTIGATING OFFICER).

If any new leads are developed by the Watertown Police Department, you will be notified immediately.

Sincerely,

(CID SUPERVISOR NAME)
(TITLE), Criminal Investigative Division

(INITIALS)/cc

