

4.09 INCIDENT REPORTING



INCIDENT REPORTING

POLICY & PROCEDURE NO. 4.09	SECTION ADMINISTRATION	PAGES: 6	ISSUE DATE: June 11, 2024
MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED: 82.1.4, 82.2.1, 82.2.2, 82.2.3, 82.2.5		EFFECTIVE DATE: June 24, 2024	REVISION DATE:
ISSUING AUTHORITY: 			
Chief Nathan Hagglund			

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

One major function of criminal justice agencies is documentation. Police agencies have become very effective at documenting incidents and events, and the demand for documentation by the legislature, courts, and citizens continues to increase.

To provide organization to the origin, filing, and retrieval of documentation, this department has obtained a computerized records management system that assigns a unique identification number to incidents and events logged by the communications staff. This numbering system allows for the orderly filing and quick retrieval, both electronically and manually, of reports and other documents and items associated with those reports.

Additionally, our crime statistics are shared with the state and federal governments through National Incident Based Reporting (NIBRS). Crime statistics are compiled, along with statistics from other criminal justice agencies, to produce reports of crime trends. The data is published by the state and federal governments.

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II. POLICY

Reports of incidents shall be documented pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws and employees shall file reports to document incidents, events, and activities as directed by this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

IV. PROCEDURES

INCIDENT NUMBERING SYSTEM [82.2.3(1)]

This department maintains a computer-generated incident numbering system. A unique incident number is generated and assigned to document calls for service, initiated activity, directed activity, administrative functions, and other police activities. The incident number is the foundation for all police record-keeping activity. The incident number is linked to arrests, citations, court, property and evidence, accidents, and other records functions within the records management system.

LOG ENTRIES

Public Safety Communications Center (C8) personnel create incident entries in response to police operations or administrative activity. Incident log records shall be created for the following types of situations:

1. Citizen Reports of Crimes [82.2.2(1-A)]
2. Citizen Complaints [82.2.2(1-B)]
3. Calls for service where a public safety employee is dispatched or assigned [82.2.2(1-C)]
4. Criminal and non-criminal cases initiated by law enforcement employees [82.2.2(1-D)]
5. Incidents involving Arrests, Citations, and Summonses [82.2.2(1-E)]
6. Notifications
7. Prisoner Transports
8. Other incidents where documentation is prudent, requested by an employee, or directed by a supervisor.

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Log entries shall include the location and type of call for service.

WRITTEN REPORTS [42.1.3] [82.2.1(1)(2)]

Some incidents require written reports because, by their nature, they need to be documented, or a report for an incident may be required by statute. In some cases, providing written documentation is just a good public service. Incidents requiring written reports should not be taken by mail or the Internet. In circumstances, such as reporting party residing out of state or being otherwise unable to make a report in person, officers may take a report via telephone (for further information see policy on **Pandemics, Communications**). Police employees of this agency shall prepare a written report for all the following incidents: **[82.2.1(3-A)] [82.2.5(1)]**

1. Arrests;
2. Motor Vehicle Crashes;
3. Crimes;
4. Statutorily Required Reports;
5. Domestic Violence; ¹
6. Identity Theft; ²
7. Child Abuse and Neglect;³
8. Elder Abuse and Neglect.⁴
9. Process Service (i.e., arrest warrants, restraining orders, etc.)
10. Any incidents where, in the opinion of the officer or their supervisor, a written report is necessary.

The following electronic report forms are to be used to document the written reports listed above: **[82.2.1(3-B)]**

1. Offence Reports (OF) - Incidents not listed under another category
2. Arrest Reports (AR) - Arrests
3. Restraint Entries (RO) - RO's and HPO's
4. Accident Reports (AC) - Accidents

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5. Investigation Reports (IV) - Sexual assaults, criminal intelligence, and sensitive investigation reports
6. Warrant Complaint Entry (WA) - Summons/hearings/warrant applications
7. Field Interviews (FI) - Brief encounters for the purpose of recording an individual or group's identity at a certain time and place
8. Citation Entries - Citation/warning entries
9. Supplemental Narratives - Narratives added to another officer's report

All written reports require the following basic information be included:
[82.2.1(3-C)]

1. Date and time of the incident
2. Location of the incident
3. A description of what happened
4. The Officer's observations and determinations
5. Information pertaining to the Complainant (s), victim(s), and witness(es), to include:
 - a. Names
 - b. Addresses
 - c. Age, gender, and race (required for NIBRS reporting)
 - d. Home, work, mobile telephone numbers and email address (if available)
 - e. Property, including stolen, found, recovered, and evidence

Ideally, an incident report should be completed immediately following the incident when the details are fresh in the officer's mind or by the conclusion of an officer's shift. This, however, is not always practical. If an officer is unable to complete a report by the end of their shift the report must be submitted prior to the end of the employee's work week (would require supervisor approval). If a complete report is not possible due to an investigation, a preliminary report should be completed within these time parameters with additional information added as the investigation progresses. **[82.2.1(d)]**

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All paper documents pertaining to a report must be scanned and electronically attached and stored in the report. All reports are electronically filed. All arrest reports are electronically filed with the East Brookfield District Court. The only printed reports will be for public record requests and fulfilling court requirements.

Arrests and Criminal Complaints (for a summons, hearing, or warrant) require a police report and a Statement of Facts. These reports should be completed following an arrest or at the culmination of an investigation and must be completed prior to the transportation of the arrested party to court or the submission of a Criminal Complaint.

REVIEWING REPORTS

Upon completing a report, the employee must submit the report to the Sergeant, Lieutenant or Chief of Police through the records management system. A report returned by a supervisor shall be reviewed and corrected by the employee. A supervisor need not submit their own reports to another supervisor for review but may at their own discretion or when directed to by a superior officer. **[82.2.1(3-D,E)]**

When reviewing an officer's report the supervisor should be looking for:

1. Spelling and grammar;
2. Required information;
3. Crime elements;
4. Defendant and victim rights;
5. Proper department procedure; and
6. Readability.

A supervisor may not change the factual content of an officer's report. Errors, omissions, or other issues detected should be brought to the employee's attention for correction. When the issues have been addressed, the report shall be resubmitted for approval. For further information, see the department policy **Records Management**. **[82.2.1(3-F)]**

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NATIONAL INCIDENT BASED REPORTING [82.1.4]

NIBRS data is inputted during the incident reporting process. For each incident, NIBRS data will be inputted by the officer assigned to the report. On the first business day following the last day of each month, the Chief of Police or their designee shall process NIBRS data for the previous month. The NIBRS data shall then be transferred from the Information Systems network to Town of West Brookfield network and uploaded to Massachusetts State police CrimeSOLVE page of the Massachusetts Crime Reporting Unit Web Site (www.ma.beyond2020.com).

QUALITY CONTROL

The NIBRS submitting software will check each entry for errors and establish a NIBRS error log. Sergeant or Chief of Police or their designee shall correct the errors listed on the error log, and resubmit the file.

¹ M.G.L. c. 209A, § 6.

² M.G.L. c. 266, §37E.

³ M.G.L. c. 119, §51A.

⁴ M.G.L. c. 19A, §15(a).