

# Suspicious Activity Reporting

## 431.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for reporting and investigating suspicious and criminal activity.

### 431.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Involved party** - An individual who has been observed engaging in suspicious activity, as defined in this policy, when no definitive criminal activity can be identified, thus precluding the person's identification as a suspect.

**Suspicious activity** - Any reported or observed activity that a member reasonably believes may have a nexus to any criminal act or attempted criminal act, or to foreign or domestic terrorism. Actual or perceived characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, or disability should not be considered as factors that create suspicion (although these factors may be used as specific suspect descriptions). Examples of suspicious activity may include but are not limited to:

- Suspected pre-operational surveillance or intelligence gathering (e.g., photographing security features, asking questions about sensitive security-related subjects).
- Tests of security measures and response to incidents (e.g., "dry run," creating false alarms, attempts to enter secure areas without authorization).
- Suspicious purchases (e.g., purchasing large quantities of otherwise legal items, such as fertilizer, that could be used to create an explosive or other dangerous device).
- An individual in possession of such things as a hoax explosive or dispersal device, sensitive materials (e.g., passwords, access codes, classified government information), or coded or ciphered literature or correspondence.

**Suspicious Activity Report (SAR)** - An incident report used to document suspicious activity.

## 431.2 POLICY

The Santa Ana Police Department recognizes the need to protect the public from criminal conduct and acts of terrorism and shall lawfully collect, maintain and disseminate information regarding suspicious activities, while safeguarding civil liberties and privacy protections.

## 431.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Criminal Investigations Division Commander and/or authorized designees will manage information reports regarding suspicious activities that do not appear to have a nexus to terrorism. Authorized designees should include supervisors who are responsible for department participation in criminal intelligence systems as outlined in the Criminal Organizations Policy.

The responsibilities of the Investigations Division Commander include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Remaining familiar with those databases available to the Department that would facilitate the purpose of this policy.

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- (b) Maintaining adequate training in the area of intelligence gathering to ensure no information is being maintained that would violate the law or civil rights of any individual.
- (c) Ensuring a process is available that allows members to report relevant information. The process should be designed to promote efficient and prompt reporting, and should not be cumbersome, duplicative or complicated.
- (d) Ensuring members are made aware of the purpose and value of documenting suspicious activity information, as well as the databases and other information resources available to the Department.
- (e) Ensuring suspicious activity information is appropriately disseminated to members in accordance with their job responsibilities.
- (f) Coordinating investigative follow-up, if appropriate.

The Homeland Security Division Commander and/or authorized designees will manage information reports regarding suspicious activities that appear to have a nexus to terrorism.

The responsibilities of the Homeland Security Division Commander include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Coordinating with any appropriate agency or fusion center.
- (b) Ensuring, as resources are available, the Department conducts outreach designed to encourage members of the community to report suspicious activity and outline what they should look for and how they should report it (e.g., website, public service announcements).

### **431.4 REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION**

Any department member receiving information regarding suspicious activity should take any necessary immediate and appropriate action, including a request for tactical response or immediate notification of specialized entities, when applicable. A Professional Staff members who receive such information should ensure it is passed on to an officer in a timely manner.

If the suspicious activity is not directly related to a reportable crime, the member should prepare an information report that includes information about involved parties and the circumstances of the incident. If, during an investigation, an officer becomes aware of suspicious activity unrelated to the current investigation, the information should be documented in a separate information report and not included in the original incident report. In the event the reported suspicious activity involves an apparent nexus to terrorism, the member should contact the Terrorism Liaison Coordinator and provide him/her with the circumstances of the suspicious activity and the report number.

### **431.5 HANDLING INFORMATION**

The Records Division will forward copies of information reports involving suspicious activity, in a timely manner, to the following:

- Criminal Investigations Division supervisor
- Homeland Security Division supervisor

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- Other authorized designees