



INVESTIGATIVE CASE SCREENING PROCESS

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<i>C.A.L.E.A.</i> 42.1.2	<i>Reference</i>

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I. PURPOSE

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

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Iowa City 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.

III. DEFINITIONS

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 reasonable probability of case clearance.

The objectives of the Investigative Case Screening Process are:

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

IV. PROCEDURES

CASE SCREENING CRITERIA

A. 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:

1. Reliable witness
2. Suspect names
3. Suspect described
4. Suspect Location
5. Suspect identified
6. Suspect previously seen
7. Suspect vehicle described

8. Traceable property
9. Significant m.o.
10. Useable physical evidence
11. Limited opportunity for anyone other than suspect to commit the crime.
12. Offense may be solved with reasonable additional investigative effort.

CASE SCREENING RESPONSIBILITY

A. WATCH COMMANDER

1. The Watch Supervisors will be responsible for:
 - a. Reviewing offense reports for completeness of the initial investigation and accuracy of the information contained on the offense report.
 - 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.
 - c. Assigning cases to officers that do not merit an investigative reassignment however do need additional follow-up.
2. If, under exceptional circumstances, and in the Watch Supervisor's opinion an immediate follow-up investigation would substantially increase the likelihood of suspect apprehension or case clearance, the Watch Supervisor may reassign the case for an immediate follow-up investigation.

B. INVESTIGATION SUPERVISOR

1. The responsibility of the Investigations Commander 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. If the case is suspended, the Investigations Commander will notify the victim(s) of the status of the investigation or return it to the original investigating officer who will make the notification.
 - 1) Upon assignment of the case by the Investigations Commander, 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 Investigations Commander.

- 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 Investigations Commander or designee shall have access to the file at all times.
 - 3) The Investigations Commander shall review the status of all assigned cases within 30 days after assignment. Cases will be assigned an "Open", "Closed" or "Inactive" status. Open cases will remain under investigation. Cases may be closed by arrest, exceptional clearance, suspended or unfounded.
 - 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 the Investigations Commander or the investigating officer and stored pursuant to the direction of the Investigations Commander
- d. To forward offense reports to crime analysis (Planning and Research) with sufficient information about the case screening decision.

C. 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.
2. 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.

D. REPORT REVIEW/CRIME ANALYSIS OFFICER

1. The responsibility of the report review/crime analysis officer in the case screening process will be:
 - a. To coordinate the Investigative Case Screening Process to ensure that the screening decisions are within established procedural guidelines;
 - b. To analyze offense, incident and other reports for crime patterns and trends, similar m.o. characteristics, or unique factors and to notify appropriate personnel of the

results of these analyses through bulletins, spot maps and/or other appropriate reports;

- c. To analyze the any changes in patterns/trends in connection with changes in enforcement efforts.
- d. To review current trends, patterns, and/or problems with the Chief of Police or designee as needed/required.

CRIME ANALYSIS

Crime analysis will, at a minimum, consist of the following: analysis of case reports, incident reports, and calls for service.

To the extent possible, crime data shall be analyzed to identify the following:

- a. Temporal and geographic factors/distribution of selected types of crime;
- b. Frequency by type of crime;
- c. Victim or target descriptors/types;
- d. Suspect identifiers or descriptors;
- e. Suspect vehicle identifiers;
- f. MO identifiers;
- g. Physical evidence information; and
- h. Other factors as determined by the Crime Analysis Officer.

In addition, as requested, the Crime Analysis section should develop recommendations for prevention and enforcement strategies.

As available, crime analysis data should be forwarded to the affected watches and officers assigned to the specific geographical area.

E. COMMANDER - FIELD OPERATIONS

1. The responsibility of the Commander, Field Operations in the case screening process will be to meet with the Investigations Commander on a regular basis and resolve any problems or conflicts developing from the case screening process.

Upon receiving a case, the Investigations Commander shall make a determination of the "solvability" of the particular case using the criteria contained in General Order 91-07. Once assigned, the Investigations Commander shall maintain records indicating the status of the case. The case records should indicate the incident number, date assigned, the investigator assigned, case status, days open and other information as determined by the Investigations Commander.

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 officers' follow-up should include those steps necessary to adequately conclude the investigation.

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 has 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.

Upon conclusion or suspension of an investigation, the investigator shall forward the case file to the Investigations Commander. The Investigations Commander shall then review and forward the file to the Records Section.

Samuel Hargadine, Chief of Police

WARNING

This directive is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. The department policy should not be construed as a creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third-party claims. Violations of this directive will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions.