

# ELIZABETH POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



**VOLUME: 3**

**CHAPTER: 10**

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**SUBJECT: CRIMINAL CASE MANAGEMENT**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

**September 18, 2020**

**ACCREDITATION STANDARDS:**

**4.1.1**

**BY THE ORDER OF**

**CHIEF GIACOMO SACCA**

**BY AUTHORITY OF:**

**POLICE DIRECTOR EARL J. GRAVES**

**SUPERSEDES ORDER #:**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this general order is to provide an organized method of reviewing, organizing and tracking the progress and disposition of cases assigned for investigation. This information is invaluable in assessing the effectiveness of investigative efforts and methods.

**POLICY:** Successful investigations are based on fidelity, accuracy and sincerity in lawfully searching for the true facts of an event under investigation and on an equal accuracy, faithfulness, and probity in memorializing the results of an investigation. It is the policy of the Elizabeth Police Department to investigate criminal cases to the fullest extent possible and to present defendants for prosecution as directed by other elements of the criminal justice system. The Elizabeth Police Department shall use the resources available to adequately measure the assigned caseload, clearance rate and disposition of cases assigned to personnel for follow-up investigation.

## PROCEDURES:

### I. CASE SCREENING

- A. The Investigative Bureau Commanders or designee shall screen all criminal reports generated by the department for follow-up assignment or closure at the preliminary investigation stage based upon solvability factors. Cases deemed low solvability shall be administratively closed.
- B. Cases being forwarded to investigative personnel for follow up investigation shall be assigned by the supervisors or designee taking the following factors into consideration:
  - 1. General Case Assignment - The detective(s) shall be assigned to conduct follow-up activity on crimes/offenses based upon caseload and the detective's past experience. This assignment of cases may deviate minimally for on-call status cases, juvenile cases, community service cases, and narcotics related cases.
  - 2. Juvenile Case Assignment - The juvenile detective(s) shall be specialists assigned to conduct follow-up activity on juvenile cases. This assignment of cases may deviate minimally for on-call status cases or caseload.
  - 3. Community Service Case Assignment - The community service detective(s), if assigned, shall be specialists assigned to conduct follow-up activity on community service related cases. This assignment of cases may deviate minimally for on-call status cases or caseload.
  - 4. Narcotics Case Assignment - The narcotics detective(s) shall be specialists assigned to conduct follow-up activity on narcotics cases. This assignment of cases may deviate minimally for on-call status cases or caseload.
  - 5. On-Call Case Assignment - The detective(s) shall be assigned on a rotating basis to be on-call. Cases occurring during this time period shall be automatically assigned to the on-call detective. Assistance by a specialist may be used to provide investigative support to the investigative efforts.
- C. The bureau supervisors or designee shall consider the seriousness and complexity of each case and reach a decision concerning the appropriate number of detectives to assign to a case.
  - 1. There shall be only one detective assigned primary responsibility as the "lead detective" for each assigned case.
  - 2. The assignment of additional detectives is intended to provide investigative support to the lead detective.
  - 3. The bureau supervisors or designee shall coordinate the distribution of work on any case having more than one detective assigned.
- D. In reaching a decision on whether or not to assign a case for follow up investigation, the bureau supervisors or designee shall consider the following solvability factors of the case:

1. Were there witnesses to the crime?
2. Can a suspect be named?
3. Can a suspect be located?
4. Can a suspect be described?
5. Can a suspect be identified?
6. Was the suspect previously seen?
7. Can the suspect's vehicle be identified?
8. Is the stolen property traceable?
9. Is a significant modus operandi present?
10. Is significant physical evidence present?
11. Was there opportunity for anyone but the suspect to commit the crime?
12. Is there some other significant reason to believe that the crime may be solved with a reasonable amount of investigative effort?
13. Severity of the case vs. caseload.
14. Degree of crime (injuries to the victim, weapon used, pattern of crime).

E. Proactive Case Assignments

1. Nothing in this general order shall be construed to prevent the bureau supervisors or designee from assigning investigative personnel to generate an investigation based upon criminal activity patterns or confidential leads.

## II. CASE MANAGEMENT

- A. The bureau supervisors or designee shall be responsible for the swift and proper management of all cases that have been assigned for investigation.
- B. The bureau supervisors or designee shall record case assignments in the Records Management System (RMS) case management module and case management ledger. The case management module and case management ledger shall be used to record all pertinent case information for every incident assigned.
- C. The following administrative designators/case disposition shall be applied to each case, as applicable. These case designators are the only designators used by the Elizabeth Police Department and shall be recorded in the case management module and case management ledger.
  1. Active
  2. Active/Investigating
  3. Cleared Arrest

4. Submitted - Grand Jury
5. Submitted – Juvenile Court
6. Closed Pending Info
7. Referred to Municipal Court
8. Returned Missing Person

D. Detective Responsibilities

1. Each detective will be responsible for the management of all the cases assigned to him/her.

### III. CASE FILES

A. Reports maintained in the case file may minimally include: investigatory type reporting, evidence type reporting, statements, and any and all pertinent documents relating to the case to include case notes as described below:

1. Contemporaneous notes, whether handwritten, typed, entered into an electronic note-taking device or audio recorded, that describes or memorializes the note taker's personal perception of what transpired in the course of a witness interview or that memorializes the officer's personal observations at the scene of the crime of the first, second, third, or fourth degree under New Jersey law, whether committed by an adult or a juvenile.

B. Access to the active investigative case files shall be available to only investigative personnel, and others as determined by the Investigative Bureau Commander or designee. Sensitive case file information shall not be left unattended allowing for unauthorized viewing.

C. Internal Disposition of Criminal Case Files

1. Electronic records shall be archived/maintained in the Records Management System (RMS).
2. Case Type – No Further Investigative Action Required/Needed (e.g., charge(s) filed)
  - a. All original supporting reports/notes/documents/records obtained during the investigation shall be forwarded to Services for secure storage. A copy of the case file may be maintained in the Investigative Bureau.
3. Case Type - Further Investigative Action Required/Needed (e.g., suspect identified, but not charged)
  - a. All working copies of supporting reports/notes/documents/records obtained during the investigation shall be maintained in the Investigative Bureaus. Case file cabinets shall be securely locked and inaccessible to anyone not authorized by the Investigative Bureau Commanders or designee.

- D. Procedures for the destruction of agency criminal investigation files shall be in accordance with the New Jersey Administrative Code and applicable records retention schedule. **N.J.A.C.15:3-2.2** (Disposal of Public Records).