

Chapter 41

RECORDS

The central records function is important to the effective delivery of police services. In this chapter, the standards address those records functions that are basic to meeting the management, operational, and information needs of the department.

41.1 Administration

41.1.1 A written directive establishes the department's central records component.

Comments: The purpose of this standard is to place accountability for the records function in an identifiable position. (M M M)

41.1.2 A written directive establishes the department's central records functions, to include:

- o report review;
- o report control;
- o records maintenance; and
- o records retrieval.

Comments: The review activity should ensure that field reports are completed in compliance with administrative directives and that a record is made for each request for service. Report review may also include coding reports for Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) purposes. The records function also includes routing reports to specialized entities and ensuring status reports on follow-up. (M M M)

41.1.3 A written directive requires the reporting of every incident in one or more of the following categories if the incident is alleged to have occurred in the department's service area:

- o reports of crimes;
- o citizen complaints;
- o citizen requests for services when an officer is dispatched;
- o criminal and noncriminal cases initiated by police officers; and
- o incidents involving arrests or prosecution.

Comments: The purpose of this standard is to establish reporting consistency. (M M M)

41.1.4 A written directive specifies:

- o the forms to be used in field reporting; and
- o procedures to be followed in completing field reports.

Comments: The department should adopt a set of forms to standardize field reporting and structure them to ensure that basic information is recorded for all crimes and incidents. (M M M)

41.1.5 A written directive specifies procedures to be followed in supervisory review of field reports.

Comments: Supervisory review should be required, and the form should be designed for the signature of the reviewing supervisor. Typically, supervisory review is a function of the first-line supervisor and is intended to ensure that the assignment has been satisfactorily completed and reported. (M M M)

41.1.6 A written directive establishes a system to account for the status of reports.

Comments: The system should ensure that the original record is maintained in the records component and that follow-up reports are prepared on a specified schedule. (M M M)

41.1.7 A written directive establishes privacy and security precautions for the central records function.

Comments: Such policy should be consistent with applicable provincial and federal legislation. (M M M)

41.1.8 The department has a records retention schedule.

Comments: The schedule for retaining records should be consistent with legal requirements. (M M M)

41.1.9 A written directive specifies procedures for handling funds by records personnel, to include:

- o designation of persons permitted to receive money;
- o receipt procedures;
- o accountability;

- o security; and
- o audits.

Comments: The procedures should enhance security and accountability of all monies received by the department. (M M M)

41.2 Operations

41.2.1 Central records information is accessible to operations personnel at all times.

Comments: In smaller departments designated persons should be given authority to access central records information at any time. (M M M)

41.2.2 The department maintains an indexing system to all files.

Comments: The index may be manual or automated and should serve as a cross-reference to all files, by name, incident type and location. (M M M)

41.2.3 The department maintains an index of stolen, found, recovered, and evidentiary property.

Comments: The purpose of this standard is to establish accountability. (M M M)

41.2.4 A written directive establishes procedures for maintaining a warrant and wanted persons file, to include:

- o maintenance criteria;
- o establishing criteria for receiving information from other jurisdictions;
- o recording the information in department files;
- o receiving and confirming information; and
- o cancelling warrant and closing file.

Comments: These procedures are particularly important when computerized information concerning wanted persons is used. The procedure should include the mechanics of initiating a file, assigning the file, and filing warrants in a way that ensures immediate accessibility. Warrants and the master name index should be cross-referenced. (M M M)

41.2.5 A written directive establishes criteria for recording arrest information, to include:

- o preparing reports;
- o fingerprinting; and
- o photographing.

Comments: The written directive should specify those offences for which fingerprints and photographs are required. (M M M)

41.2.6 A written directive establishes procedures for collecting and submitting crime data to the national Uniform Crime Reporting program.

Comments: The standard will be satisfied if the department reports data to another system for subsequent inclusion in the national system. (M M M)

41.2.7 A written directive requires maintaining records on the disposition of all cases presented where charges were laid.

Comments: Although police departments are generally well informed about arrest rates, they often are ill informed regarding the number of, and reasons for, cases being declined for prosecution or dismissed by the prosecutor. By knowing the number of cases declined or dismissed and the underlying rationale for the prosecutorial action taken, police personnel can identify and correct departmental problems as well as those caused by other departments. (M M M)