



# VIA TRANSIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Standard Operating Procedures



### Section 402 Reporting Process

Office with Primary Responsibility:	COP	Effective Date: Prior Revision Date:	March 1, 2020 New
Officer(s) with Secondary Responsibilities:	Supervisor's, Custodian of Records	Number of Pages:	6
Forms Referenced in Procedure:	Crime-Star Law Enforcement Records Management System , VIA Form 201	Related Procedures:	Sec. 200 Code of Conduct - 4. 12 B

#### .01 INTRODUCTION

- A. The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for the preparation of the VIA Transit Police Department's written reports. All reports should be generated in the Department's CrimeStar Records Management System (RMS). Should the CrimeStar RMS be unavailable or unusable, reports may be generated by use of VIA form 201 available in the office computer system.
- B. All reports generated by VIA Transit Police Department members should be of the highest quality and accuracy as they are considered governmental records. This procedure also covers the procedures for submitting, approval, use, forwarding to investigations, and storage of files according to the guidelines of the custodian of records.

#### .02 TYPES OF REPORTS

##### A. Offense Report

1. An Offense Report is completed by an officer who is assigned report responsibility for any call for service involving a criminal offense or an alleged criminal offense.
2. Officers write all Offense Reports in CrimeStar RMS Incident Module. The officer with report responsibility shall number the offense report using the incident number they were assigned. The report shall be titled with the criminal offense(s) observed or alleged.
3. In the event CrimeStar RMS is unavailable, an officer may write an offense report using a VIA form #201. Depending on the circumstances, officer may have to number their offense report using the incident number or x-ray number they were assigned.
4. Officers shall write an offense report when a state or local criminal offense, other than traffic offense, is:
  - a. Observed and the officer is filing charges with the local judicial authority.
  - b. Observed and the officer is filing charges at large.
  - c. Unobserved and the officer has reasonable suspicion or probable cause to believe a criminal offense has occurred, and a complainant is present and wishes to pursue charges.
  - d. Unobserved and a complainant wishes to report a criminal offense, regardless of evidence to support the claim.
  - e. Traffic offenses leading to a custodial arrest.
  - f. All arrests for city, county, and out of county warrants.
5. Officers may write an offense report when a state or local criminal offense, other than a traffic offense, is:
  - a. Observed but the complainant refuses to press charges.
  - b. Unobserved and the officer has reasonable suspicion or probable cause to believe a criminal offense has occurred, and a complainant is not present but likely to pursue charges.



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#### B. Incident Report

1. An Incident Report is completed by an officer with report responsibility for a call for service with the need to document, investigate, forward any incident.
2. Officers write all Incident reports in CrimeStar RMS Incident Module. The officer with report responsibility shall number the incident report using the incident number they were assigned. The officer shall title the incident report with a title that closely resembles their scenario. Incident reports should not be titled with a criminal offense nor involve criminal offenses.
3. In the event CrimeStar RMS is not available, an officer may write an incident report using a VIA form #201. Depending on the circumstances, officers may have to number their incident report using the incident number or the x-ray number they were assigned.
4. Officers shall write an incident report when a call for service requires the documentation of:
  - a. The tow of a vehicle in parking offenses or traffic offenses not leading to a custodial arrest
  - b. The use of force, above soft empty hand control, not leading to an arrest.
  - c. Emergency detentions.
  - d. Criminal trespass warnings.
  - e. The death of an individual on transit system or involving any VIA vehicle.
  - f. The loss of personal property a complainant wishes to document.
  - g. The finding of property that cannot be taken or stored at VIA's lost and found or returned to the owner.
5. Officers may write an incident report when a call for service could possibly need documentation involving:
  - a. Disturbances
  - b. Suspicious persons, vehicles, or activity.
  - c. Sickness or injuries on or involving the transit system.

#### C. Supplemental Report

1. The Supplemental Report is an additional report attached the original offense or incident report. There is no limit to the amount of supplemental reports that can be added to an original report. The supplemental report serves to add additional information to an existing case or to make corrections to existing record.
2. Officers shall write a supplemental report when:
  - a. The officers are a part of a call for service that leads to a felony arrest.
  - b. The officers have information or witness information relating to the probable cause of a criminal offense.
  - c. The officers have information or witness information relating to the witness testimonies of a criminal offense.



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- d. The officers have information or witness information relating to the statements, actions, or defense of a suspect in a criminal offense.
  - e. the officer has additional information for the original report however the report has been locked by a supervisor.
  - f. a copy of the original report has been submitted to the local judicial authority and a correction, addition, or change needs to be made to the original report.
  - g. a complainant has additional information relating to their case and reports it to an additional officer.
  - f. instructed to do so by an investigator, supervisor, or commanding officer.
3. All Supplemental Reports must be included in the case record. The case record is not considered complete without all required supplements prepared by officers for the original report.
- D. Assist Outside Agency Report
1. The Assist Outside Agency (AOA) Report can be either an offense report or incident report in nature. As such, the procedures for both 402.02A and 402.02B can apply to these types of reports.
  2. They are reports written for the for the need to document a situation that the VIA Metropolitan Transit Police Department is not leading the follow-up investigation.
  3. Assist outside agency reports are, submitted, reviewed, approved, and forwarded to investigations in the same manner as offense or incident reports.
- E. Administrative Report
1. Officers required to write a report that will be used for administrative purposes only shall not write the report in Crime-Star nor assign a case number. Administrative reports should be written in memorandum form. Examples of Administrative Reports are:
    - a. Requests for training and/or travel.
    - b. Requests for shift/relief day changes.
    - c. All Internal Investigation Reports.
  2. All reports regarding internal disciplinary cases shall be considered Administrative Reports and be dealt with in hard copy only.

### **.03 RESPONSIBILITY AND PROCEDURE FOR TURNING IN REPORTS**

- A. All incident numbers requested by officers shall have a corresponding report submitted.
- B. All Reports prepared by a Transit Police Officer in CrimeStar RMS shall be submitted prior to the end of the officer's respective shift except under extenuating circumstances and with the approval of a supervisor.
- C. Should handwritten reports become necessary, the case is logged in and the hard copy is turned into the report box located in the Transit Police Department offices. Copies of the report should be routed to the Transit Police Investigator when the officer deems the incident a high-priority case.
- D. In the event CrimeStar RMS is unavailable, it is the responsibility of the individual who hand wrote the report to electronically submit it when CrimeStar becomes available.



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- E. All officers submitting reports through CrimeStar shall enter the internal disposition and UCR disposition as “OPEN”.

#### **04. APPROVING AUTHORITY**

- A. Supervisors shall conduct daily inquiries for new reports that have not been reviewed from officers under their direct supervision or for officers creating reports during their shifts.
- B. Supervisors shall inspect all reports for completeness, accuracy, and validity. Upon inspection, each supervisor will claim which report they reviewed, the date they reviewed it, and update the reviewed status of the report.
- C. If the report is reviewed but not approved the supervisor shall “kickback” the report and explain to the officer, the corrections needed. If the report has already been submitted to the local judicial authority, the officer shall be instructed to write a supplement with the corrections.
- D. All reports already submitted to the local judicial authority must be locked as soon as the supervisor becomes aware the report has been submitted. Locked reports can still be reviewed and not approved.
- E. Once a report is reviewed and approved the supervisor shall select the internal disposition, the UCR disposition and the date of the disposition for the report. Supervisors must choose the disposition as it closely relates to the scenario the report has described. All approved reports must be locked under the case management report to avoid alteration to the original report.
- F. If the report meets criteria to assign to an investigator as defined in SOP 402.05 the supervisor shall make the investigation active and assign an investigator to the report in their case management. Report will only be assigned to a VIA Metropolitan Transit Police Detective Investigator.
- G. All unapproved reports shall be corrected by the author of the report immediately.
- H. Supervisors shall conduct a weekly inquiry for missing incident reports in their case management. Supervisors shall search for missing incident numbers generated from the calls for service log that are not found in the incident module. If an incident report is determined to be missing, the supervisor shall conduct an investigation for each missing incident report generated by officers assigned on their shift. The supervisor shall discover the officer responsible for writing the report and take the appropriate action to correct the error. All reports must be submitted, returned, corrected and finally approved no later than seven (7) calendar days from the date of the original call for service.

#### **.05 REPORTS REQUIRING ASSIGNMENT OF INVESTIGATOR**

- A. During the review of the reports in the case management, Supervisors will come across reports needing follow-up investigation. Reports needing follow-up investigation shall be assigned an investigator. Supervisors shall designate an investigation active and assign an investigator, in their case management, for reports meeting the following criteria:
  - 1. Offense reports with a felony offense and a suspect has been arrested.
  - 2. Offense reports with a felony offense higher and a suspect has been identified.
  - 3. Offense reports with a misdemeanor offense and a suspect has been arrested.
  - 4. Offense reports with a misdemeanor offense and a suspect has been identified.
  - 5. Any report the supervisor deems has a high probability of solvability.



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6. Any report with suspected workplace violence.

- B. Officers may be faced with the need to have a case investigated for a variety of reasons. Officers may forward the report to the investigator and notify their supervisor. **NOTE:** Simply forwarding the report or case number to the investigator does not automatically assign the report to the investigator's workload.

#### **.06 MAKING CHANGES ON POLICE REPORTS**

- A. Officers may make changes to their reports that have not been approved or locked by a supervisor or submitted to the local judicial authority.
- B. All changes, corrections, or additional information needed to be added to an original report shall be done through the use of a supplemental report if a copy of the original report has already been submitted to the local judicial authority.
- C. No officer shall make changes, alterations, or corrections to another officer's report. Suggestions to another officer's report will be made to the officer themselves. This does not apply to shared documents such as property and evidence which requires the need for multiple officers to add to chain of custody. Nor does it apply to master name, location, or vehicle index which has a necessity to be updated. Updates by other officers shall be done through their respective modules not through the body of another officer's report.
- D. Supervisors shall not make changes to another officer's reports. Changes requested or required by the supervisor must be made through the case management. Reports needing changes shall be submitted by the supervisor through kickback messages.

#### **.07 INTERNAL DISPOSITION**

- A. All reports shall be closed out with an internal disposition. The responsibility of entering the internal disposition falls on the officer writing the report. All officers shall enter every disposition "open" regardless if they know the outcome of their report.
- B. Supervisors are responsible for changing the disposition at the time the report has been approved. Supervisors shall change the disposition using their case management. Internal dispositions to reports should be labeled by supervisors in the following scenarios:
1. Closed - All incident reports should be "closed" when approved. No reports meeting SOP 402.05 shall be closed by a supervisor.
  2. Open - All reports meeting SOP 402.05 shall remain "open" by a supervisor. The assigned investigator shall have final say towards the disposition.
  3. Suspended - Offense reports with no leads and do not meet criteria per SOP 402.05, should be suspended.
  4. Filed – Offense reports that do not meet criteria outlined in SOP 402.05 and concluded with a citation only, shall be listed as filed with the court.
- C. The Transit Police Investigators are responsible for the final dispositions of reports assigned to them. Investigators shall make changes to the disposition using their case management. Investigators will use the internal disposition to manage which cases are being investigated and which are no longer being investigated. Internal dispositions to reports should be labeled by the investigator in the following scenarios:
1. Closed – All offense or incident reports which lead the investigator to believe the complaint is unfounded, baseless or untruthful. Offense reports leading to a conviction of a suspect and offenses exceeding the statutes of limitation should be closed. When closing a report, investigators should remove the "investigation active" status from the report and therefore remove the report from their workload.



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2. Open – All reports the investigator is still investigating.
3. Suspended- Cases where a crime has been established, yet all leads to solve the crime have been exhausted. The leads have not yielded the combination of probable cause and a suspect. Suspended cases can be reopened if further leads develop. When a report has been suspended by an investigator, the investigator should remove the “investigation active” status from the report and therefore remove the report from their workload.
4. Filed – All case reports the investigator has turned over to the assistant district attorney and/or courts. When a report has been filed with a local judicial authority, the investigator should remove the “investigation active” status from the report and therefore remove the report from their workload.

#### **.08 UNIFORMED CRIME REPORT DISPOSITIONS**

- A. Officers creating the report shall enter in a UCR Disposition to all reports they create. Officer shall enter in a UCR disposition of “Open” for all reports, regardless if they know the conclusion to their reports.
- B. Supervisors shall update the UCR disposition after reviewing and approving the report. Supervisors shall update the UCR disposition regardless if it meets criteria listed in SOP 402.05.
- C. Investigators shall be responsible for the final entry to the UCR disposition for all reports assigned to them. Investigators will update the UCR disposition based on the developments in the case.
- D. Investigators and supervisor will assign a UCR disposition based on the report using the following guidelines:
  1. Open- Indicates the report is still being investigated.
  2. Cleared by Adult Arrest- indicates for UCR purposes, the report has been cleared. In reports with multiple suspects, the arrest of any one adult suspect is sufficient to clear the report using CBAA.
  3. Cleared by Juvenile Arrest- indicates for UCR purposes, the report has been cleared. In reports with multiple suspects, the arrest of any one juvenile suspect is sufficient to clear the report using CBJA.
  4. Cleared by Exception, Adult- indicates for UCR purposes, the report has been cleared. An adult exception would be a circumstance where the suspect is an adult but due to the circumstances beyond the control of VIA Transit Police Department, no arrest can be made. The department can clear by exception when the following questions can be answered in the affirmative:
    - Has the investigation established the identity of an offender?
    - Is there enough information to support an arrest, charge, and turning over to the court for prosecution?
    - Is the exact location of the offender known so the suspect can be taken into custody?
    - Is there some sort of reason outside of law enforcement control that precludes arresting, charging, prosecuting the offender?
  5. Cleared by Exception, Juvenile- indicates for UCR purposes, the report has been cleared. A juvenile exception would be a circumstance similar to that of a cleared by adult exception, but the suspect involved is a juvenile rather than an adult.
  6. Suspended- indicates the report is treated as open in that there is no UCR clearance. Using suspended indicates the department is no longer actively working or investigating the report, but the investigation has not been cleared nor meets criteria to clear by exception.
  7. Unfounded- indicates the crime as reported was false or a baseless complaint and/ or no crime has occurred.