

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>East Haven Police Department</b></p> 	<b>Type of Directive:</b> <b>Policies &amp; Procedures</b>		<b>No. 303.4</b>
	<b>Subject/Title:</b> <b>Incident Reporting and Review Procedures</b>		<b>Issue Date:</b> <b>August 28, 2018</b>
			<b>Effective Date:</b> <b>September 15, 2018</b>
	<b>Issuing Authority:</b> <b>Honorable Board of Police Commissioners</b>		<b>Review Date:</b> <b>Annually</b>
<b>References/Attachments:</b> <b>Policies and Procedures #: 212, 412, 801</b> <b>Connecticut General Statute § 54-86e</b>			<b>Rescinds:</b> <b>303.3</b>
			<b>Amends:</b> <b>N/A</b>

## I. PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this directive is to set forth the policies and procedures of the East Haven Police Department (EHPD) regarding the use of a standardized records management system, establishing the guidelines and procedures to be followed by officers in determining when and how to complete incident reports, and the procedures for how incident reports will be recorded, reviewed, filed, and disseminated.

## II. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the East Haven Police Department to define an incident as any event that requires police action, documentation, or dispatching of agency personnel in response to a citizen's request for police services or an officer's self-initiated activity. This includes any incident, whether criminal or non-criminal, which involves a police response to the scene.
- B. It is the policy of the East Haven Police Department to document all incidents in incident Reports, and/or into the Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD).
- C. It is the policy of the East Haven Police Department to utilize a standardized record manage system, Law Enforcement Administration System (LEAS), for reporting and tracking incidents, managing case files etc.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Incident: Any event that requires police action, documentation, and/or dispatching of Department personnel in response to a citizen's request for police services or an officer's self-initiated activity. This includes any incident, whether criminal or non-criminal, which involves a police response to the scene.
- B. Records Management Systems (RMS): Refers to LEAS in which all Department digital records are stored and maintained. Records include incident reports, Master Name Index files, and other Department developed software systems to track information.

### **IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES AND CONSIDERATIONS**

- A. Incident reports are the basic documents of policing. They create the foundation for almost all arrests and criminal investigations. They provide the basic evidence, facts and data for strategic initiatives in crime and disorder prevention, intervention and enforcement, especially for crime analysis and problem solving.
- B. The effectiveness of the Department relies centrally on quality incident reports. Officers must conduct quality preliminary investigations in order to produce quality incident reports.
- C. Quality incident reports are honest and accurate records of what the responding officer has seen, heard, and found and of the pertinent information he or she has obtained from all parties involved in an incident. Such reports present the facts and evidence of the incident logically. They present the reader of the report with a concise, fact-based picture of what the officer understood to have happened. They cite the laws and ordinances relevant to the incident.
- D. Quality incident reports do not embellish the narrative arising from the facts and evidence nor do they present those facts and that evidence in a mere sequential listing. The officer making the report arrives at a summary of what happened based on his or her training, powers of observation, knowledge and judgment and presents that summary as a complete, impartial accounting of what transpired.
- E. An incident report shall serve as a record that demonstrates that the officers involved in an incident or situation acted appropriately and in accordance with the law and the Department's Policies and Procedures.
- F. Personnel shall complete incident reports in situations required under the Policies and Procedures Manual.

### **V. PROCEDURES**

- A. LEAS RMS
  - 1. Members of the Department shall be authorized to use LEAS in accordance with Policies and Procedures # 212 – Electronic Information Systems.
  - 2. The Department's standardized RMS is electronically housed in LEAS.

- a. All digital/electronic records and files will be accessible, stored, and maintained via LEAS.
  - b. Access to digital/electronic records and files in LEAS will be based on the roles and responsibilities of the officer.
  3. Forms to be used by personnel in reporting (i.e. accident reports, incident reports, etc.) are located in LEAS.
  4. Members of the Department shall use LEAS as a case management/status control system. The following information is available in LEAS RMS:
    - a. Case and File Type.
    - b. Incident Report Case Number – Incident Numbering System
      - 1) Case numbers will be automatically assigned via CAD in sequential order to all incidents.
    - c. Case Status.
    - d. Officer Assigned.
    - e. Date Assigned.
    - f. Report Due Date.
    - g. Supervisory Group.
  5. Officers shall assign an appropriate administrative status designation to incident reports. Administrative designations for the status of cases include:
    - a. Cleared by Arrest.
    - b. Closed.
    - c. Inactive.
    - d. Open.
    - e. Pending.
    - f. Referral to JRB (Juvenile Review Board).
- B. Acquiring an Incident Report Case Number
1. Incident report case numbers shall be acquired through Dispatch from the CAD System before an officer begins his/her incident report. The CAD System automatically produces and assigns a case number per incident.
  2. This number will be utilized for any incidents, follow-ups or supplemental reports.

### C. Reporting Requirements

1. The following categories of incidents occurring within the jurisdiction of the Department shall be documented in reports, and/or into the CAD System:
  - a. Citizen reports of crimes.
  - b. Citizen complaints.
  - c. Calls for service in which an officer is dispatched or assigned to investigate.
  - d. Criminal and noncriminal cases initiated by officers.
  - e. Incidents involving arrests, citations or summons.
2. In conjunction with being documented in the CAD System; the following situations require the completion of an incident report:
  - a. Any time any officer conducts a search of a vehicle, persons, or a building except when already described by a search warrant or a search incident to arrest.
    - 1) A home or business check in response to an alarm or property check is exempt from reporting unless criminal activity is discovered.
  - b. Any time any officer uses force as detailed in Policies and Procedures # 404 – Use of Force to include Hands-On Defense.
  - c. Any time an officer takes action that results in, or is alleged to have resulted in injury or death of another person.
  - d. Any time an officer discharges his/her firearm for other than training or recreational purposes.
  - e. Any incident in which an officer determines that a family violence offense has occurred.
  - f. Any time an officer is required to take possession of property, to include situations involving stolen, found, recovered, contraband, and evidentiary property (to include the associated Property/Evidence forms).
  - g. Incidents when an officer engages in an investigative detention (apart from a motor vehicle stop for a motor vehicle violation, unless the situation involves an arrest or when in the officer's discretion it is prudent to complete a police incident report).
  - h. Arrests.
  - i. Persons taken into custody when they are going to be detained at the Department. Officers will complete an incident report in these situations whenever there are extenuating circumstances, or when directed to do so by a supervisor.

- j. Incidents for which in the officer's judgment or that of his or her supervisor a written report is necessary.
  - k. Lost, stolen or damaged department-issued equipment.
3. When an officer is in doubt about whether or not an incident report is required, the officer should consult with his/her direct supervisor.
- D. Unless it is not available, officers shall include, at minimum, the following information on all applicable reports:
- 1. Date and time of occurrence of the incident. If the exact time and date cannot be established because the incident occurred sometime in the past, the officer should provide the best estimate of the narrowest time frame when the incident could have occurred.
  - 2. Names of principal parties involved in the incident, to include; the identity of the reporting party, suspects, victims, witnesses, and other involved parties.
  - 3. At minimum, the officer should obtain the following information on each individual named in the report if possible.
    - a. Full name of the individual (first name, middle name/initial, and last name).
    - b. The address of the individual named in the report.
    - c. Age, gender, and race of the individuals involved (required for NIBRS reporting).
    - d. Home, work, and mobile telephone numbers if available.
    - e. Exact location of the incident. The location should always reflect where the incident actually took place, as opposed to the location where the report is being taken.
    - f. The officer should attempt to capture all the circumstances surrounding the incident.
    - g. The report should also include the actions of the officers, the investigative findings of the officers, and any observations the officers made. This would also include whatever information, advice, or direction officers gave to the individuals encountered during the course of the preliminary investigation.
- E. Information to be Excluded from Incident Reports
- 1. Consistent with Connecticut General Statute § 54-86e, the location and street address of all domestic violence and sexual assault victims, shall be absolutely confidential and shall not be required to be revealed in any criminal or civil proceedings. This is extremely important in protecting the victim or witnesses from exposure to further attack or retaliation.

F. Officers shall observe the following when writing the report narrative:

1. The narrative should be clear and concise and must describe who, what, when, where, and how the incident occurred. The narrative should begin with the date and time and how the officer became involved with the incident.
2. Use short words and sentences that convey what you mean as accurately as possible. Use details that have clear meaning and leave little chance of being misinterpreted.
3. Make sure that all information pertaining to motor vehicles, property, and persons involved is properly listed in the header section of the report.
4. Use past tense for incidents or actions that have already occurred.
5. Use first and last names to ensure that the report positively identifies the correct persons.
6. Minimize the use of abbreviations.
7. Use proper names and titles, especially when referring to other officers or other officials who may be involved in the incident.
8. Do not use radio call signs and police jargon.
9. Make sure quotes are correct and accurate (quotes denote what someone said verbatim). If paraphrasing something that was said, it should be clearly noted as opposed to enclosing what was said in quotes.
10. Officers should not include their opinions or any conclusions not indicated by the facts and evidence and the relevant law.
11. Check for spelling and grammatical errors.

G. Completing Incident Reports

1. An incident report should be completed as soon as practical immediately after the officer clears the scene, when the details are fresh in the officer's mind.
2. Incident reports must be submitted within seven (7) days after the incident case number was issued, unless otherwise granted additional time by a supervisor.
3. Supplemental reports due to ongoing investigation should be completed as soon as possible following the incident.
4. Arrest reports must be completed prior to the end of the officer's tour of duty absent exigent circumstances that must be documented.
  - a. This section does not apply to non-custodial motor vehicle misdemeanor summons arrests.

## H. Reviewing and Routing Responsibilities

1. Once officers have completed an incident report, their assigned supervisor will review the reports through LEAS Case Management and sign off on the report if approved. If corrections are needed, the supervisor will return the report to the officer who authored the incident report through Case Management for corrections.
2. The reviewing supervisor shall review the incident report as soon as feasible to do so.
3. A supervisor will not “sign-off” on an incident report until he/she is satisfied that the incident report has been completed.
  - a. Supervisors shall review incident and supplemental arrest reports of officers under his/her command for probable cause and for deficiencies; such review shall be completed within 12 hours, absent exceptional circumstances. Supervisors shall review for the following deficiencies:
    - 1) “Canned” or conclusory language.
    - 2) Inconsistent information.
    - 3) Lack of articulation of the legal basis for the arrest.
    - 4) Lack of exculpatory information.
    - 5) Any other indicators that the information in the reports is inauthentic or incorrect.
  - b. Upon completing the supervisory review, supervisors shall electronically sign the arrest, incident, and/or supplemental report(s). By electronically signing the arrest, incident, and/or supplemental report(s), the supervisor is confirming the arrest, incident, and/or supplemental report(s) contain articulated probable cause, did not contain deficiencies, and conformed to Policies and Procedures # 412 - Arrests.
4. The following items can serve as checklist for the supervisor.
  - a. Has the incident report been accurately and completely filled out (have all of the required fields been filled in)?
  - b. Has the information for any motor vehicles, persons, or property involved in the incident been properly listed in the header section of the report?
  - c. Is the incident report free of obvious errors or omissions? Is the incident report free of spelling and grammatical errors? Does the report use the facts, evidence and the law to convey a picture of what has transpired?
  - d. Based on the information that is contained within the incident report, does the investigation require any follow-up action? If the report is going to be forwarded for follow up action, does the report clearly identify and support the action that needs to be taken?

- e. Has the submitting officer taken the preliminary investigation to its logical conclusion?
  - f. Does the incident report have all of the required information?
  - g. When the incident involves a crime or an arrest, does the incident report contain all of the elements of the crime? Was the defendant given his or her rights? When required, does the report document that the victim was notified of his or her rights? Were departmental procedures followed?
  - h. Has the nature of the incident been properly classified?
  - i. What is the disposition or status of the investigation?
  - j. Have all ancillary reports associated with the Incident Report been completed properly, if applicable?
5. A reviewing supervisor may not change the factual content of a report, however, the supervisor should make recommendations as to information that should be included, which have been omitted or that is viewed as a critical or necessary to the completeness of the report.
6. If the report is not acceptable or does not meet the established standards, it is to be returned to the submitting officer for the necessary corrections.
7. If the report is deemed to be complete, the reviewing supervisor will e-sign the report approving it.
- I. Records Management
- 1. After the supervisor reviews and e-signs the report, it will then be checked in by the Records Division.
- J. Release of Reports to Members of the Public
- 1. Reports to members of the public will be released in accordance with CT F.O.I.A laws.
- K. Release of Reports to Members of Criminal Justice Agencies
- 1. Additional information that is not releasable to the general public may be released to criminal justice agencies including reports and documents that may be used in a judicial proceeding.
- L. Records and files will be purged if it is necessary to do so, and purging will be done in accordance with Policies and Procedures # 801 – Records Retention.