


NORTHAMPTON POLICE DEPARTMENT		
Administration & Operations Manual		
Policy: Records Maintenance		AOM: S-200
Massachusetts Police Accreditation Standards Referenced: [82.2.2.a-e], [82.2.3], [82.2.1.a&d], [82.2.1.b&c], [1.2.5], [82.2.1.e], [72.1.3], [81.1.1.a], [82.1.1.b], [82.1.7], [82.1.1.c], [82.2.4], [82.1.2], [82.1.4]		Issuing Authority <hr/> John D. Cartledge Chief of Police
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I. Introductory Discussion

Police Departments by their very nature are information driven agencies. The collection, documentation, and maintenance of information are key to the department’s ability to function effectively and efficiently. Information gathered by department personnel can be essential to the successful conclusion of investigations and prosecutions, as well as the department’s planning and problem-solving activities. Additionally, other agencies and the public regularly obtain information from the department. The unavailability or the inaccuracy of such information erodes the public’s confidence and trust in their police department.

Because information gathered by police personnel plays such important roles, it is necessary that a system be in place to insure the following:

- A. That such information is properly and correctly recorded.
- B. That all Central Records Files are maintained and updated in a consistent manner.
- C. That such information is accessible to operations personnel at all times, without compromising the privacy and security of the information; and

D. To permit dissemination of public data to interested individuals in conformance with state and federal laws.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the Northampton Police Department to maintain a field reporting and records management system in order to provide reliable information to allow the department to function more effectively and efficiently. Additionally, it is the policy of this department to permit dissemination of public data to interested individuals, in conformance with the standards of the Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board, and to the extent that the rights of any individual are not infringed.

III. Definitions

- A. Public Record: All documents, materials, or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which are made or received by any officer or employee of any Massachusetts governmental entity, unless such materials or data fall under one of the twelve (12) “exemptions” under M.G.L. Ch. 4 §7(26).
- B. Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI): Records and data in any communicable form compiled by a criminal justice agency which concern an identifiable individual and relate to the nature or disposition of a criminal charge, an arrest, a pre-trial proceeding, other judicial proceedings, sentencing, incarceration, rehabilitation or release (M.G.L. Ch. 6 §177-178).
- C. Incident Report: Computerized report generated by a Dispatcher whenever they receive information, which meets the required criteria for recording. Such criteria include: [82.2.2, a-e]
1. Citizen reports of a crime.
 2. Citizen complaints (other than Internal Affairs Complaints).
 3. Any activity which results in the following:
 - a. An officer is dispatched.
 - b. An employee is assigned to investigate; or
 - c. An employee is assigned to take any action, either immediately or at a future time.
 4. Criminal and non-criminal investigations or inquiries initiated by officers; and
 5. Incidents involving arrests or legal process.
- D. Incident Number: A unique number that is computer assigned automatically upon initiation of an incident report by a dispatcher or by the investigating officer. [82.2.3]

IV. Procedures – Incident Reporting & Management

- A. Responsibility of Dispatchers: Once an incident report and corresponding incident number have been generated, the Dispatcher will record all applicable information relative to the incident in the proper areas.
- B. Responsibilities of Sworn Department Personnel: Unless otherwise authorized by the OIC, before the end of their tour of duty, officers shall complete all required incident narratives, traffic collision reports, stolen motor vehicle reports, arrest (booking) reports, and motor vehicle citations. [82.2.1,a,d]
1. **Incident Narratives**: Some types of police response require only a brief summary of the police action, while others require a more extensive, detailed narrative, and possible subsequent investigation. The following types of situations require an extensive narrative:
 - a. Homicides and unattended deaths.
 - b. Sexual assault/rape.
 - c. Assault against an officer.
 - d. Robbery.
 - e. Assault/assault & battery/assault with dangerous weapon.
 - f. All Domestic incidents.
 - g. Breaking & entering.
 - h. All situations requiring the Use of Force by the responding officer(s); and
 - i. Other incidents as determined by the OIC.
 2. **Data Entry Screens**: Officers shall complete all data entry screens related to a particular incident, such as property, persons, vehicles, or other screens related to specific offenses or arrests. [82.2.1, b, c] [41.4.3]
 3. **Multiple Responding Officers**: Whenever two or more officers respond to an incident, the primary responding officer will be responsible for completing all required reports. However, in many circumstances, an assisting officer may be required to submit a supplemental report.
 4. **Multiple Arrests**: In cases where multiple arrests arise from one offense, the officer shall file one incident report or narrative containing all of the facts leading up to and supporting each of the arrests, and shall complete a separate *Arrest AR Custody Sheet* for each person arrested or placed in protective custody. [41.4.3]
 5. **Subsequent Arrests**: Whenever a person is subsequently arrested, the arresting officer shall ensure that existing file information on that person is updated (i.e. address, etc.). [41.4.3]
- C. Responsibilities of the Officer-In-Charge (OIC): It shall be the responsibility of the OIC to:
1. **Review Reports/Paperwork**: The OIC shall review the reports/paperwork of all their personnel, and that of any personnel working over from the previous shift, to verify its completion and accuracy. Additionally, the OIC shall enter

their initials in the appropriate section of those written or electronic reports which they have reviewed. Reports shall be reviewed for: [82.2.1,e]

- a. Spelling and grammar.
- b. Content (including all names and addresses of involved persons and all necessary facts/elements of the crime).
- c. Proper use of incident codes; and
- d. Appropriate use of charges (i.e. criminal, non-criminal).

2. **Reports Requiring Immediate Review:** If time does not allow the review of all reports/paperwork, the OIC may complete the review during their next tour of duty. However, the following reports must be reviewed immediately upon submission:

- a. Assault & Battery upon an officer.
- b. Offense reports of a serious nature (i.e. rape, homicide, civil rights violations, A & B w/ DW, etc.).
- c. Use of force reports.
- d. Reports relative to the requesting of criminal complaints.
- e. Employee injury reports.
- f. Traffic collisions involving on-duty personnel or department vehicles.
- g. Traffic collisions involving personal injury.
- h. Reports relating to injuries to detainees; and
- i. Any report of an incident that is likely to generate public concern and inquiry.

3. **Ensure the Correction of Deficiencies:** If deficiencies in reports/paperwork are found, the OIC shall direct the police officer to make the necessary corrections, not make them themselves.

D. Responsibility of Division Commanders: It will be the responsibility of the Division Commanders to conduct inspections of the Incident Management System in accordance with procedures set forth in *AOM A120 Line and Staff Inspections*.

V. Procedures – Records Maintenance

A. Responsibilities of Records Bureau Personnel: The Records Bureau is a component of the Administrations Division of the Northampton Police Department. It operates under the supervision of a civilian Supervisor of Records & Information Services as set forth in *AOM A102 Agency Structure and Organization*. With regard to Record Maintenance, the responsibilities of Records Bureau Personnel are as follows:

1. **Review Reports:** Review all reports from within the department to identify and retrieve necessary information, ensure appropriate usage of agency forms and IBR codes, and to monitor the quality and thoroughness of information being added to the records function.

2. **Furnish Information:** Furnish accurate and complete information when, where, and to whom required in order to manage and operate the Department effectively;
 3. **Process/Control Information:** Process and control information as efficiently and effectively as possible;
 4. **Disseminate Information:** Provide external agencies, organizations, and members of the public with whatever information is legally obtainable.
 5. **Retain/Purge Records As Appropriate:** Process and retain only those records that have special value to the Department or have a legal requirement to be maintained (refer to the Secretary of State's Records Retention Schedule); and
 6. **Records Security:** Ensure the physical security of reports/paperwork maintained within the Records Bureau.
 7. **Comply with Orders to Expunge:** In compliance with the 2018 Criminal Justice Reform Act, Records Personnel may be directed to expunge specific records. When this occurs, Records Personnel shall expunge records by doing the following:
 - a. Place a copy of the Order to Expunge in the Arrest Book
 - b. Place a copy of the Order to Expunge with the printed daily log stored in the Archive Room or the daily log saved to an electronic device.
 - c. Make a note in the Records Maintenance System (IMC) attached to the individual's name indicating. "Record Expunged- Do Not Disseminate, along with the specific case information.
- B. **Records Security:** Records information is available during regular business hours. In the interest of preserving the security of the Department's records, only authorized personnel will have access to the Records Bureau after normal business hours. [72.1.3] [82.1.1,a]
1. **Authorized Personnel:** Authorized personnel include Sergeants, Lieutenants, Captains, and the Chief of Police, and any other personnel with the express approval of the Administrations Division Commander.
 2. **Entry of Authorized Personnel after Business Hours:** The Records Bureau shall remain locked when records personnel are not present. Persons with authorized access must re-secure the area upon leaving.
 3. **Public Access:** All Department records maintained within the Records Bureau shall not be open to public view within that designated area. No visitor, whether on official or unofficial business, shall be allowed to enter the Records Bureau for the purpose of perusing or reviewing any Department records, nor shall any officer, Records Bureau Member, or other department employee allow or condone this act if observed.
 4. **Access to Computerized Operational Records:** All Operational Records, which are maintained within the Department's Central Computer System, are available to personnel at all times in order to facilitate investigations and other matters of duty being performed by members of this Department. In an effort to ensure confidentiality of all police intelligence, all employees of the Department will use a password to access the system. [82.1.1,b] [82.1.7]

- C. Repository of Department Records: Members of the Records Bureau are responsible for the filing and maintenance of the following Department Records in the described manner:
1. **Arrest Reports**: All information regarding any individual brought before the court by this department for any offense, other than a non-criminal motor vehicle violation shall be placed on an Arrest/Protective Custody Sheet. These sheets will be filed numerically by Arrest (AR) numbers in the Records Bureau.
 2. **Records Regarding Pending Court Cases**: All reports and folders regarding pending adult court cases shall be filed according to the court date and maintained by the Court Administrator.
 3. **Warrants**: Warrants shall be maintained alphabetically by the Court Administrator.
 4. **Records Regarding Adjudicated Court Cases**: All records regarding adjudicated adult court cases (including all incident reports, subsequent reports, citizen walk-in reports/statements, witness statements, arrest sheets, inventory lists, applications for complaint and some types of evidence/photos) shall be filed according to Incident Number and maintained in Records Bureau.
 5. **Fingerprints no longer stored in Records.**
 6. **Traffic Collision Records**: The Department's traffic accident data filing system provides a ready reference for accident/enforcement data related to specific intersections or segments of highways. Traffic records shall be maintained by members of the Records Bureau as follows:
 - a. Persons Involved: Index cards shall be maintained for the current calendar year, on which all persons involved in traffic accidents are listed. Such cards shall be filed alphabetically according to the involved person's name. A separate file shall be similarly maintained for the previous two (2) calendar years.
 - b. Location: Index cards shall also be maintained for the current calendar year on which all traffic accidents are listed for specific locations/intersections. Such cards shall be filed alphabetically according to the street/intersection name. A separate file shall be similarly maintained for one (1) previous year.
 7. **Motor Vehicle Citations**: Copies of traffic citations shall be stored in alphabetical order by members of the Records Bureau. There shall be two (2) separate citations files maintained in the Records Bureau: one for the current year and the others for the previous one (1) year.
 8. **License to Carry Firearms (Class A, B, C, D, & E)**: Records of Licenses to Carry Firearms (gun permits) are filed alphabetically (with photograph) by the Firearms Licensing Clerk.
 9. **Bicycle Registration**: Bicycles can be registered electronically in the department's central computer system.
 10. **Juvenile Offender Records**: Records pertaining to juvenile offenders (including arrest reports, fingerprints, photos, and records of pending or adjudicated cases) shall be maintained in the manner prescribed above, but shall be kept separate from any adult criminal records. These records are stored following the municipal record retention schedule [16.052], in a separate

locked drawer each with red stickers that indicate that they are a juvenile record. These are stored in the Records Division. [82.1.1] [82.1.2]

The department shall expunge all juvenile records when ordered by the court. The records shall be destroyed in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Supervisor of Public Records of the Commonwealth. All other juvenile records shall be retained after the age of majority. [82.1.2,d]

D. Computer Files: In addition to hard copy records maintained in the Records Bureau, the following records will be maintained within the Department's Central Computer System:

1. Incident Reports.
2. Arrests.
3. Field Interviews.
4. Juvenile Offender Records.
5. Evidence/Property Records.
6. Tow Vehicle History.
7. Citations.
8. Wants/Warrants.
9. Traffic Collision Tracking.
10. Weapons registration.
11. Bicycle registration.
12. Intelligence files; and
13. Case management and photographs.

E. Release of Department Records: The Northampton Police Department is committed to fulfilling its responsibility regarding the release of public records while protecting individuals' rights to privacy. In the interest of meeting the above stated objective, the following guidelines have been established regarding the release of records by members of this Department. [82.1.1,c] [82.2.4]

1. **Receiving Requests for Records**: Copies of public records may be requested in person, over the phone, or through the mail. One business day advance notice or longer if the request is unusually large, may be required prior to the record(s) becoming available. Generally, the records will be available for pick up or review Monday through Friday during regular business hours.
2. **Records Distribution**: Dissemination of Department records shall be strictly controlled by members of the Records Bureau according to the guidelines of CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) and M.G.L. Ch. 66 §10, which relates to the inspection and examination of segregable Public Records. A copy of each of these documents will be kept in a conspicuous place in the Records Bureau and Records Bureau Members shall be expected to refer to them if there is a question regarding dissemination of Department records. [82.1.2]
 - a. **Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI)**: The rules of CORI prohibit the revelation, the distribution, and/or the dissemination of criminal record information to individuals or agencies not covered under M.G.L. Ch. 6 §172. It is suggested that all personnel familiarize themselves

with the actual content of this statute. For procedures regarding the dissemination of CORI refer to *AOM S200tb1 Criminal Offender Record Information*. [72.1.3] [82.1.1,c]

- b. Juvenile records shall be disseminated by Records Personnel in the accordance with M.G.L. Ch.119 §60A. [82.1.1.b,c] [82.1.2]
3. **Fees:** Fees for copies of police reports will be established consistent with applicable State Law (M.G.L. Ch. 66 §10). All fees accepted will be handled in accordance with *AOM A111 Cash Fund Handling Procedures*.
4. **Releasing Hard Copy Original Reports:** There are situations and circumstances whereby records must be removed from Records Bureau files (i.e. Court proceedings, civil litigation, etc.). Whenever a report is removed from the files and taken from the Records Bureau, a note shall be placed in the file location and shall contain the following information:
 - a. The date removed.
 - b. The name of officer or person removing it.
 - c. The incident number of the report; and
 - d. The purpose for the removal.
5. **Releasing Computerized Operational Records:** All access to criminal history records that are maintained in the Department's Central Computer System shall be subject to the same procedures as hard copy records stored in Records Bureau Files. Any release of computerized records shall be held to the conditions of M.G.L. Ch. 6 §172.

VI. Procedures – Collecting & Submitting Crime Data

- A. All police departments in the state of Massachusetts are required to retrieve data and generate Incident Based Reports for submission to the Massachusetts State Police.
 1. Responsibility of the Supervisor of Records & Information Services: Using NIBRS (via the appropriate IMC tab), generate and submit data to the Massachusetts State Police on a monthly basis (no later than 31 days beyond the last reporting day of the month being submitted). [82.1.4]