



HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
GENERAL ORDER ADM-37
REPORT WRITING
EFFECTIVE AUGUST 8, 2011

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. REPORTING SYSTEM
- III. REPORT WRITING
- IV. SUBMISSION OF REPORTS
- V. USE OF REPORTING FORMS
- VI. ARREST & INCIDENT REPORTS
- VII. CANCELLATION

I. POLICY

The Howard County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) shall properly report and record every incident, arrest, or activity alleged to have occurred within the Office's service area and in which its members become involved.¹ Proper reporting protects the HCSO and its members from unwarranted accusations of improper or inadequate action.

The information provided in this General Order is intended as guidance regarding the authority granted by law to members performing their duties as law enforcement personnel when taking police action within Maryland jurisdictions.

II. REPORTING SYSTEM

- A. A record shall be made of all actions taken by Howard County Sheriff's Office deputies, whether in response to a request for service or for self-limited actions.
- B. If two or more deputies report the same incident, only one case report is required.
- C. Proper action shall be taken to document and manage the following incidents:
 - 1. Citizen reports of crime;²
 - 2. Citizen complaints;³
 - 3. Incidents resulting in a deputy being dispatched or assigned;⁴
 - 4. Criminal and non-criminal cases initiated by HCSO deputies; and⁵
 - 5. Incidents involving arrests, citations, or summonses.⁶
- D. Citizens lodging complaints against the Office shall be notified of the action taken in response to their reports.

¹ CALEA 82.2.2

² CALEA 82.2.2 a

³ CALEA 82.2.2 b

⁴ CALEA 82.2.2 c

⁵ CALEA 82.2.2 d

⁶ CALEA 82.2.2 e

III. REPORT WRITING⁷

- A. Proper reports are complete and accurate records of an event which convey clear, concise, and correct information.⁸
 - 1. Reports include the who, what, when, where, how, and why of an event or condition being related.
 - 2. Reports describe what is directly observed, heard, and otherwise experienced by members or witnesses. Inferences and opinions shall be kept separate from the facts.
 - 3. Report forms shall be filled out completed and as accurately as possible. This includes the usage of proper grammar and appropriate spelling in order to convey a concise and clear message.
- B. Reports shall be written by HCSO members as required by written directives or at the direction of a supervisor. Reports shall be submitted on time and in accordance with established procedures. All official business must be processed through official channels (i.e., Chain of Command).
- C. All reports submitted by members of this Office shall be truthful. No member shall knowingly report or cause to be reported any false information. Willfully omitting information shall be considered falsifying a report.
- D. Information regarding official HCSO business shall be considered confidential.
 - 1. Confidential information shall be disseminated only to those for whom it is intended and in accordance with established procedures.
 - 2. A member shall not divulge the identity of a person providing confidential information, except as authorized by the proper authority while in the performance of his/her law enforcement duties.
- E. A report is required when a situation or event:⁹
 - 1. Contains information that may be necessary to the operation of the HCSO and/or statistical purposes;
 - 2. Is of an unusual circumstance, situation, or event;
 - 3. Endangers the health, safety, or security of any person or facility under the control of the HCSO, including an injury to an arrestee, inmate, civilian, or other Office personnel;
 - 4. Violates any County, State, or Federal law and/or Local Ordinance for which the HCSO has enforcement responsibility.

IV. SUBMISSION OF REPORTS¹⁰

- A. All reports shall be completed and submitted to a supervisor prior to the end of a member's tour of duty, unless otherwise directed.
- B. All reports required by a written direction shall be completed and submitted to the approving supervisor, unless otherwise specified.

⁷ CALEA 82.2.1 d

⁸ CALEA 82.2.1 c

⁹ CALEA 82.2.1 a

¹⁰ CALEA 82.2.1 e

- C. Approving supervisors are responsible for reviewing and ensuring all reports are accurate, classified properly, contain no spelling errors, are in acceptable grammatical form, and that proper procedures were followed.
- D. Supervisors shall sign and forward reviewed reports to the appropriate members of the Staff, via the Chain of Command.
- E. In the event an incident is considered noteworthy, the approving Supervisor shall forward a copy of the report to his/her supervisor for Command Staff notification. Refer to *General Order OPS-21, Command Staff Notification* for additional information.

V. USE OF REPORTING FORMS¹¹

- A. All reports shall be typed or legibly written in black ink.
- B. All forms shall be completed in their entirety. If information required by the form is considered not applicable, N/A shall be entered in the appropriate space.
- C. Arrest & Incident Reports
 - 1. The Howard County Sheriff's Office *Arrest Report Form (HCSO 9013)* shall be used whenever an arrest is effected or when a member is directed to do so by a supervisor.
 - 2. The Howard County Sheriff's Office *Incident Report Form (HCSO 9014)* shall be used whenever an incident occurs involving a member of the public, a member of the HCSO, a prisoner, or when a member is directed to do so by a supervisor.
 - 3. In the event either of the above forms does not contain enough space to complete the respective narratives, members shall utilize the *Supplementary Report Form (HCSO 9013A)*. This Supplementary Report may also be used as a follow-up report to an already documented arrest or incident.
- D. Form 16 Internal Memorandum
 - 1. The Form 16 Internal Memorandum shall be used for all administrative correspondence and personnel related matters.
 - 2. The Memorandum shall be addressed to the Sheriff and shall be forwarded to his Office via the Chain of Command.
 - 3. Reviewing supervisors shall initial and date the report before forwarding it to their respective supervisors for additional approval.
 - 4. Supervisory comments should be written on a separate document and attached to the original document for review.

VI. CANCELLATION

This General Order cancels and replaces *General Order ADM-37 Report Writing*, dated December 21, 2010.

Authority:

James F. Fitzgerald
Sheriff

¹¹ CALEA 82.2.1 b