Chapter 8 - Correspondence

• 3-08/000.00 - Correspondence

[Title Only]

• 3-08/005.00 - Introduction

This chapter outlines procedures for the preparation of the following Department correspondence:

- Outgoing correspondence;
- Correspondence to the Board of Supervisors;
- Internal correspondence;
- Homicide case correspondence;
- Form letters; and
- Rough drafts.

• 3-08/010.00 - Signatures Permitted

The following executives are authorized to sign their names to outgoing correspondence:

- Sheriff
- Undersheriff
- Assistant sheriff(s)
- Division chiefs
- Commanders
- Captains
- Directors
- Legal advisors

The executive may delegate subordinates to sign their name or to stamp their name with a signature facsimile stamp. When this is done, the subordinates shall write their own initials below the signed or stamped signature of the executive.

When inquiries and replies should be referred to the handling unit, the executive may authorize persons in units under his command to sign their own names to form letters.

The executive shall be responsible for the content and composition of all correspondence handled by units under his command.

• 3-08/020.00 - Special Instructions

Letters for signature by major executives of the Department, i.e., Sheriff, undersheriff, assistant sheriff(s), division chiefs, and division directors, shall be printed on the embossed Department letterhead. All such letters shall be printed as perfect finals. The following shall be adhered to when using embossed Department letterhead:

- Font shall be 12-point Times New Roman ONLY. It is not permissible to condense the font to make the text fit on one page; and
- Margins shall be set between 1 to 1.5 inches, depending on the user's preference and to make it aesthetically pleasing. Going beyond these margins is never permissible.

Letters for signature by other executives of the Department, i.e., commanders, captains, directors, and other authorized personnel below the rank of captain, shall be on regular Department letterhead. All such letters shall be printed as finals. Neat, unnoticeable repairs or corrections are permissible, if authorized.

• 3-08/030.00 - General Instructions

The following guidelines shall be used in preparing outgoing correspondence from this Department:

- Language shall be modern, professional, business English;
- File numbers;
  - When answering correspondence from an outside agency, refer to the agency's file number and subject title if one is given; and
  - When correspondence concerns a Sheriff's case, refer to the file number of the case;
- Certified mail shall be used rather than registered mail when a record of delivery is necessary; and
- Personal names shall not be printed on form letters. The appropriate name shall be added by the preparer.

• 3-08/040.00 - Instructions/Format - Outgoing Correspondence

The format and other instructions for all outgoing correspondence shall be as outlined in the following subsections.

• 3-08/040.05 - Margins

All margins shall be from one to one-and-one-half inches in width dependent on the length of the letter. The right margin shall be as even as possible with words divided according to syllabication as shown in Webster's Dictionary. One and two-letter word divisions and division of hyphenated words shall be avoided. The bottom margin should not be less than one inch.

• 3-08/040.10 - Style

Block style shall be used with each line beginning at the left margin.

NOTE: An exception is the subject line.

• 3-08/040.15 - Telephone Number

The concerned division, bureau/unit, or facility telephone number, preceded by the area code, shall be placed by the secretary on all letters that do not require the signature of the Sheriff, undersheriff, or assistant sheriff(s). The telephone number is to be centered and placed two lines below the letterhead.

NOTE: When a telephone number, preceded by the area code, is mentioned in the body of the letter, e.g., "Please contact Lieutenant Jane Doe at (213) 526-4264 if you have any questions regarding employee grievance procedures," the concerned dvision, bureau/unit, or facility telephone number may be omitted.

• 3-08/040.20 - Date

The format for the date shall be month, day, and year with no abbreviations. The date shall be placed from two to seven lines below the letterhead, depending on the length of the letter.

Letters prepared for major executives of the Department will have a verification of date of signature prior to preparation.

• 3-08/040.25 - Address Block

The addressee's identification shall be placed a minimum of five lines below the date, depending on the length of the letter.

The information in the address block shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Name and Title

Full and complete name of addressee followed by his business or professional title. If a title is used and cannot be placed on the same line with the name, it should be placed immediately below the name on the next line.

When a business or professional title is not used, the titles "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Miss," or "Ms." shall always precede the addressee's name. If unable to tell whether the addressee is a man or woman, use first and last name. If doubtful whether "Miss" or "Mrs.," use "Ms."

Business or professional titles (e.g., "Chief," "Capt.," "Prof.," "Dr.," "Hon.," etc.) shall always be used when

applicable. In such cases, Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. shall not be used.

Agency, Department, Company, etc.

Agency, department, company, or other organization of which the addressee is affiliated, if applicable.

When addressing a subdivision of an agency, the subdivision shall be placed first with the name of the agency/company immediately below on the next line. The name of the subdivision may be placed in the Attention Notation Block (see section 3-08/040.30) with the agency's, department's, company's,or organization's name in the address block.

When a letter is intended for the consideration of only one person, the personal name (the addressee) shall always be placed above the name of the agency, department, company, or organization. Letters addressed solely to an agency, etc., should be avoided.

Balance of Address Block

- When a building name is used, the room, suite, or apartment number must precede it; and
- If a building name is not used and the room, suite, or apartment number is available, place the number at the end of the street address line,

On letters mailed for local distribution only, when the building name is a very well known local or government building and the room number is available, the street address may be omitted, e.g., 383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.

- Street address (or box number) or rural route. Do not abbreviate street, drive, etc. When a post office box number is given, use the box number and not the street address; and

City, state, and zip code. The city and state names shall be spelled out with the zip code placed two spaces after the state name, never singly on a separate line.

• 3-08/040.30 - Attention Notation Block

When a person other than the addressee or a subdivision of the concerned agency, department, company or organization is to directly handle the letter, the personal name or name of the subdivision should be placed in the attention notation block.

If a personal name is used, type the full name of the addressee followed by his business or professional title. A subdivision, i.e., Department, division, or bureau, if known and if different from that used in the address block, shall be placed immediately below the name and title.

If only the name of the subdivision is to appear in the attention notation block, it shall not appear in the address block (see section 3-08/040.25). In such cases, the subdivision may be expanded to include a unit, section, etc., within the subdivision so as to more clearly indicate the area to which the correspondence should be directed (see last two examples in this subsection).

When used, the notation, "Attention:," shall be placed two lines below the address block and punctuated with a

colon. The entire attention notation block shall be typed in upper and lower case letters. Abbreviations shall be avoided.

EXAMPLES:

Attention: John Smith, Captain
Century Sheriff's Station

Attention: Mary Jones, Director
Personnel Administration

Attention: Fleet Management Unit
Communications & Fleet Management Bureau

• 3-08/040.35 - Salutation

The salutation shall be placed two lines below the attention notation and punctuated with a colon. When the attention notation is not used, the salutation shall be placed two lines below the last line of the address block. The salutation shall be typed in upper and lower case letters.

When letters are addressed to one person, the surname shall be preceded by one of the following salutations:

- Dear Mr.
- Dear Mrs.
- Dear Miss
- Dear Ms.

Mr. and Mrs. shall always be abbreviated. They are never spelled out.

Appropriate titles of law enforcement personnel, clergy, college faculty, government officials, military personnel, etc., if known, shall be used. The title shall always be written out, followed by the surname of the addressee.

EXAMPLES:

- Dear Sheriff
- Dear Chief
- Dear Father
- Dear Reverend
- Dear Professor
- Dear Dr. (doctor of medicine or academic degrees)
- Dear Senator
- Dear Colonel

NOTE: Use of the addressee's first name is optional with the signer.

Letters addressed to organizations shall bear a salutation of "Gentlemen:" or "Ladies:" as appropriate.

NOTE: When an attention notation block is used, the salutation shall agree with the address block, e.g.:

John Jones, Chief
Burbank Police Department

Attention: Lee C. McCown, Captain
Risk Management Bureau

Dear Chief Minnis:

• 3-08/040.40 - Subject Line (Optional)

The subject line, when used, shall be centered and placed two lines below the salutation. A notation such as "Subject" or "Re:" shall not be used. The entire subject shall be in upper case letters and shall not be underlined. Abbreviations shall be avoided.

If a subject to be centered is lengthy, use two or more lines so as to be set in from the margins.

• 3-08/040.45 - Complimentary Closing

The closing shall be "Sincerely" in upper and lower case letters, followed by a comma. It shall be two lines below the last line of the body of the letter.

• 3-08/040.50 - Signature Block

On letters for the Sheriff's signature, "ROBERT LUNA," in upper case letters, shall be placed five lines below the complimentary closing in order to provide a space for the Sheriff's signature. The word "SHERIFF" typed in upper case letters shall be placed immediately below the typed name of the Sheriff.

On letters for signature of executives other than the Sheriff, the words “ROBERT LUNA, SHERIFF," typed in upper case letters, with the name and title on the same line, shall be placed two lines below the complimentary closing. The name and rank or title, of the person signing the letter shall be placed five lines below the Sheriff's typed name and title. The division, bureau/unit, or facility designation shall be placed immediately below the signer's name. These shall all be in upper case letters with the exception of persons below the rank of chief or division director, which shall be in upper and lower case letters with normal punctuation.

• 3-08/040.55 - Identification (Sign-Off) Initials

Identifying initials shall be used in the following order: The signer, the writer, and the typist. These initials will be typed on the copy and shall be placed two lines below the signature block. Initials of the signer and writer

shall be in upper case letters with the initials of the typist in lower case letters. The name of the handling bureau/unit shall be placed immediately below the initials, enclosed in parenthesis. No identifying initials shall appear on any copies sent outside the Department.

• 3-08/040.60 - File Numbers

A unit or division file number, if assigned, may be used on letters prepared by this Department. When applicable, the file number, preceded by the words "FILE NO.," typed in upper case letters, shall be placed two lines below the identification (sign-off) initials and appear only on the copy.

• 3-08/040.65 - Enclosures

When enclosures (documents, papers, etc.) will be included with a letter or when material will be sent separately, a statement to this effect should be included in the body of the letter.

If the material to be enclosed is of unusual importance, it should be listed and identified in short lines. In such cases, the enclosure notation shall be punctuated with a colon and shall only appear on the copy, not on the original.

The enclosure notation shall be placed two lines below the identification initials or two lines below the file number, if used, using upper and lower case letters.

EXAMPLES:

- Enc.: Contract - 2011-2012 Towing Services

  Document - Legislative Report

  Report - Law Enforcement Mutual Agreement Pact

If material is being sent under separate cover, the enclosure notation shall be as follows:

- Sep. Cov.: Contract - 2011-2012 Towing Services

  Document - Legislative Report

  Report - Law Enforcement Mutual Agreement Pact

• 3-08/040.70 - Mailing Notation

When a letter is sent other than by first class mail, a mailing notation shall be in upper and lower case and placed immediately below the enclosure notation. If an enclosure notation is not used, place the mailing notation two lines below the file number or identification initials. This notation shall only appear on the copy.

EXAMPLES:

- Special Delivery
- First Class/Certified

• 3-08/040.75 - Copy (Distribution) Notation

Copy (distribution) notation, "c:" shall be in lower case only, punctuated with a colon and shall appear only on the copies. This notation shall be placed two lines below any other notation and shall be the last one.

Entries shall be listed in a single column and single-spaced, with the first entry placed on line with the "c:" notation. Entries shall be typed in upper and lower case with normal punctuation.

• 3-08/040.80 - Distribution of Copies

All original letters, for signature by a major executive, shall be accompanied by a copy with all pertinent notations typed in.

All copies of letters for distribution to any member of this Department may be a copy with all pertinent notations typed in.

All copies of letters for distribution to any person outside this Department shall be a letterhead copy of the unsigned, original letter and shall be distributed only after the original has been signed and mailed.

A copy with all pertinent notations typed in shall be maintained by the bureau/unit handling the correspondence.

• 3-08/040.85 - Continued Pages

When a letter is continued on two or more pages, the name of the addressee shall be entered at the left margin six lines down from the top of the continuation page. The page number, with a hyphen before and after the number, shall be centered on the same line, with the date of the letter begun so as to end at the right margin. The letter shall be continued four lines below the above identification.

• 3-08/040.90 - Referral

All letters which may generate additional correspondence shall contain, in the body of the letter, a notation of the bureau/unit to contact for further information.

EXAMPLE: "Please direct all inquiries or replies regarding this letter to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Administrative and Training Division, Fiscal Administration, Room 341, Sheriff's Headquarters Building, 4700 Ramona Boulevard, Monterey Park, California 91754."

• 3-08/040.95 - Envelopes

The envelope for use with letters typed on the embossed Department letterhead stationery shall be the embossed Department envelope.

The envelope used with letters typed on the regular Department stationery shall be the regular Department envelope.

Bureaus/units whose outgoing mail is routed through the mail room or metered postage shall type their room number above the printed return address.

The information placed on the face of the envelope shall be as follows:

Address Block

This information shall be the same information which appears in the address block on the letter (see section 3-08/040.25).

The block-style address shall be used and should be single-spaced.

Attention Notation Block

This information shall be the same information which appears in the attention notation block of the letter except that it shall be placed in the lower left corner of the envelope, never directly below the address block (see section 3-08/040.30).

Class of Mail and Service Blocks

This information shall be the same information which appears in the mailing notation of the letter except that it shall be noted in upper case letters immediately below the stamps (see section 3-08/040.70).

Exception: When using certified mail, the certified mail sticker or the typed words "CERTIFIED MAIL," in upper case and underscored, shall be placed on the left side of the envelope, midway between the return address and the bottom edge of the envelope.

Personal Notation

On letters requiring the use of the "Personal" notation, type "PERSONAL" in upper case in the lower left corner of the envelope.

• 3-08/050.00 - Board of Supervisors - Correspondence To

All letters to the Board of Supervisors require the signature of the Sheriff or, in his absence, the undersheriff or appointed assistant sheriff. The following criteria will be utilized in establishing the distribution of such letters:

- Letters containing information only and which are not agenda items may be directed to individual board members, to the board as a whole, or to the Chief Administrative Officer;
- Letters responding to a request from an individual member of the Board of Supervisors shall be directed only to the requesting Board member. Any further distribution will be the prerogative of the board member receiving the letter;
- Letters requesting the support of, or action by, an individual board member shall be directed only to that board member. Any further distribution will be the prerogative of the board member receiving the request; and
- Any Board letters that are either in response to an order of the Board of Supervisors or are to become agenda items are to be directed to the Board as a whole. Letters to individual board members will not be prepared. Distribution to individual board members shall be left to the discretion of the clerk of the board.

• 3-08/050.05 - Procedures Regarding Letters Directed to the Board As a Whole

All correspondence addressed to the Board of Supervisors as a whole must be routed through the Administrative and Training Division. Administrative and Training Division will review and process the documents.

The unit preparing the letter shall make a copy with the distribution notation for the unit file.

Following distribution to the Board of Supervisors, Administrative and Training Division will send a hard copy to Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau where they will be made available to the general public upon request. Administrative and Training Division will upload an electronic copy to the Los Angeles County's website for public access (http://lacounty.info/).

• 3-08/050.10 - Procedures Regarding Agenda Item Board Letters

All agenda item board letters must be routed through the Administrative and Training Division. Administrative and Training Division will review and process the documents.

All agenda item Board letters shall be submitted to the clerk of the board prior to noon on Thursday for Tuesday hearings. The matter will then be placed on the Tuesday agenda, eleven days later. Any letters received after noon will be placed on the Tuesday agenda 18 days later.

The following guidelines shall be used in preparing agenda item board letters:

Address

Agenda item board letters shall be addressed to:

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles

383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Salutation

The salutation shall read "Dear Supervisors:".

Subject Line

The subject line of the board letter shall be typed and centered in upper case and should be specific and complete enough to readily identify the documents. Also included in the subject line should be the number of votes required for board approval (e.g., 3, 4 or 5-Votes).

Distribution

All items submitted to the supervisors in reference to the board agenda shall be flagged by placing the agenda date on the envelope and on the first page of the report.

Following distribution to the Board of Supervisors, Administrative and Training Division will send a hard copy to Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau where they will be made available to the general public upon request. Administrative Services Division will upload an electronic copy of the Los Angeles County's website for public access (http://lacounty.info/).

• 3-08/060.00 - Internal Correspondence

Internal correspondence shall be prepared either on Office Correspondence, Form SH-AD-32A or on Memorandum, Form SH-AD-131. All internal correspondence prepared on a SH-AD-32A shall have a signature at the end of the original communication, or above the sender's name in the "From" section.

Persons signing their names on internal correspondence shall sign using a Department-approved digital signature or in ink. A signature stamp may be used if such stamp is authorized by the concerned division chief or division director.

When a signature stamp is used, the employee whose signature is represented shall be responsible for the content of the communication.

County messenger envelopes (76E612) shall be utilized for the transmittal of interdepartmental papers. Sealable manila envelopes are permissible for confidential data. Complete addresses of both the sender and the addressee shall be used on all interdepartmental envelopes. Envelopes shall be reused to eliminate waste.

• 3-08/060.05 - Digital Signatures

Department approved digital signatures are electronic signatures used in lieu of ink signatures, for documents submitted by employees. Digital signatures can virtually replace an ink signature to speed up the paper-

driven, manual signature process.

A list of Department-approved digital signature platforms will be maintained on the Administrative Services Division's intranet website.

• 3-08/060.10 - Office Correspondence (Form SH-AD-32A)

Internal correspondence prepared on a SH-AD-32A is generally used by the Department as a formal method of communication and, as such, shall be typewritten. These forms shall only be used intradepartmentally.

When the communication exceeds one page on a SH-AD-32A, all succeeding pages shall be typed on similar bond paper.

The format for the SH-AD-32A shall be as follows:

- Date - shall be in upper and lower case letters;
- From and To - the person's full name, followed by the rank or title, shall appear on the first line with their unit of assignment placed immediately below. These shall all be in upper case letters;
- Subject - the entire subject shall be in bold upper case letters and shall not be underlined;
- Margins - the left margin shall be blocked at first line and be at least one to one and one-half inches. The right and bottom margins shall be at least one inch, depending on the length of the communication;
- Narratives - shall be single-spaced and double-spaced between paragraphs. Block style shall be used with each line beginning at the left margin;
- Page numbering - shall be used only when the communication exceeds one page. Do not number the first page. When a communication is continued to two or more pages, the subject (briefed) shall be entered at the left margin six lines down from the top of the page. The page number, with a hyphen before and after the number, shall be centered on the same line, with the date of the communication begun so as to end at the right margin;
- Signature - shall appear at the end of the original communication, or above the sender's name in the "From" section. The identification (sign-off) initials and the copy (distribution) notation shall be typed two to six lines below the last line of the communication on the original; and
- If an approval line is needed, it shall be above the sign-off initials and copy notation, formatted as shown below:

  APPROVED: _____
  Executive's Name and Title

  NOTE: A unit or division file number, if assigned, shall be used on all office correspondence prepared by this Department. The file number shall be placed in the upper right corner in the space provided for file numbers.

• 3-08/060.15 - Memorandum (Form SH-AD-131)

Internal correspondence prepared on a SH-AD-131 is generally used by the Department as an informal

method of communication and, as such, may be typewritten or handwritten. The SH-AD-131 shall only be used intradepartmentally and only when the information to be communicated is brief. When information exceeds one page of a SH-AD-131, the Office Correspondence, Form SH-AD-32A should be used.

• 3-08/070.00 - Homicide Case Correspondence

In homicide cases, the original crime report is restricted to the basic essentials of the offense, with the supplemental report containing the necessary detailed information.

Office correspondence regarding homicide cases is similarly controlled. Initial correspondence from a station should contain only necessary information taken from the original report. Any further correspondence regarding the case shall be handled by the Homicide Bureau.

• 3-08/080.00 - Form Letters

Form letters will be typed in black ink on regular Department letterhead.

The telephone number of the handling unit shall be preprinted, centered, and placed two lines below the letterhead. The handling unit's name shall be preprinted five lines below the Sheriff's preprinted name and title.

The following shall be filled in by the typist after the letter is printed:

- Date;
- Address;
- Salutation; and
- Name and rank (or title) of person signing the form letter.

Form letters shall not show the word "By" in the space for the signature of the signer, nor shall a line for the signature be preprinted on form letters. Otherwise, the instructions/format for outgoing correspondence shall apply to all form letters (refer to section 3-08/040.00).