

06-003 Procedures for Contacting Informants on Calls for Service

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services



PROCEDURES FOR CONTACTING INFORMANTS ON CALLS FOR SERVICE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Field Operations Directive is to establish procedures for field deputies who contact informants requesting the services of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

BACKGROUND

Communication with people who report incidents and request service from the Sheriff's Department is vital to public safety and service. Such communication improves relations between the communities we serve and the Department. In addition, contacting an informant before units arrive and upon conclusion of the call may be the critical step needed to obtain the best possible outcome for an incident. The informant is usually in the best position to direct us to possible suspects. They can also provide the probable cause needed to support our actions, including detentions and arrests. Informants generally expect communication from the Department following an incident. Every effort should be made to notify and communicate with informants when we have responded to their requests for service.

When an informant requests not to be contacted, we must also make every effort to honor their request to remain anonymous. We must remain cognizant that they may have legitimate and personal reasons for not being identified and afford them the maximum protection of their identity.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Complaint Person's Responsibilities

Desk personnel taking calls for service shall ask the informant whether or not they would like to be contacted. If the informant does not want to be contacted, desk personnel shall enter "911N" (Do Not Contact the Informant) in the "CODE" section of the "INC" incident input screen. If the informant would like to be contacted, personnel shall enter "911A" or other appropriate contact-related code into the "CODE" section. The caller's name, address, and telephone number shall also be entered into the input screen. If the caller's location is different than the "LOC," the caller's location information shall be entered into the "ADDR" line.

If the informant does not wish to be contacted, desk personnel should still attempt to obtain the informant's name, address, and telephone number. This information may be of vital importance to the Department at a later time. The informant should be reassured that unless it is absolutely necessary, they WILL NOT be

contacted by field units.

Field Personnel's Responsibility

Field personnel shall attempt to contact the informant on all calls for service except when the call is designated "Do Not Contact the Informant" (911N) or the informant is listed as "Anonymous."

If field personnel have a question about whether an informant should be contacted, they shall request additional information from the dispatcher or watch deputy. They may also ask desk personnel to contact the informant by telephone, especially if they determine that personal contact with the informant may jeopardize the informant's safety. If field personnel believe that contact with the informant is necessary the watch deputy shall advise the watch commander of the situation.

Field personnel shall log the informant's name, age, and the method used to contact the informant by noting, "I/JONES, 02/29/70, CONTACTED BY TELEPHONE" or "IN PERSON," in the narrative of the tag or call clearance.

If the informant is not contacted, that fact shall also be noted by either listing the reason or writing "911N" in the clearance narrative, whichever is applicable.

If after a brief search and a request for the desk to "call back" the informant the informant still cannot be located, "Unable to locate the informant" or "UTL INF" shall be entered into the narrative section of the tag clearance.

Watch Deputy's Responsibility

The watch deputy shall ensure that the above information is included in the incident clearance before approving ("O.K.I.") the incident.

Watch Sergeant's Responsibility

The watch sergeant shall periodically monitor desk personnel and Deputy Daily Worksheets to ensure that they are complying with this order.

Any worksheet which fails to include the proper information shall be reviewed with the responsible deputy(s) in order to ensure their compliance with this directive.

Field Sergeant's Responsibility

Field sergeants shall monitor and conduct "field audits" of calls for service to ensure that informants are being contacted by field personnel when appropriate.

Watch Commander's Responsibility

If it becomes necessary to contact an informant who has requested to remain anonymous, the watch commander shall be notified and will evaluate the situation. If the watch commander determines that contact

is not necessary, the watch commander shall ensure that all efforts to contact the informant are discontinued.

If the watch commander determines that contact is absolutely necessary, the watch commander shall try to arrange contact with the informant in a manner which will satisfactorily protect the informant's identity.

If attempts to telephonically contact the informant are unsuccessful and no acceptable alternative can be arranged, the watch commander may authorize field personnel to personally contact the informant, even if the contact is made against the informant's wishes. Such a contact should only be directed if it is deemed to be absolutely necessary.

Under such circumstances, the watch commander shall make an entry in the Watch Commander's log explaining this action.

AFFECTED DIRECTIVES/PUBLICATIONS

None

CITES/REFERENCES

Field Operations Directive #04-003 Station Desk and Front Counter Operations

ATTACHMENTS

None
