

Unit Order #17 - Contacting Informants

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

CRESCENTA VALLEY STATION

UNIT ORDER # 17

CONTACTING INFORMANTS ON CALLS FOR SERVICE POLICY

It is the policy of the Crescenta Valley Station that field personnel **shall** contact informants on **all** calls for service unless either the call is designated "Do Not Contact the Informant" (911N) or the informant wishes to remain "Anonymous."

Communication with people who report incidents and request service from the Crescenta Valley Station is vital to public safety and service. Such communication improves relations between the communities we serve and the Department. Contacting an informant before units arrive and after the call has been handled 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 personnel to possible suspects. They can also provide the probable cause needed to support our actions, including detentions and arrests.

Informants generally expect communication from station personnel following an incident. Every effort should be made to notify and communicate with informants when we have responded to their request for service

Conversely, when an informant requests **not** to be contacted, we must make every effort to honor their request to remain anonymous; realizing they may have legitimate and personal reasons for not being identified and afford them the maximum protection of their identity.

Desk Personnel'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, personnel shall enter "911N" in the "CODE" section of the "INC" incident input screen. If the informant would like to be contacted, personnel shall enter "911A" or other related contact 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 onto the "ADDR" line.

If the informant does not wish to be contacted, personnel should still try to obtain the informant's information. This information may be of vital importance to the station at a later time. The informant should be reassured that unless it is absolutely necessary, they WILL NOT be contacted by the field units.

Field Personnel's Responsibilities

Field personnel shall attempt to contact the informant on all calls for service, except; when the call is designated "911N" or the informant is listed as "Anonymous."

If field personnel have any questions, they shall request the information from the dispatcher or the 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.

Field personnel shall log the informant's name, age and the method used to contact the informant in the narrative of the tag or call clearance, i.e. "I/JONES, 02/29/1970, CONTACTED BY PHONE" or "IN PERSON". If the informant is **not** contacted, that fact shall also be noted by either listing the reason or typing "911N" in the clearance narrative, whichever is applicable. If after a brief search and a request for the desk personnel to "call back" the informant and the informant cannot be located, then "Unable to locate the informant" or "UTL INF" shall be entered into the narrative section of the tag clearance.

Watch Deputy Responsibilities

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 Responsibilities

Watch sergeant shall periodically monitor desk personnel and Deputy Daily Worksheets (DDWS) to ensure that they are complying with this order. Any DDWS which fails to include the proper information, shall be reviewed with the responsible deputy(ies) in order to ensure their compliance with this order.

Field Sergeant's Responsibilities

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 Responsibilities

If it should become necessary to contact an informant who has requested to remain anonymous, the watch commander shall be notified and he/she will evaluate the situation. If the watch commander determines that contact is not necessary, he/she shall ensure that all efforts to contact the informant are discontinued.

However, if the watch commander determines that contacting the informant is **absolutely** necessary, he/she shall try to arrange contact with the informant in a manner that will satisfactorily protect the informant's identity.

If attempts to telephonically contact the informant are unsuccessful and no acceptable alternative arrangements can be made, the watch commander may authorize field personnel (along with the field sergeant) to personally contact the informant; even if the contact is made against the informant's wishes. Such contact should only be directed if the watch commander determines it to be absolutely necessary. Under such circumstances, the watch commander shall make an entry in the "Watch Commander's Log" explaining this action along with the informant's information.

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Crescenta Valley Station

Date Approved

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