
Records Division

803.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines for the operational functions of the Merced Police Department Records Division. The policy addresses department file access and internal requests for case reports.

803.1.1 NUMBERING SYSTEMS

Reports are numbered commencing with the last two digits of the current year followed by a sequential number beginning with 00001 starting at midnight on the first day of January of each year. As an example, case number 08-00001 would be the first new case beginning January 1, 2008.

803.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced Police Department to maintain department records securely, professionally, and efficiently.

803.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Crime Analyst is responsible for maintaining compliance with federal, state, and local regulations regarding reporting requirements of crime statistics. This includes reporting statistical data to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) for suspected hate crimes (Penal Code § 13023).

The Administrative Division Captain is responsible for reporting statistical data to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) for:

- (a) All officer-involved shootings and incidents involving use of force resulting in serious bodily injury (Government Code § 12525.2).
- (b) Suspected hate crimes (Penal Code § 13023).
- (c) Complaints of racial bias against officers (Penal Code § 13012; Penal Code § 13020).
- (d) Civilian complaints made against officers (Penal Code § 832.5; Penal Code § 13012).

803.3.1 RECORDS SUPERVISOR

The Chief of Police shall appoint and delegate certain responsibilities to a Records Supervisor. The Records Supervisor shall be directly responsible to the Administration Division Captain or the authorized designee.

The responsibilities of the Records Supervisor include but are not limited to:

- (a) Overseeing the efficient and effective operation of the Records Division.
- (b) Scheduling and maintaining Records Division time records.
- (c) Supervising, training, and evaluating Records Division staff.
- (d) Maintaining and updating a Records Division procedure manual.

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- (e) Ensuring compliance with established policies and procedures.
- (f) Supervising the access, use, and release of protected information (see the Protected Information Policy).
- (g) Establishing security and access protocols for case reports designated as sensitive, where additional restrictions to access have been implemented. Sensitive reports may include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Homicides.
 - 2. Cases involving department members or public officials.
 - 3. Any case where restricted access is prudent.

803.3.2 RECORDS DIVISION

The responsibilities of the Records Division include but are not limited to:

- (a) Maintaining a records management system for case reports.
 - (a) The records management system should include a process for numbering, identifying, tracking, and retrieving case reports.
- (b) Entering case report information into the records management system.
 - 1. Modification of case reports shall only be made when authorized by a supervisor.
- (c) Providing members of the Department with access to case reports when needed for investigation or court proceedings.
- (d) Maintaining compliance with federal, state, and local regulations regarding reporting requirements of crime statistics. This includes reporting statistical data to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) for:
 - (a) Stop data required by Government Code § 12525.5 and 11 CCR 999.226.
 - (a) The reported information must not contain personally identifiable information of the person stopped or other information exempt from disclosure pursuant to Government Code § 12525.5 (11 CCR 999.228).
- (e) Maintaining compliance with federal, state, and local regulations regarding criminal history reports and auditing.
- (f) Identifying missing case reports and notifying the responsible member's supervisor.
- (g) Updating the Automated Firearms System to reflect any firearms relinquished to the Department and the subsequent disposition to the DOJ pursuant to Penal Code § 34010 (Penal Code § 29810).
- (h) Entering into the Automated Firearms System information about each firearm that has been reported stolen, lost, found, recovered, held for safekeeping, or under observation within seven calendar days of the precipitating event (Penal Code § 11108.2).
- (i) Maintaining compliance with the state and DOJ reporting requirements regarding the number of transfers of individuals to immigration authorities and offenses that allowed for the transfers (Government Code § 7284.6(c)(2))

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803.3.3 RECORDS DIVISION PROCEDURE MANUAL

The Records Supervisor should establish procedures that address:

- (a) Identifying by name persons in reports.
- (b) Classifying reports by type of incident or crime.
- (c) Tracking reports through the approval process.
- (d) Assigning alpha-numerical records to all arrest records.
- (e) Managing a warrant and wanted persons file.

803.4 DETERMINATION OF FACTUAL INNOCENCE

In any case where a person has been arrested by officers of the Merced Police Department and no accusatory pleading has been filed, the person arrested may petition the Department to destroy the related arrest records. Petitions should be forwarded to the Administration Supervisor. The Administration Supervisor should promptly contact the prosecuting attorney and request a written opinion as to whether the petitioner is factually innocent of the charges (Penal Code § 851.8). Factual innocence means the accused person did not commit the crime.

Upon receipt of a written opinion from the prosecuting attorney affirming factual innocence, the Administration Supervisor should forward the petition to the Investigative Bureau Supervisor and the City Attorney for review. After such review and consultation with the City Attorney, the Investigative Bureau Supervisor and the Administration Supervisor shall decide whether a finding of factual innocence is appropriate.

Upon determination that a finding of factual innocence is appropriate, the Administration Supervisor shall ensure that the arrest record and petition are sealed for later destruction and the required notifications are made to the California DOJ and other law enforcement agencies (Penal Code § 851.8).

The Administration Supervisor should respond to a petition with the Department's decision within 45 days of receipt. Responses should include only the decision of the Department, not an explanation of the analysis leading to the decision.

803.5 FILE ACCESS AND SECURITY

The security of files in the Records Division must be a high priority and shall be maintained as mandated by state or federal law. All case reports including but not limited to initial, supplemental, follow-up, evidence, and any other reports related to a police department case, including field interview (FI) cards, criminal history records, and publicly accessible logs, shall be maintained in a secure area within the Records Division, accessible only by authorized members of the Records Division. Access to case reports or files when Records Division staff is not available may be obtained through the Shift Supervisor.

The Records Division will also maintain a secure file for case reports deemed by the Chief of Police as sensitive or otherwise requiring extraordinary access restrictions.

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803.6 ORIGINAL CASE REPORTS

Generally, original case reports shall not be removed from the Records Division. Should an original case report be needed for any reason, the requesting department member shall first obtain authorization from the Records Supervisor. All original case reports removed from the Records Division shall be recorded on a designated report check-out log, which shall be the only authorized manner by which an original case report may be removed from the Records Division.

803.7 CONFIDENTIALITY

Records Division staff has access to information that may be confidential or sensitive in nature. Records Division staff shall not access, view, or distribute, or allow anyone else to access, view, or distribute any record, file, or report, whether in hard copy or electronic file format, or any other confidential, protected, or sensitive information except in accordance with the Records Maintenance and Release and Protected Information policies and the Records Division procedure manual.

803.8 ARREST WITHOUT FILING OF ACCUSATORY PLEADING

The Patrol Division Captain should ensure a process is in place for when an individual is arrested and released and no accusatory pleading is filed so that the following occurs (Penal Code § 849.5; Penal Code § 851.6):

- (a) The individual is issued a certificate describing the action as a detention.
- (b) All references to an arrest are deleted from the arrest records of the Department and the record reflects only a detention.
- (c) The California DOJ is notified by the Merced County District Attorney's Office.