



Report Writing

Course Topics

- LD 18
- Policy 344 Report Preparation
- Policy 330 Child Abuse
- Use of force report writing Policy 300
- SPD Forms
- Officer Handbook
- Mark43 RMS
- Crossroads Video
- SPD Report Writing
- Scenarios / Report Writing



Learning Domain 18



- A peace officer's ability to clearly document the facts and activities of an investigation not only reflects on the officer's own professionalism, but also on the ability of the justice system to prosecute the criminal case.
- As much as 40% of a peace officer's work involves writing. Good investigative skills can be diminished if officers do not have the necessary writing skills to record their observations, findings, and actions clearly and concisely.

Learning Domain 18

Investigative Report



- An investigative report is a written document prepared by a peace officer that records in detail the officer's observations and actions as they relate to a specific event or incident.
- Each investigative report is a legal document that becomes a permanent written record of that event or incident.

Learning Domain 18

Judicial Process



- A suspect's freedom, rights or privileges cannot be taken away or denied unless there is sufficient cause to justify such action.
- In order to ensure due process, officers, prosecutors, judges, etc., must have sufficient information and evidence to initiate or continue the judicial process and successfully prosecute or exonerate a suspect.

Learning Domain 18

Judicial Process



- The judicial process cannot function without the investigative reports written by the officers who have the direct knowledge of an event or incident.
- An officer's report must present each event or incident in a complete and clear manner. Any investigation, arrest, prosecution, or other action taken must be initiated, supported, or justified by the information included in the report written by that officer.
- Because peace officer's reports are so important to the judicial process, each one must be able to stand up to critical review and legal scrutiny.

Learning Domain 18

Judicial Process



- State and federal statutes mandate that law enforcement agencies report certain events and incidents. **Penal Code Section 11107** requires each sheriff or police chief executive to furnish reports of specified misdemeanors and felonies to the Department of Justice.
- Such reports must:
 - describe the nature and character of each crime,
 - note all particular circumstances of that crime, and
 - include all additional or supplemental information pertaining to the suspected criminal activity.

Learning Domain 18

Specific Crimes

- Specified misdemeanors and felonies that require investigative reports, as required under Penal Code Section 11107, include, but are not limited to:
 - Forgery
 - Fraud – bunco
 - Bombings
 - Receiving or selling stolen property
 - Safe and commercial burglary
 - Grand theft
 - Child abuse
 - Homicide
 - Threats
 - Offenses involving lost, stolen found, pledged or pawned property
 - Domestic abuse
 - Sex crimes



Learning Domain 18

Failure to File a Report



- Peace officers have a legal and moral duty to investigate and accurately report crimes or incidents that come to their attention. Failure to uphold this responsibility can have negative consequences for officers.
- Deliberate failure to report a crime may be considered a violation of agency regulations and grounds for disciplinary action.
- Any officer who knowingly files a false report will be guilty of a crime. (Penal Code Section 118.1)

Learning Domain 18

Ethics



- All reports are to be true, unbiased, and unprejudiced. These are easy words to say, but sometimes hard to live by. It is not always easy to know or find out the truth. Clearly it is the peace officer's moral obligation to seek the truth, lying is wrong. Truth and public trust cannot be separated.

Learning Domain 18

Uses of Investigative Reports



Even though it is the officer in the field who gathers the initial information regarding a crime, that officer may not be the person who must use that information to make decisions regarding further actions. Those decisions are usually made by other people removed from the actual event. They must rely on the information in the investigating officer's report to make decisions.

Learning Domain 18

Uses of Investigative Reports



- Identification, apprehension and prosecution of criminals
- Provide a record for prosecutors, defense attorneys and other law enforcement agencies
- To assist officer in preparation for court
- Aid in determining civil liability
- Assist decision makers
- Serve as reference material

Learning Domain 18

Report Users



- Immediate supervisors and FTO's
- Detectives
- Other Law Enforcement Agencies
- District Attorney's Office and Defense Council
- Parole, probation and custody personnel
- Involved parties
- Media
- Insurance agencies

Learning Domain 18

Effective Investigative Report



- No matter what type of investigative report is being written (i.e., arrest report, incident report, etc.) that report must be:
 - Factual,
 - Accurate,
 - Clear,
 - Concise,
 - Complete, and
 - Timely

Learning Domain 18

Effective Investigative Report - Factual



- Critical decisions made based on an officer's investigative report require that each report be factual. Users of the report must have an exact and literal representation of the event or incident.
- The factual report provides an objective accounting of the relevant facts related to the event or incident under investigation. Any conclusions made by the reporting officer must be based on objective facts. These facts must be articulated and documented within the body of the report.

Learning Domain 18

Effective Investigative Report - Accurate



- The decisions made and actions taken by the users of the report must be supported by accurate information. There must be no inconsistencies or discrepancies between what took place and what is documented in the officer's report.
- If any specific information is found to be inaccurate, the credibility and reliability of the report itself may be jeopardized.
- Accuracy is achieved by carefully, precisely, impartially, and honestly documenting all relevant information.

Learning Domain 18

Effective Investigative Report - Clear



- An investigative report must speak for the investigating officer at a time when that officer is not present. There should be no doubt or confusion on what the investigating officer is reporting.

Learning Domain 18

Effective Investigative Report - Clear



- An investigative report must speak for the investigating officer at a time when that officer is not present. There should be no doubt or confusion on what the investigating officer is reporting.

Learning Domain 18

Effective Investigative Report - Concise



- Reports should be brief yet; contain all relevant information the users will need to do their jobs. Wordiness can make a report less readable and therefore less effective. Accuracy, completeness, or clarity should never be sacrificed for the sake of brevity.

Learning Domain 18

Effective Investigative Report - Complete



- An officer's report must contain all the relevant information and facts the user of that report will need. If the user must contact the writer to gather additional information, the report is not complete.

Learning Domain 18

Effective Investigative Report - Timely



- No decisions can be made or actions taken if an officer's report does not reach the users in a timely fashion. Evidence can be lost, suspects or witnesses may disappear, and the support and good will in the community can be lost if action toward resolving a case is delayed

Learning Domain 18

Field Notes



- The officers who investigate a crime or incident are responsible for providing the information other participants in the criminal justice system need to effectively do their jobs. Officers should rely on accurate sources of information when writing their reports.

Learning Domain 18

Field Notes



- Field notes are abbreviated notations written by an officer in the field while investigating a specific incident or crime.
- An officer's field notes are the **primary source** the officer will use when writing the investigative report. If the officer's field notes are incomplete, difficult to read, or poorly organized, they will be of little use to that officer.

Learning Domain 18

Field Notes



- Field notes are recorded while information is fresh in the investigating officer's mind. They should be taken:
 - at the scene of an event or incident,
 - when interviewing persons (e.g., victims, witness, suspects, etc.),
 - whenever an officer wishes to record specific facts for inclusion in the report, and
 - any time the officer wishes to remember specific details at a later time.

NOTE: Body camera footage as well as in-car camera footage can assist with recording crime scenes, victim, witness and/or suspect statements, and for time-stamping certain points during the investigative process.

Learning Domain 18

Field Notes



- Every event or incident is different; therefore, the facts and information the officer must gather will differ. An officer's field notes should contain the facts and information that will aid that officer in answering the questions what, when, where, who, how, and why.

Learning Domain 18

Opinions, Facts, and Conclusions



- An effective investigative report must be factual. It must present an objective accounting of the relevant facts related to the event or incident under investigation. An officer must be able to distinguish between opinion, fact, and conclusion.
- The basis for determining relevant information requires peace officers to make the fine distinctions between an opinion, a fact, and a conclusion. The following table illustrates these distinctions.

Learning Domain 18

Opinions, Facts, and Conclusions



	Description	Example
Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A statement that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- can be open to different interpretations,- expresses a belief not necessarily substantiated by proof.	The victim was in pain.
Fact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A statement that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- can be verified or proven- has real, demonstrable existence.	The victim's arm was broken.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A statement that is based on the analysis of facts and opinions.• Conclusions should always be accompanied with the supporting facts and opinions. Conclusions presented without supporting information may be considered unwarranted.	The victim was not able to explain what had happened because she was in pain due to her broken arm.

Learning Domain 18

Opinions, Facts, and Conclusions



Victim's Statement	Relevant Facts	Irrelevant Facts
"I just bought this bike from the guy down the street a couple of weeks ago. It wasn't new but it was in really good shape. After a long ride, I parked the bike in front of my building at the bottom of the stairs. I didn't bother locking it up or anything because I thought it would be safe there, you know."	The bike was left unlocked in front of the victim's residence.	I thought it was safe there.
"I went inside my apartment to fill my water bottle and was gone for less than 5 minutes."	The bike was left unattended for about 5 minutes.	The victim went into his apartment to fill his water bottle.
"When I came out, the bike was gone. I was really mad and started yelling and cursing. I looked up and down the street but didn't see anyone or any signs of my bike."	No suspect was seen or heard by the victim.	The victim yelled and cursed when he realized his bike was stolen.

Learning Domain 18

Fundamental Content Elements



Each investigative report should describe the manner in which the peace officers learned of the incident. The initial information should also describe the officer's immediate observations and any actions they took upon arrival at the scene. Content elements specific to the initial information may include, but are not limited to:

- the name(s) and badge number(s) of the responding officer(s),
- how the officer(s) learned of the incident (e.g., radio dispatch),
- the exact date and time the officer(s) arrived,
- the exact location, and
- details regarding the officer(s) own observations of who was where and what was happening upon arrival.

Learning Domain 18

Fundamental Content Elements



- The facts which are the evidence of a crime are referred to as the corpus delicti, or the body of the crime.
- Specific crimes have their own required crime elements. Investigative reports must clearly identify these elements as facts in order to establish that a crime has occurred.
- Crime identification information within the body of the investigative report must clearly state the:
 - common name of the crime,
 - statutory code reference number for the crime (i.e., Penal Code, Health & Welfare Code, etc.), and
 - existence of each of the required crime elements necessary for the crime to be complete.

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 344 Report Preparation



Report preparation is a major part of each officer's job. The purpose of reports is to document sufficient information to refresh the officer's memory and to provide sufficient information for follow-up investigation and successful prosecution. Report writing is the subject of substantial formalized training and on-the-job training.

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 344 Report Preparation



Employees should ensure that reports are sufficiently detailed for their purpose and free from errors prior to submission. It is the responsibility of the assigned employee to complete and submit all reports taken during the shift before going off-duty unless permission to hold the report has been approved by a supervisor. Generally, reports requiring prompt follow-up action on active leads, or arrest reports where the suspect remains in custody should not be held.

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 344.2 Required Reporting



- When a member responds to a call for service, or as a result of self-initiated activity becomes aware of any activity where a crime has occurred, the member shall document the incident regardless of whether a victim desires prosecution. Activity to be documented in a written report includes:
 - All arrests
 - All felony crimes
 - Non-Felony incidents involving threats or stalking behavior
 - All misdemeanor crimes where victim desires prosecution
 - Situations covered by separate policy:
 - Use of Force, Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, Senior and Disability Victimization, Hate Crimes, Suspicious Activity Reporting Policy

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 344.2.2 Non-criminal Activity



- Any use of force against any person by a member of this department (see the Use of Force Policy)
- Any firearm discharge (see the Firearms Policy)
- Anytime a person is reported missing, regardless of jurisdiction (see the Missing Persons Policy)
- Any found property or found evidence
- Any traffic collisions above the minimum reporting level (see Traffic Collision Reporting Policy)
- Suspicious incidents that may indicate a potential for crimes against children or that a child's safety is in jeopardy
- All protective custody detentions
- Suspicious incidents that may place the public or others at risk
- Whenever the employee be

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 344.2.3 Death Cases



•Death investigations require specific investigation methods depending on circumstances and should be handled in accordance with Policy § 360 Death Investigations. The handling officer should notify and apprise a supervisor of the circumstances surrounding the incident to determine how to proceed. The following cases shall be appropriately investigated and documented using the approved report:

- Sudden or accidental deaths
- Suicides
- Homicide or suspected homicide
- Unattended deaths
- Found dead bodies or body parts

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 344.2.5 Miscellaneous Injuries



- Any injury that is reported to this department **SHALL** require a report when:
 - The injury is a result of a drug overdose
 - Attempted suicide
 - The injury is major/serious, whereas death could result
 - The circumstances surrounding the incident are suspicious in nature and it is desirable to record the event

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 344.2.6 Mandated Reporting



- A report shall be taken when any incident in which a child 18 years or younger suffered an unintentional or self-inflicted gunshot wound. The Records Unit shall notify the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) of the incident as required by CDPH (Penal Code § 23685).

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 344.6 District Attorney's Office Requests



- Periodically the District Attorney's Office will send an employee of this Department a memorandum requesting additional information or additional work be completed on an investigation. Employees receiving such a request from the District Attorney's Office shall complete the requested work as soon as possible, document the information on the appropriate report form, and request the report be forwarded to the requesting District Attorney's Office employee.

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 330 Child Abuse



Patrol Officers: A patrol officer shall prepare a complete investigation and take the appropriate steps to assure the safety of the child and identify and apprehend the suspect. A report of suspected child abuse shall be sent to the Monterey County CPS / DSS. CPS / DSS will complete notifications to the District Attorney's Office and send the BCIA 8583 to the appropriate reporting centers.

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 330.5 Child Abuse Reporting



In all suspected cases of child abuse, a report will be written. Investigations and reports related to suspected cases of child abuse should address, as applicable:

- The overall basis for the contact. This should be done by the investigating officer in all circumstances where a suspected child abuse victim was contacted.
- The exigent circumstances that existed if officers interviewed the child victim without the presence of a parent or guardian.
- Any relevant statements the child may have made and to whom he/she made the statements.
- If a child was taken into protective custody, the reasons, the name and title of the person making the decision, and why other alternatives were not appropriate.
- Documentation of any visible injuries or any injuries identified by the child. This should include photographs of such injuries, if practicable.

Salinas Police Policy Manual

Policy 330.5 Child Abuse Reporting



Continued:

- Whether the child victim was transported for medical treatment or a medical examination.
- Whether the victim identified a household member as the alleged perpetrator, and a list of the names of any other children who may reside in the residence.
- Identification of any prior related reports or allegations of child abuse, including other jurisdictions, as reasonably known.
- Previous addresses of the victim and suspect.
- Other potential witnesses who have not yet been interviewed, such as relatives or others close to the victim's environment.

Use of Force Report Writing



Reporting the Use of Force (300.5):

Any use of force by a member of this department shall be documented promptly, completely, and accurately in an appropriate report, depending on the nature of the incident. The officer should articulate the factors perceived and why he/she believed the use of force was reasonable under the circumstances. To collect data for purposes of training, resource allocation, analysis, and related purposes, the Department may require the completion of additional report forms, as specified in department policy, procedure, or law.

Use of Force Report Writing



Review BWC before finalizing your report involving use of force, but do not just rely solely on your BWC for your report. Your report should be mostly completed before reviewing your BWC as a tool to assist you in remembering some details.

Review and Reference the Use of Force Policy 300 before and while writing or finalizing your report involving use of force.

The Policy provides proper terms, elements, and factors useful in documenting reasonable force (300.3.3)

- Use the language and terms from the policy because that is the standard that your use of force will be judged by.
- The Use of Force Policy can be used as a reminder or like a check list to make sure you do not leave anything out of your report.

Use of Force Report Writing



Remember to document anything leading up to the use of force

- Your uniform and vehicle
- Prior knowledge of the suspect or location (personal or documented history)
- Radio traffic
- Actions (Officer Safety/De-escalation) leading up to contact
- Resources asked for even if not available (CIT, K-9, drone, HNT, medical staged, Mental Health, Sgt., etc.)
- Information gathered from reporting party, witnesses, etc.
- Communication with suspect, building or attempting to build rapport

Use of Force Report Writing



Officer Safety can also be considered as de-escalation, so you should document it in your report.

- Parking a few houses down and approaching on foot
- Driving a fully marked police unit and in full uniform
- Taking time to listen and observe before making contact
- Having back up and other resources (K-9, 40mm, shield, etc.)
- Announcing and identifying yourself
- Taking your time, slowing things down, and having "patience"
- Building or attempting to build rapport
- Having objects between you and the suspect (vehicle, furniture, wall, etc.)
- Taking steps back/tactically retreating

Use of Force Report Writing



You or someone else are the victim in a use for force incident, so your report should reflect that fact.

The suspect's actions "forced" you to use "reasonable" force, so document that fact in your report.

Describe your thoughts and feelings before and during the use of force (scared, afraid, etc.)

Thoroughly document the suspects actions/re-actions and your actions/re-actions.

You can briefing describe your partners actions, but they need to document their own actions.

Document how, when, and what caused the threat/force to stop and why (if known).

CSIs or you need to document/photograph injuries or lack of injuries.

Questions



Domestic Violence Report

Write report based improvised a domestic violence incident involving one male suspect, female victim and one witness. Instructors should provide the parties' statements.

Date, time and location should be improvised.

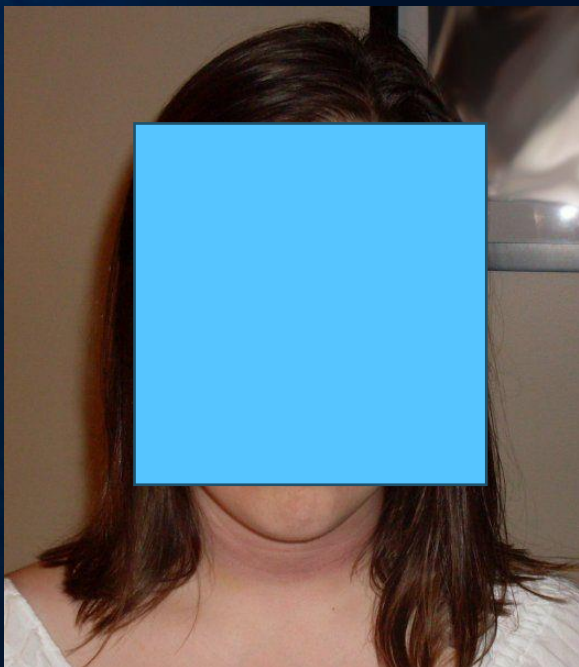
Describe injuries based the following evidence photos

Review reports and provide feedback.



Domestic Violence Report

Female's injuries:



Male's injuries:



Public Intoxication Report

Watch the Public Intoxication Report video on 365 Share Point

Write report based on observation from BWC to meet the elements of 647f PC for an arrest.

Date, time and location should be improvised

Review report and provide feedback.



Use of Force Report

Watch the Use of Force video on 365 Share Point

Write report based on one of officers.

Date, time and location should be improvised

Review report and provide feedback.



Questions

