

DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 99-71

OFFICE of the CHIEF OF POLICE
REPLACES: General Order 82-03
SOP 501.28.00/501.28.01

DATE: December 13, 1999

FIELD INTERVIEWS

I. PURPOSE.

To establish guidelines governing the field interview and reporting process.

II. DEFINITIONS:

Field Interview - The stopping and questioning of a person by a law enforcement officer because the officer (1) has a reasonable suspicion that the subject may have committed, may be committing, or may be about to commit a crime, (2) believes the subject may be a hazard to themselves or others, or (3) believes the interview may have a preventative effect.

Field Interview Report - A standardized form used to record personal, vehicle and other pertinent information that are obtained during a field interview.

III. FIELD INTERVIEW PROCESS.

In the event an officer encounters activity that he/she deems to be questionable in nature and thereby conducts an investigative stop, same should be based on reasonable suspicion or some other objective criteria. The length of the stop (both for pedestrians and vehicles) should be reasonable and the scope of the inquiry initially limited to specific areas of questioning.

Generally, no more than two officers or marked police vehicles shall be present at the scene of an investigative stop and/or field interview. However, should a serious arrest be initiated, or other

exigent circumstances exist, the number of officers/vehicles at the scene may exceed the desired number in accordance to need. In addition, none of the preceding shall preclude the on-duty uniformed supervisor from stopping at the scene to assess the status of the investigative stop, or otherwise driving by the scene to monitor same from a distance.

The decision to create a written record of an investigative stop (both pedestrian and/or vehicle) shall be at the discretion of the individual officer. In those instances where an officer deems an investigative stops warrants documentation, same shall complete a Field Interview Report prior to the release of the subject(s) from the scene.

The Regional Field Interview Report utilized by this department shall bear an individually assigned number for computer tracking purposes. The officer will then complete as much information as possible concerning the date, time and location of the stop, each individual subject's personal information (name, address, race, sex, date of birth, etc.), vehicle information and description, employment information, associates, gang affiliation, and any other pertinent information. The officer will subsequently return the completed F.I.R. to this agency and relinquish same to their supervisor for review. The supervisor, in turn, will then forward the F.I.R. to the communications unit for entry into the computer.

A. Record Retention

Completed F.I.R. forms will be forwarded to the communications unit, which shall enter data from same into both the R.E.J.I.S. and in-house computer systems. The hard copy of the forms will then be remanded to the supervisor of the Administrative Division at which time they shall be filed. Said records shall then be retained for a year in accordance with Section VI, General Order 99-35.

IV. GANG MEMBER IDENTIFICATION.

In those instances where an officer may initiate a field interview contact or an investigative detention with a suspected gang member, in addition to documenting the encounter with a Field Interview Report (FIR), the officer will also complete a "Gang Identifier Report" whenever possible. This shall include items of information as gang structure, affiliations, members, nicknames, colors, terminology, vehicles and weapons of choice.

The "Gang Identifier Report" shall also be completed in those instances where one or more suspected gang members are arrested.

Completed forms shall be forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division. The forms will then be reviewed by detective personnel and subsequently distributed to the St. Louis County Police Department.

BY ORDER OF:

RICHARD T. MORRIS
Chief of Police

RTM:dld

CALEA Reference: 41.2.4