

7.7 Reports and Forms Completion

7.7.1 Dynamics of Effective Report Writing

A proper report is a complete and accurate record of an event. A report conveys clear, concise, and correct information. Reports include the who, what, when, where, how, and why of the event or condition being reported. Reports describe what is directly observed, heard, and otherwise experienced. Inferences and opinions are kept separate from the facts. Report forms are to be filled out completely. Grammar and spelling are to be accurate in order to convey a concise and clear message.

7.7.2 When to Write a Report

Reports are to be written by employees as required by written directive or at the direction of a supervisor. A report is also required when a situation or event:

- Contains information which may be necessary to the operation of the Sheriff's Office, and/or statistical purposes;
- Is of an unusual circumstance;
- Endangers the health, safety, or security of any person or facility under the control of the Sheriff's Office, including any injury or medical emergency regarding an arrestee or an employee;
- Violates any County, State or Federal law or ordinance for which the Sheriff's Office has enforcement responsibility.

7.7.3 Maintenance of Reports and Forms

The Sheriff's Administrative Secretary will maintain an original of all completed reports. The Administrative Secretary will maintain a good copy of most of the Sheriff's Office forms electronically on the "j" drive. Any Office member identifying the need for a new form, or modifications to an existing one, should submit the proposed document to the Chief Deputy via their chain-of-command. The final approved version will be transmitted to the Administrative Secretary for inclusion in the on-line forms file.

Some specialized forms not to be accessed office-wide are maintained by the Human Resources Coordinator, as are some forms in other Bureaus. In each case, a good copy of the original document should be maintained electronically within those respective areas by the Captain or his/her designee. All other Anne Arundel County standard forms may be found on-line through the county's intranet.

7.7.4 Completion of Reports and Forms

All reports should be typed or legibly written, and lettered in black ink. All forms will be filled out in their entirety. If an informational block on a particular form is not applicable, "N/A" or a slash mark should be placed in the space. Informational blocks on forms are generally self-explanatory. If guidance is required in completing the form, supervisory staff should be consulted.

7.7.5 Incident Numbers

Any employee preparing an *Incident Report* will also draw a unique control identifier - *incident number*. Incident numbers are maintained by the Office communications unit. This incident number will be referenced on all forms and other documentation regarding the circumstance being detailed. Those incidents not documented in AACoPD's Automated Reporting System (ARS) or in MSP's Automated Crash Reporting System (ACRS) shall be submitted on the Sheriff's Office Incident Report Form.

7.7.6 Submission of Reports

All reports should be submitted prior to the end of the reporting employee's tour of duty, unless otherwise directed. Supervisors are responsible for reviewing and ensuring all reports are accurate, classified properly, contain no spelling errors, are in acceptable grammatical form, and that proper procedures were followed.

Unless specified by another directive, reviewed reports will be promptly forwarded to the Sheriff's Administrative Secretary via chain-of-command. The Administrative Secretary will retain all reports for a period compliant with the requirements set forth in General Order 7.6, *Records Retention*.