

## SCRANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY

*Effective Date:*  
**August 12, 2019**

*Policy Number:*  
**07-011**

*Policy Subject:*  
**Initial Police Report Writing**

*Reevaluation Date:*  
**August 12, 2020**

*No. Pages:*  
**6**

*PLEAC Standard(s):*  
**3.4.1**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a set of guidelines and procedures for report writing pertaining to calls for service, criminal and vehicle investigations.

### **II. POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Scranton Police Department that proper report writing procedures be utilized and enforced for the purpose of criminal investigations, tracking, statistics, resolution, and public service.

This policy cannot address every aspect of a police report or report writing but in every instance, all initial and supplemental reports should be thorough, articulate, complete, accurate, and comprehensive in addressing the issue/incident that is being reported on and/or documented.

### **III. PROCEDURE**

Report writing is the foundation and the main basis of information, which is instrumental in the level of productivity and crime solution within the Scranton Police Department. The following procedures shall be used when report writing. The reports shall include the basic who, what, where, and when. If the reviewer has questions about exactly what has happened and/or the report does not state what action the officer is going to take or has taken, the report shall not be approved and it shall be returned for correction/additions.

- A. All police reports, initial and supplemental, shall be completed **prior** to departing from duty unless the commanding officer (command car) of the

shift expressly gives permission to the officer to finish the report on his/her next shift. In this instance the report shall be completed at the beginning of his/her next shift. The following incident reports must be entered into the Reporting System prior to the end of an officer's shift. The commanding officer **shall not** permit an officer to end his/her tour of duty without completing his/her reports under the following conditions:

1. Felony crimes/incident reports
  2. Arrests in which the violator is scheduled for a preliminary arraignment within the next 24 hours.
  3. Accidents involving serious injury or death.
  4. Any hit and run accident with information that may identify the hit-and-run driver and/or vehicle.
  5. Any incident which requires follow-up by the Detective Division prior to the initial reporting officer's next shift.
  6. When an officer is not scheduled to work in the next 24 hours. This includes all reports by the initial reporting officer and all officers that have information pertaining to the incident which requires them to complete a supplemental report.
- B. No officers shall knowingly falsify any official report or enter or cause to be entered any inaccurate, false, or improper information.
- C. All reports shall be classified by incident type and the following fields shall be completed on the initial reports:
1. Persons/Subjects field – completed for any and all individuals involved in the incident, suspected of being involved in the incident, witnesses, and any other person who may have information relating to the incident. This includes but is not limited to reporting parties, victims, suspects, accused (offender), witnesses and subjects mentioned. Phone numbers, addresses and place of employment for all the above parties shall be included in this field. All known biographical information about the person shall be completed in the field.
  2. Vehicle Field – completed anytime a vehicle is mentioned or involved in the incident.
  3. Property Field – completed when any property is stolen and/or recovered or when any type of drug is seized by the officer(s). Vehicles and guns should be entered in the appropriate property field(s).
  4. Status Field – Status and disposition field shall be completed on all incident reports with the appropriate drop down box selected for each section. The clear date shall be completed when the incident has been cleared.
  5. Weapons Field – completed anytime a weapon is seized, used or mentioned in an incident.
  6. Date/Time Field – shall be completed in its entirety. Type of premises shall be completed for all reports. Entry point and forced entry box shall be completed for all burglaries.

7. Summary Field – Narrative including all relevant information to include required information as listed above.

D. The following calls/incidents shall require a police report to be filed:

1. Any reported crimes.
2. Any police informational report.
3. Anytime an officer makes an arrest (either on view, warrant, or other) for any criminal or summary non-traffic offenses.
4. When any physical use of force is used. Refer to Policy 10-002 Use of Force.
5. Whenever a controlled substance is seized, found, and/or turned over to the police either for evidence and/or destruction.
6. Whenever lost, found and/or stolen property is turned over to police.
7. Any police pursuit, in addition to the state mandated police pursuit report.
8. All reports of missing persons/juveniles.
9. Any incident in which a weapon is discharged within the City of Scranton.
10. Anytime a police officer has a vehicle towed unrelated to a reportable crash.
11. All stolen vehicles, recovered stolen vehicles and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle incidents.
12. All domestic violence incidents, whether physical or verbal.
13. All child custody cases.
14. Anytime a civil court order, including but not limited to protection from abuse orders, are violated or alleged to have been violated.
15. Motor vehicle accidents.
16. Any accident other than a motor vehicle accident.
17. Any health or public safety issue.
18. Any *other* time an officer feels the incident/issue he/she is handling, which is not addressed or mandated by this policy, should require a report and/or documentation.
19. Any other time a supervisor directs an officer to do a report.

E. The following reports shall be completed for motor vehicle accidents:

1. Reportable;
2. Non-Reportable; and
3. Hit-and-Run accidents in accordance with Policy 16-013 Traffic Accidents.

F. Warrant Arrests: All criminal, bench, non-traffic, and traffic warrant arrests in accordance with Policy 07-009 Warrant Control

G. Domestics: A case report shall be completed on all domestic related incidents either verbal and/or physical in nature. The report shall include all information and meet all criteria as directed in Policy 12-001 Domestic Violence.

H. Assaults: The following shall be documented in the initial report:

On all assault incidents in which there is visible injury and there will be additional follow up and/or an arrest, photographs and written statements shall be taken and documented in the narrative. The original written statements shall be forwarded to Central Records. In cases where the victim states that they do not wish to pursue criminal charges, a Scranton Police Department *Criminal Charges/Criminal Investigation Refusal Affidavit* (SPD Form 08-001) **shall** be completed and sent to Central Records. The officer shall additionally document the exact injuries he/she has observed on the victim and/or that the victim stated they sustained.

- I. Use of Force Reports: Use of Force Reports shall be completed in accordance with Policy 10-002 Use of Force.
- J. Stolen Vehicles: Included and documented in the narrative of these reports shall be whether the vehicle was locked, whether the owner has accounted for all known keys to the vehicle, what items of value were left in the vehicle, any known means of tracking e.g., EasyPass, any known damage to the vehicles interior/exterior and/or any other characteristics (ex. aftermarket body parts, etc.) of the vehicle that may distinguish it from others.
- K. Narcotic/Drug Reports: When seizing controlled substances, officers shall indicate and document in their narrative the results of the chemical field test performed on the substance and who performed the test. Officers shall also indicate in their narratives what supervisor placed the substances into evidence.
- L. Supervisors shall file a report for:
  - 1. Any injury to a police officer while on duty.
  - 2. Serious accident, injury, or incident involving any City of Scranton personnel or property.
  - 3. Any incident involving the use of deadly force or any discharge of a firearm by a police officer (on or off duty), other than that in the course of training.
  - 4. Any incident (including motor vehicle accidents and other incidents requiring an initial police report) involving a police officer (on or off-duty). In these incidents the report shall be completed, where possible, by a supervisor of a higher rank than the officer involved in the incident.
  - 5. Any incident where the supervisor feels a report is required.
  - 6. If directed by a superior officer.
- M. Only designated SPD Forms shall be used. Designated Forms shall have from numbers listed on the upper right hand corner (e.g. SPD Form # 08-042). New forms can be found on PowerDMS as well as in the patrol area. No personnel is authorized to create additional forms or to alter/add/change

existing department forms. All forms must be approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

- N. Upon completion of any report:
1. The reporting officer shall review his/her own reports for clarity and completeness.
  2. Officers will “submit” completed reports for approval by a supervisor by clicking the appropriate button in the reporting software.
  3. The reports are to be checked for content, neatness, accuracy, etc. and shall be reviewed by a day shift (0600-1400) supervisor.
- O. Report Corrections: When a report, either initial or supplemental, is found to be deficient by a reviewing supervisor the following procedures shall be followed by the supervisor(s) and the officer(s) who filed the report(s):
1. The reviewing supervisors shall ensure that the reports are completed to their entirety and that their content complies with the minimum standards of this policy.
  2. Any reports found deficient by a supervisor shall be returned to the officer(s) who filed the report for corrections/additions.
  3. The reviewing supervisor shall mark the report “rejected”. The supervisor shall indicate what corrections and/or additions to the report must be made prior to it being approved.
  4. **The officer whom the report was sent back to shall make the indicated corrections and/or additions to the report by the end of his/her next scheduled day of work.** In any instance where the report cannot be corrected by the end of his/her next scheduled shift, that officer **shall notify the reviewing supervisor** (verbally, in writing, or by email) of said reasons why the report cannot be corrected in the required timeframe.
  5. When the officer corrects the report, he/she shall resubmit the report for correction.
  6. The report shall not be approved by **any** supervisor until all the corrections/additions indicated by the reviewing supervisor have all been completed.
- P. The shift commanders shall be responsible for any corrective action towards any officers under their command regarding infractions on the reports.
- Q. Police reports shall not be printed, reproduced, or disseminated except for official business.
- R. All officers and supervisors shall be accountable to the Captain for compliance.
- S. Use of SIT Clerks

1. The Patrol Division shall utilize SIT Clerks as much as possible in an effort to maximize our effectiveness and efficiency. Officers have their choice with regards to utilizing the Dictaphone system or through the hand written report forms available.
2. It is the responsibility of the shift supervisors to ensure that the SIT Clerks are being utilized in the manner in which they were designed (to keep officers on the road as opposed to having them type reports).
3. The following reports may be entered by the patrol officers at headquarters:
  - a. Reports where an arrest was made and arraignment is needed.
  - b. Reports that require immediate entry for NCIC purposes.
  - c. Reportable accidents.
  - d. Hit and run accidents.
  - e. Reports that need immediate entry and no SIT Clerk is available.

By Order Of:

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Chief Carl R. Graziano  
Superintendent of Police  
Scranton Police Department