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## CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

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### COLD CASE SQUAD

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish an investigative squad or team that will be responsible for the reexamination of **unsolved** homicides, suicides, or suspicious deaths.

**Policy Statement:** It is the policy of the North Little Rock Police Department to establish a **Cold Case Squad** which will be responsible for exhaustive investigations of all active leads of unsolved homicides or other unsolved high profile cases. The squad will consist of a detective sergeant, an investigator, and a retired police volunteer with investigative experience. The squad will focus on new or updated information developed in the selected unsolved case and will have at its disposal the most modern technologies known in forensic science. [CALEA 42.2.7a]

#### Summary of Changes:

#### Procedure:

##### 1 Partnering With Volunteers

- 1.1 Supervisors of the Investigations Division will be responsible for contacting retired, experienced police investigators who are interested in volunteering their services to the North Little Rock Police Department for assignment to the detective office's Cold Case Squad.
- 1.2 Volunteers with specialized backgrounds will be sought for membership in the squad in order to have cases looked at from a fresh perspective.
- 1.3 Volunteers must be interviewed and screened by the Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Captain of the Detective Office.
- 1.4 The Professional Standards Unit will conduct a background investigation on the selected volunteer.
- 1.5 When the volunteer has successfully completed the above criteria, the volunteer's file will be presented to the Chief of Police for final approval or disposition.
- 1.6 With the Chief's approval, the Commander of the Investigations Division will contact the City's Volunteer Office in order to register the selected person for volunteer service.

##### 2 Training

- 2.1 In-service training will be conducted by police instructors within the Investigations Division.
  - 2.1.1 This training will consist of the most updated techniques that modern forensic science has to offer, especially in the areas of homicides, suicides, or other high profile investigations.
  - 2.1.2 Training in the preparation of case files should include:
    - 2.1.2.1 Case file preparation and case summary;
    - 2.1.2.2 A study of the victim;
    - 2.1.2.3 Offender characteristics;
    - 2.1.2.4 Statement analysis;
    - 2.1.2.5 Forensic evidence, like DNA and fingerprints;
    - 2.1.2.6 Crime reconstruction; and
    - 2.1.2.7 Profiling.

##### 3 Criteria for Cold Case Selection

- 3.1 The Crimes Against Persons supervisor will be responsible for selecting an unsolved case based on some of the following criteria: [CALEA 42.2.7b]
  - 3.1.1 Solvability factors, such as: DNA and fingerprints.
  - 3.1.2 Relationships between the victim, witnesses, and suspect.
    - 3.1.2.1 Relationships change with time; therefore, a thorough analysis should be conducted on every person's statement.
    - 3.1.2.2 Fear and allegiances may change with time. Witnesses may come forward with vital information that could help solve the case.
    - 3.1.2.3 Witnesses could provide missing pieces of evidence that may shed new light on a case.
- 3.2 When cold cases are identified by the above criteria, they should be given top priority for review by the team or squad.

#### **4 Duties of a Cold Case Squad Volunteer**

4.1 A retired police volunteer assigned to the Cold Case Squad will have the following duties:

- 4.1.1 Report to the Detective Office for case assignments on a weekly basis.
  - 4.1.2 The volunteer will be asked to report to work at least one (1) day a week, if possible.
  - 4.1.3 He will receive a cold case file for review from a detective supervisor on a case-by-case basis.
  - 4.1.4 He will be asked to review case files for forensic science evidence, such as DNA and fingerprints.
  - 4.1.5 Study the relationships between the victim, witnesses and possible suspects.
  - 4.1.5.1 Document the names of any person(s) who need to be interviewed by detectives.
  - 4.1.6 Identify, locate, and recover any physical evidence in the case documenting your findings.
  - 4.1.7 Prepare a written case summary listing the potential leads and pointers for further review by the case squad, as well as any additional investigative actions or activities. [CALEA 42.2.7c]
  - 4.1.8 Final case review is conducted.
- 4.2 Cold case volunteers are non-sworn personnel and as such are restricted from performing any law enforcement function as prescribed in Policy Directive 03-07, *Limits of Authority*, or as defined by law.

#### **5 Duties of the Cold Case Squad**

- 5.1 Once the cold case squad has reviewed the selected case, and it is determined the case will be reactivated; the person crimes supervisor will be responsible for assigning the volunteer with a detective.
- 5.2 The assigned detective along with the assistance of the volunteer will then be responsible for the investigation.
- 5.3 The detective will ensure that his direct supervisor is kept informed of all findings during the investigation until there is a final disposition reached in the case.

#### **6 The Prosecuting Attorney's Office**

- 6.1 The detective assigned to a cold case will ensure that the Prosecuting Attorney's Office is officially notified that a case has been reactivated.
- 6.2 The Crimes Against Persons supervisor will ensure that a DPA is notified of any meetings with the cold case squad during the duration of the reactivated investigation.
- 6.3 The supervisor, detective, volunteer and DPA will meet routinely, so that all personnel are kept informed about the progress of the cold case until a final disposition is reached.

#### **7 Responsibilities of the Investigations Division Commander**

- 7.1 The Commander of the Investigations Division will be responsible for developing operational procedures for the cold case squad, as well as for the squad's operational oversight.

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Patrick Thessing  
Chief of Police