



Policy Number: 318 – Report Preparation
Effective Date: June 26, 2020
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Approved By: Denis Otterness, Chief of Police

318.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to those members of the Montana State University Billings Police Department (Department) who conduct criminal investigations and complete incident reports as a part of their required duties.

318.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this Department that all officers shall act with promptness and efficiency in the preparation and processing of all required reports. Reports shall document sufficient information to refresh the member's memory and shall provide enough detail for follow-up investigation and successful prosecution.

318.3 EXPEDITIOUS REPORTING

Incomplete reports, unorganized reports or reports that are delayed without supervisor approval are not acceptable. Reports shall be processed according to established priorities or to a special priority made necessary under exceptional circumstances.

318.4 REPORT PREPARATION

Reports should be sufficiently detailed for their purpose and free from errors prior to submission to a Department supervisor for approval. It is the responsibility of all officers 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.

All reports shall accurately reflect the identity of all persons involved; all pertinent information seen, heard or assimilated by any other sense; and any actions taken. Officers shall not suppress, conceal or distort the facts of any reported incident, nor shall any member make a false report orally or in writing. Generally, the reporting officer's opinion(s) should not be included in any criminal investigative reports.

318.4.1 HANDWRITTEN OR TYPED REPORTS

Handwritten forms must be prepared legibly. If the form is not legible, the reporting officer will be required, by the reviewing supervisor, to promptly make corrections and resubmit the report.

The narrative portion of reports shall be typed. Officers who generate reports on computers are subject to all requirements of this policy.

318.5 REQUIRED REPORTING

In all of the following situations, officers shall complete reports using the appropriate Department-approved forms and reporting methods, unless otherwise approved by a supervisor.

These reporting requirements are not intended to be all-inclusive. An officer may complete a report if s/he deems it necessary, or when directed by a supervisor.

318.5.1 CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

When an officer 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 officer shall document the incident regardless of whether a victim desires prosecution.

Activity to be documented in a written report includes:

- a. All arrests.
- b. All felony crimes.
- c. Non-felony criminal incidents involving threats or stalking behavior.
- d. Situations covered by separate policy. These include:
 1. Response to Aggression and Resistance Policy
 2. Domestic Violence Policy
 3. Child Abuse Policy
 4. Hate Crimes Policy
 5. Suspicious Activity Reporting Policy
 6. Identity Theft Policy
- e. All non-traffic related misdemeanor crimes.
- f. Certain traffic-related misdemeanors (i.e. DUI)

318.5.2 NON-CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Non-criminal activity to be documented through a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) entry or written report includes:

- a. Any found property or found evidence.
- b. All protective custody and welfare detentions.
- c. Any time a person is reported missing, regardless of jurisdiction (see the Missing Persons Policy).
- d. Suspicious incidents that may indicate a potential for crimes against children or that a child's safety is in jeopardy.
- e. Suspicious incidents that may place the public or others at risk.
- f. Any use of force by officers of this Department against any person (see the Response to Aggression and Resistance Policy).
- g. Any firearm discharge (see the Firearms Policy).
- h. Any time a sworn officer points a firearm at any person.

- i. Any traffic accidents above the minimum reporting level (see the Traffic Accidents Policy).
- j. Whenever an officer believes the circumstances should be documented, or at the direction of a supervisor.
- k. Any other reports that the Department deems necessary.

318.5.3 MISCELLANEOUS INJURIES

Any injury that is reported to this Department shall require a report when:

- a. The injury is a result of a drug overdose.
- b. There is an attempted or threatened suicide.
- c. The injury is major, serious, or potentially fatal.
- d. The circumstances surrounding the incident are suspicious in nature and it is desirable to document the event.
- e. The injured party is a faculty member, staff, student or visitor to Montana State University Billings.

318.5.4 STATE PERSONNEL OR PROPERTY

Incidents involving State personnel or property shall require a report when:

- a. An injury occurs as the result of an act of a State employee or on State property.
- b. There is damage to State property or equipment.

318.6 REVIEW AND CORRECTIONS

Department supervisors shall review reports for content and accuracy. If a correction is necessary, the reviewing supervisor should notify the reporting officer. The original report will be returned to the reporting officer for correction as soon as practicable. It shall be the responsibility of the reporting officer to ensure that any report that was returned for correction is processed in a timely manner.

318.6.1 CHANGES AND ALTERATIONS

Reports that have been approved by a supervisor and/or submitted via the Automated Records Management System for filing and distribution shall not be modified or altered, except by way of a supplemental report.