



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 1-53 (Formerly 5-3)

Effective: 05/28/2021

Review: 05/28/2022

Replaces: 10/17/2017

1-53 HOMICIDE UNIT

Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

- [1-35 Crime Scene Specialists \(Formerly 5-8\)](#)
- [2-30 Emergency Command Post](#)
- [2-74 Submission of Cases to the District Attorney](#)
- [2-91 Investigation of Violent Crimes](#)
- [2-92 Crimes Against Children](#)

B. Form(s)

None

C. Other Resource(s)

N.M. R. Ann. LR2-400 Case Management Order

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

None

1-53-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish requirements for the investigation of cases involving homicides, unexplained deaths, questionable suicides, or cases of aggravated battery with great bodily harm for which an Impact Teams unit has done the preliminary investigation and the victim passed away due to their injuries before an arrest is made.

1-53-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Albuquerque Police Department (Department) to assign rules and responsibilities for investigations of homicides, unexplained deaths, suspicious suicides, or cases of felony aggravated battery for which an Impact Teams unit has done the preliminary investigation and the victim passed away from their injuries before an arrest is made.

1-53-3 Definitions

A. Life-threatening Injury

Any injury that involves serious physical harm that may result in significant or permanent disfigurement or the loss of a major bodily organ or function, including, but not limited to, the loss of a limb, paralysis, or the loss of eyesight; that may necessitate medical or surgical intervention to prevent permanent impairment; that could



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potentially cause a significant reduction in the quality of life; or that has the likelihood of causing death.

B. Homicide Unit Call-Out

A Homicide Unit Call-Out is generated following a suspicious death, including a suspicious suicide, as determined by a Crime Scene Specialist (CSS) Unit supervisor, or the Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI).

C. Serious Crime

For the purposes of this policy, any criminal offense resulting in great bodily harm with the potential of death or permanent disfigurement.

D. Serious Crimes Call-Out

A Serious Crimes Call-Out is generated when an individual sustains a life-threatening injury.

7 1-53-4 **Rules and Responsibilities**

A. The Homicide Unit shall investigate:

1. Homicides, except for:

- a. Crimes against children, which shall be consistent with SOP Crimes Against Children.
 - i. The Homicide Unit may assist the Crimes Against Children Unit (CACU) if requested by a CACU supervisor; however, the responsibility of the case remains with the CACU.
- b. Impact Teams investigations where an arrest has been made.
 - i. The Impact Teams retain case responsibility when the detective charges an individual(s), before the victim passes away.

2. Suspicious deaths, as determined by the OMI or Major Crime Scene Team (MCST).

3. Suspicious suicides, as determined by the OMI or MCST.

B. Homicide Unit Detective Responsibilities for Serious Crimes Call-Outs

1. After a CSS supervisor determines the incident is a Serious Crime, consistent with SOP Crime Scene Specialists and SOP Investigation of Violent Crimes, the Homicide Unit detective shall:

- a. Provide investigative support for the responding Serious Crimes Call-Out Primary Investigative Detective; and



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- b. Assume case responsibility for the case in which the victim passed away as a direct result of their injuries and no criminal charges have been drafted.

C. Homicide Unit Call-Out Procedures

1. The sworn personnel who are dispatched to a Homicide Unit Call-Out shall notify their supervisor of a potential homicide and/or suspicious, unexplained death.
2. The supervisor of the sworn personnel who is dispatched to the Homicide Unit Call-Out and a CSS shall respond to the scene and determine if a Homicide Unit Call-Out is appropriate.
 - a. If it is determined that a Homicide Unit Call-Out is appropriate, the CSS supervisor shall notify the Emergency Communications Center (ECC).
3. ECC personnel shall then notify the on-call personnel listed below:
 - a. Primary and secondary Homicide Unit Detectives/Investigators;
 - b. Primary and secondary MCST detectives/investigators and supervisor;
 - c. Assisting Criminal Investigations Division (CID) Detectives and Investigative Services Division (ISD) detectives;
 - d. Assistant District Attorney (DA);
 - e. Field Investigator for the OMI;
 - f. On-call CID supervisor; and
 - g. On-call officer for the Emergency Command Post, consistent with SOP Emergency Command Post.
4. The on-call CID supervisor shall ensure the above personnel are notified and respond to the scene.
5. On-Call Status
 - a. Homicide Unit Detectives and MCST Detectives/Investigators are placed on an on-call rotation list as primary or secondary.
 - b. The on-call Homicide Unit Detectives/Investigators shall have one (1) hour to respond to the scene.
 - c. The CID supervisor and/or their designee shall be responsible for organizing and maintaining the on-call roster for detectives/investigators on Homicide Unit Call-Outs.

D. Homicide Briefings

1. The on-scene investigative supervisor shall ensure Department personnel who are responsible for the Homicide Unit Call-Out conduct a briefing of the incident as soon as possible after arrival.
2. Personnel needed for the briefing include but are not limited to:



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- a. Primary and secondary detectives/investigators;
- b. On-scene investigative supervisor;
- c. MCST primary detective/investigator and MCST supervisor;
- d. DA's Office representatives;
- e. OMI representative (if needed);
- f. The primary dispatched officer shall participate in this briefing; and
- g. Additional sworn personnel or CSS with pertinent information may also participate in the briefing.

E. Homicide Debriefings

1. The Violent Crimes Section Lieutenant or their designee shall coordinate debriefings to review previous Homicide Unit Call-Outs from the prior week, which shall include the following personnel:
 - a. Primary and secondary detectives/investigators;
 - b. On-scene investigative supervisor;
 - c. MCST primary detective/investigator and MCST supervisor; and
 - d. DA's Office representatives.
2. In the event of a homicide, Homicide Unit personnel shall meet with the victim's family as soon as possible to provide the death notification. The primary Homicide Unit Detective keeps the family informed of any arrests and/or developments in the case. Homicide Unit Detectives should utilize the DA's Victim Impact Unit to assist with this process and to help the family.

F. Homicide Reports

1. The Homicide Unit Sergeant shall ensure cases are submitted to the DA's Office, consistent with time limits prescribed by the DA's court discovery rules and the Case Management Order (N.M. R. Ann. LR2-400) of the Second Judicial District Court, and consistent with SOP Submission of Cases to the District Attorney.
2. Once an arrest is made, the Homicide Unit Detective who has case responsibility shall provide all available electronic reports and documents to the appropriate screener at the DA's Office.
3. A Homicide Unit Detective shall only use Department-approved technology for the submission of reports.
4. Homicide Unit personnel shall keep reports and electronic documentation confidential to preserve a case, pending any future investigative efforts.

G. Homicide Cases

1. The Homicide Unit Sergeant shall:



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- a. Assign all homicide cases to a Homicide Unit Detective. Cases shall remain assigned to detectives until all leads are exhausted; and
 - b. Hold weekly briefings on the status of active homicide cases.
2. When all leads in a case are exhausted, the case shall be reviewed by the Homicide Unit Sergeant, the Cold Case Unit Sergeant, and the Violent Crimes Section Lieutenant. Once an agreement has been reached by the aforementioned personnel, they shall reassign the case to the Cold Case Unit.
 3. Detectives who transfer out of the Homicide Unit are required to turn in all case files before leaving. Even if the detective's transfer is approved, the detective shall be removed from primary on-call status and remain in the Homicide Unit in a Temporary Duty (TDY) status, if approved by the CID Commander, until the cases are submitted for supervisor review and approval.
 - a. When a Homicide Unit Detective submits an interoffice memorandum announcing their retirement, the Homicide Unit Sergeant shall remove the detective from being on an on-call status approximately two (2) months before the proposed retirement date to complete the existing caseload. The Homicide Unit Detective should provide the earliest possible notice before retirement to ensure case management and integrity.