



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 1-53 (Formerly 5-3)

Effective: 12/28/2022 Review: 12/28/2023 Replaces: 05/28/2021

## 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### Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):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 Unit \(Formerly 3-05 and 5-8\)](#)  
[2-30 Emergency Command Post \(Formerly 1-30\)](#)  
[2-72 Procedures for Serious Crimes Call-Outs \(Formerly 2-28 and 2-91\)](#)  
[2-74 Submission of Cases to the District Attorney \(Formerly 2-39\)](#)  
[2-92 Crimes Against Children Investigations \(Formerly 2-33\)](#)

#### B. Form(s)

[PD 4201 Request for Forensic Service](#)

#### 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#### D. Rescinded Special Order(s)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 outline the requirements for the investigation of cases involving homicides, unexplained deaths, questionable suicides, and cases of aggravated battery with great bodily harm for which another investigative unit has done the preliminary investigation and the victim passed away due to their injuries before sworn personnel arrest individual(s) based on warrants or probable cause to believe the individual committed a crime related to the investigation.

### 1-53-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Albuquerque Police Department (Department) to thoroughly investigate cases, to reasonably follow-up on every investigative lead, to submit completed cases to the prosecutor, and to update victims' families on the progress of the case. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Department for the Homicide Unit to conduct weekly meetings with supervising prosecutors at the District Attorney's (DA) Office to create and foster consistency and the highest excellence in homicide investigations.

### N/A 1-53-3 Definitions

#### A. Homicide

The unlawful killing of one person by another.



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 1-53 (Formerly 5-3)

Effective: 12/28/2022 Review: 12/28/2023 Replaces: 05/28/2021

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

C. Next of Kin

The nearest relative, spouse, child, parent, or sibling of the person who is part of an investigation.

D. Serious Crime

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

E. 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. A Homicide Unit Detective shall investigate:

1. Homicides, except for:

**N/A**

- a. The unlawful death of a child as outlined in SOP Crimes Against Children Investigations (refer to SOP Crimes Against Children Investigations for sanction classifications and additional duties);
- b. When another investigative unit investigates a crime and has arrested the suspected individual before the victim passes away; or
- c. If the initial investigative unit's sergeant and the Homicide Unit Sergeant deem it practical and efficient for the initial investigative unit to maintain case responsibility, even if the individual suspected of a crime has not been arrested.

2. Suspicious deaths as determined by the Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) or a Crime Scene Specialist (CSS); and

3. Suspicious suicides as determined by the OMI or a CSS.

B. Criminal Investigations Division (CID) Supervisory Procedures for Serious Crimes Call-Outs



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 1-53 (Formerly 5-3)

Effective: 12/28/2022 Review: 12/28/2023 Replaces: 05/28/2021

1. After a CSS supervisor determines the crime is a serious crime, as outlined in SOP Crime Scene Specialists Unit and SOP Procedures for Serious Crimes Call-Outs, the CID supervisor shall:
  - a. Provide investigative support to the primary investigative detective who responds to the Serious Crimes Call-Out; and
  - b. Assign case responsibility if the victim passes away due to their injuries suffered during the incident, and no individual has been criminally charged with the associated crime.

C. Homicide Unit Call-Out Procedures

1. Field Services Bureau (FSB) sworn personnel who are dispatched to a potential homicide, a suspicious death, or an unexplained death shall notify their on-duty supervisor.
  - a. The notified FSB supervisor shall ensure that a CSS responds to the scene.
  - b. If the CSS determines that a Homicide Unit call-out is appropriate, the CSS supervisor shall notify the Emergency Communications Center (ECC).

2. ECC personnel shall notify the following on-call personnel:

- a. Primary and secondary Homicide Unit Detectives;
- b. Primary and secondary Major Crime Scene Team (MCST) Detectives and supervisor;
- c. The assisting Criminal Investigations Division (CID) Detectives and Investigative Services Division (ISD) Detectives;
- d. The on-call Assistant District Attorney;
- e. A Field Investigator for the OMI;
- f. The on-call CID supervisor;
- g. The on-call officer for the emergency command post, consistent with SOP Emergency Command Post (refer to SOP Emergency Command Post for sanction classifications and additional duties); and
- h. The Department's Public Information Officer (PIO).

N/A

3. The on-call CID supervisor shall ensure that the above personnel are notified and respond to the scene.

D. Homicide Unit On-Call Status Procedures

1. A Homicide Unit sergeant shall place Homicide Unit Detectives on the on-call rotation list as primary or secondary Homicide Unit Detectives.
2. The CID supervisor or their designee shall organize and maintain the on-call roster for Homicide Unit Detectives on Homicide Unit call-outs.



**ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDERS**

**SOP 1-53 (Formerly 5-3)**

**Effective: 12/28/2022 Review: 12/28/2023 Replaces: 05/28/2021**

3. The on-call primary Homicide Unit Detective shall have one (1) hour to respond to the scene.

**E. Homicide Unit Briefings**

1. The on-scene CID supervisor shall ensure that Department personnel who are responsible for the Homicide Unit call-out conduct a briefing of the incident as soon as possible.
2. The Homicide Unit briefing shall include the following personnel:
  - a. Primary and secondary Homicide Unit Detectives;
  - b. On-scene investigative supervisors;
  - c. The MCST primary detective;
  - d. The primary dispatched officer; and
  - e. Additional sworn personnel or the CSS with pertinent information.
3. The Homicide Unit briefing may include representatives from the following outside agencies:
  - a. The DA's Office;
  - b. The OMI; and
  - c. Any other relevant law enforcement agencies.

**F. Homicide Unit Meetings**

1. The Violent Crimes Section Lieutenant or their designee shall coordinate meetings two (2) and sixty (60) days after the initial call-out investigation ends.
  - a. If either meeting falls on the primary Homicide Unit Detective's normal day off, the meetings shall take place on their next regularly scheduled shift.
  - b. The meetings shall not be postponed or canceled without the written authorization of the CID Commander or their designee.
2. Procedures for Meeting Two (2) Days After Initial Call-Out Investigation
  - a. A Homicide Unit supervisor shall ensure that the following Department personnel attend the meeting in person or virtually:
    - i. The primary Homicide Unit Detective;
    - ii. A Homicide Unit sergeant;
    - iii. An MCST Detective or representative;
    - iv. A Victim Liaison;
    - v. The Digital Intelligence Team (DIT) lead; and
    - vi. Sworn personnel who are assigned to apprehend the individual.
  - b. A Homicide Unit supervisor shall ensure that the meeting is conducted in the following order:
    - i. The victim is identified and verified (OMI, etc.);



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 1-53 (Formerly 5-3)

Effective: 12/28/2022 Review: 12/28/2023 Replaces: 05/28/2021

- ii. Next of kin contact information is confirmed or difficulties in contacting the next of kin are communicated;
- iii. Details of communication with next of kin who have already been briefed;
- iv. New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission (CVRC) qualification status;
- v. The Department's PIO is contacted and updated on whether next of kin has been notified by the Homicide Unit supervisor for cases when the homicide victim's name may be released to the public.
  - 1. If the victim's name cannot be released at that time, the Homicide Unit supervisor shall update the PIO in writing every day until they can release the victim's name to the public.
- vi. The Victim Liaison may leave the meeting at this point;
- vii. The primary Homicide Unit Detective shall provide a brief summary of the investigation;
- viii. The MCST Detective shall outline any physical evidence that was collected; and
  - 1. When necessary, the MCST Detective shall complete the Request for Forensic Service form during the meeting.
- ix. The DIT lead shall review social media accounts, phone numbers, and physical mobile devices.
  - 1. The DIT lead shall make determinations on all mobile devices collected and the most appropriate forensic tool to use on the device, including which laboratory and methods used to try and extract data from the device.
  - 2. The DIT lead shall identify all social media accounts and phone numbers requiring preservation.
- c. The meeting attendees shall assess any available surveillance video to determine:
  - i. If assistance from the Regional Computer Forensic Laboratory (RCFL) is needed to edit video surveillance or to review a large quantity of footage;
  - ii. Whether to release still images or video to persons outside of the Homicide Unit for assistance; and
  - iii. What information can be released to sworn personnel first, then to the public through the Crime Stoppers Program.
    - 1. The Department's PIO shall share information with the public unless a lead exists that is currently being investigated or if a lead is likely to come in within the next forty-eight (48) hours.
- d. The Homicide Unit supervisor shall add the following information to the Homicide Unit's internal information management system:
  - i. Completed search warrants;
  - ii. Identified need for future search warrants;
  - iii. Completed interviews;
  - iv. Identified need for future interviews and who the backup detective will be if the lead detective is unavailable; and
  - v. Persons of interest or witnesses with outstanding arrest warrants for any charge.



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 1-53 (Formerly 5-3)

Effective: 12/28/2022 Review: 12/28/2023 Replaces: 05/28/2021

- e. The Homicide Unit supervisor shall update modifications to internal tracking data in the internal information management system, including:
  - i. The potential motive; and
  - ii. The victim's behavior.

3. Procedures for Meeting Sixty (60) Days After Initial Call-Out Investigation

- a. Department personnel shall review any updates to the information as discussed during the two (2) day meeting.
- b. The primary Homicide Unit Detective shall complete a Supplemental Report that will become part of the case file.

G. Contacting the Victims

1. In the event of a homicide, Homicide Unit personnel shall meet with the victim's family as soon as practicable to provide the death notification.
2. The primary Homicide Unit Detective shall keep the family informed of any arrests in the case.

N/A

- a. Homicide Unit Detectives may rely on internal and external victim's advocates to assist with the notification process and to help the victim's family.

H. Homicide Discovery Requirements

N/A

1. The Homicide Unit Sergeant shall ensure that homicide cases are submitted to the DA's Office, consistent with time limits prescribed by the DA's court discovery rules (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 (refer to SOP Submission of Cases to the District Attorney for sanction classifications and additional duties).
2. Once sworn personnel arrest the individual, the Homicide Unit Detective who has case responsibility shall provide all available electronic reports and documentation to the appropriate screener at the DA's Office.
3. Homicide Unit Detectives shall only use Department-approved technology to transmit electronic reports and documentation to the DA's Office.

I. Homicide Case Assignment and Closure

1. The Homicide Unit Sergeant shall:
  - a. Assign homicide cases to a Homicide Unit Detective;
    - i. Cases shall remain assigned to Homicide Unit Detectives until all leads are exhausted.
  - b. Hold weekly briefings on the status of active homicide cases; and



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 1-53 (Formerly 5-3)

Effective: 12/28/2022 Review: 12/28/2023 Replaces: 05/28/2021

N/A

- c. Assist with the two (2) day and sixty (60) day meetings, and the weekly meetings with the DA's Office.
2. If a Homicide Unit Detective expresses that they wish to transfer out of the Homicide Unit, the Homicide Unit supervisor shall remove them from the on-call rotation.
  - a. The Homicide Unit Detective shall be given up to sixty (60) days to complete their case files.
  - b. The Homicide Unit supervisor shall make recommendations to the CID Commander on whether the Homicide Unit Detective shall retain their cases, consistent with SOP Preliminary and Follow-Up Investigations (refer to SOP Preliminary and Follow-Up Investigations for sanction classifications and additional duties), if their cases will be reassigned, or if their cases were closed prior to the Homicide Unit Detective's departure from the Homicide Unit.
3. When a Homicide Unit Detective submits an Interoffice Memorandum announcing their retirement, their Homicide Unit Sergeant shall remove them from the on-call rotation list no less than sixty (60) days before their proposed retirement date.
  - a. The Homicide Unit Detective shall provide the earliest possible notice before retirement to ensure that cases are managed.
4. Homicide Unit Detectives who transfer out of the Homicide Unit shall forward their case files to their Homicide Unit supervisor before departing.