

Department of the Interior

Departmental Manual

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Series: Law Enforcement and Security

Part 446: Law Enforcement

Chapter 15: Records System

Originating Office: Office of Managing Risk and Public Safety

446 DM 15

15.1 Purpose. This chapter establishes policy and standards for law enforcement records systems. An efficient records system will enable law enforcement administrators to measure workloads and performance levels, allocate resources efficiently, and project realistic budgets. An effective records system will establish and maintain an institutional memory, thereby enhancing the organization's ability to properly conduct patterns and trend analysis.

15.2 Policy. An efficient records system shall be maintained in all Departmental bureaus/offices with law enforcement authority.

15.3 Responsibilities. Each bureau/office shall establish and maintain adequate and proper documentation of their law enforcement programs as set forth in Part 446 DM. Each bureau/office that has a law enforcement program will implement a statistical management reporting system that is responsive to its needs and those of the Department.

15.4 Standards. Information in bureau/office records systems should be maintained in a manner which allows for effective storage, retrieval, cross-referencing and analysis. The following guidelines will assist each bureau/office with law enforcement responsibilities in developing a records system for their law enforcement program. Bureau/office Records Managers should be consulted in carrying out the following:

A. All bureaus/offices should publish internal guidelines regarding the creation and maintenance of law enforcement program records.

B. All bureaus/offices should publish guidelines stipulating the circumstances which require an officer to complete a report. Reports shall contain, at a minimum, the information specified in 446 DM 9.4C(1)-(6).

C. Printed reporting forms will be used to report criminal acts committed, arrests made, and other incidents.

D. Report forms should be simple. There should be enough appropriately headed fill-in boxes and accompanying instructions to assist the officer in obtaining and reporting all required information.

E. Report forms will be designed to allow for systematic collection of summary and management data.

F. A forms control procedure should be established to assure that all forms utilized are approved by the bureau/office heads.

G. Bureaus/offices should ensure that there is a periodic review and evaluation to assure that forms being utilized are appropriate and data collected and stored is necessary and/or sufficient.

H. Each bureau/office head will ensure that records are created and maintained in accordance with this authority, approved National Archives and Records Administration Records Schedules, and all appropriate laws and regulations, including the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Privacy Act and Federal Records Act.

I. Each bureau/office shall develop and maintain a law enforcement management information system which is compatible with the computerized statistical reporting system used by the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and complies with the Uniform Crime Reporting Act of 1988. The system will comply with the NIBRS and Departmental reporting requirements. The reporting system should be reviewed by the Office of Managing Risk and Public Safety (MRPS) prior to implementation. (See 446 DM 13)

J. Bureaus/offices shall include in the performance appraisals of their law enforcement personnel an element which addresses the adequate documentation of the law enforcement program.

15.5 Disclosure. The disclosure of law enforcement information may be subject to the provisions of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552, and the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a. Bureau/office heads should be cognizant of these provisions and ensure that information is only released in accordance with these laws. Information requested under the provisions of the FOIA shall be released by the appropriate FOIA officials in each bureau/office. Law enforcement personnel should forward any requests for the release of information to these officials and note any objections that they have concerning the release of the information requested. Law enforcement officials should familiarize themselves with the Department's FOIA Handbook (383 DM 15).

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