



SOP 1-53 (formerly 5-3)

OPA DRAFT

1-53 — HOMICIDE UNIT [A1]

Related SOP(s):

5-8 -Crime Scene Specialist

1-53-1 — Purpose

The purpose of the Homicide Unit is to investigate cases involving homicides, unexplained deaths, questionable suicides, or cases of aggravated battery including with great bodily harm. ~~for which an Impact Unit has done the preliminary investigation and the victim dies from their injuries before an arrest is made.~~

1-53-2 — Policy [A2]

It is the policy of the Department's Homicide Unit to investigate homicides, unexplained deaths, questionable suicides, or cases of aggravated battery for which an Impact Unit has done the preliminary investigation and the victim dies from their injuries before an arrest is made.

1-53-3 — Definitions [A3]

A. Violent Crimes Call-Out

A violent crimes call out is generated when an individual sustains a life-threatening injury that creates a substantial risk of death or that causes death or serious and protracted disfigurement, or impairment of the function of any bodily organ or limb.

1-53-4~~32~~ — Rules and Responsibilities

A. Investigations

1. Homicides

- a. Exception: Crimes Against Children Unit (CACU) investigations ~~or~~
 - i. The Homicide Unit may assist CACU if requested by a supervisor, but case responsibility remains with CACU.
 - b. Exception: Impact team investigations where an arrest has been made.



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i. ~~The Homicide Unit may assist Impact Units if requested by a supervisor, but case responsibility remains with CACU.~~^[A4] The Impact Team retains case responsibility when the detective charges an individual(s) prior to the death of a victim.

2. Suspicious ~~U~~unexplained death

3. Questionable suicide^{[A5][A6]}

~~Batteries Aggravated battery for which an Impact Unit has done the preliminary investigation and the victim dies from their injuries before an arrest is made.~~

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B. Violent Crimes Call out Procedures^[A7]

1. The dispatched officers will notify their supervisor of a potential homicide and/or suspicious unexplained death.

2. The ~~on scene~~ dispatched officer's ~~s~~Supervisor and a Crime Scene Specialist (CSS) ~~CSS~~ will ~~respond to the scene and~~ determine if a ~~V~~Violent ~~e~~Crimes call out is appropriate.

3. The ~~on scene~~ dispatched officer's supervisor or designee will notify dispatch who will ~~then~~ notify the ~~Homicide S~~ergeant on-call Impact Supervisor.

4. The on-call Impact Supervisor ~~Homicide S~~ergeant will ~~then~~ ensure that the appropriate personnel are notified to respond.^[A8]

~~Primary and secondary detective~~^[A9]/investigators;

a.

~~Primary and secondary Major Crime Scene Team (MCST) detectives/investigators and supervisor;~~

b.

~~Assisting Violent Crimes~~^[A10] and Special Investigations detectives; and

c.

~~Assistant District Attorney.~~ y, and

d.

~~The Field Investigator Specialist from the Office of Medical Investigator (OMI).~~

5. The on-call ~~detectives/investigators~~^[A11] will have one hour to respond to the scene.

6. On-Call Status



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- a. Impact Homicide detectives/investigators are placed on an on-call rotation list as primary or secondary.
- b. The ~~Homicide Ssergeant~~ Impact supervisor [A12] will be responsible for organizing and maintaining the on-call roster for Impact detectives on Violent Crime call outs.
- c. The Homicide Unit will be responsible for providing detectives in a supportive capacity for Violent Crime call outs.

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C. Homicide Call-Out Procedures

1. The dispatched officers will notify their supervisor of a potential homicide and/or suspicious unexplained death [A13].
2. The on-scene dispatched officer's supervisor and a Crime Scene Specialist (CSS) will respond to the scene and determine if a Homicide call out is appropriate.
3. The dispatched officer's on-scene supervisor will notify dispatch who will notify the on-call Violent Crimes Section Supervisor. [A14]
4. The on-call Supervisor will ensure the appropriate personnel are notified to respond.
 - a. Primary and secondary detectives/investigators;
 - b. Primary and secondary Major Crime Scene Team (MCST) detectives/investigators and supervisor;
 - c. Assisting Violent Crimes and Special Investigations detectives;
 - d. Assistant District Attorney; and
 - e. Field Investigator for the Office of Medical Investigators (OMI).
5. The on-call detectives/investigators will have one hour to respond to the scene. [A15]
6. On-Call Status
 - a. Homicide detectives and MCST detectives/investigators are placed on an on-call rotation list as primary or secondary.
 - b. The Violent Crimes Section supervisor [A16] and/or their delegate signee will be responsible for organizing and maintaining the on-call roster for detectives/investigators on homicide call outs.

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D. Violent Crimes Call-Out/Homicide Briefings



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1. The ~~Violent Crimes~~ on-scene investigative supervisor ensures the call-out team conducts a briefing of the incident as soon as possible after arrival.
2. Personnel ~~that may be~~ needed for the briefing include but is not limited to:
 - a. Primary and secondary detectives-/investigators;
 - b. The on-scene investigative supervisor^[A17] ~~Homicide and/or IMPACT Impact sSergeant;~~
 - c. MCST primary detective/investigator and MCST supervisor;
 - d. District Attorney Office ~~r~~Representatives; ~~and~~
 - e. OMI representative (if needed);
 - f. The primary dispatched officer will participate in this briefing; and
 - g. Additional officers or ~~Crime Scene Specialists~~ CSS with pertinent information may also participate in the briefing.

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E. Violent Crimes Call Out/Homicide Debriefings

1. There will be debriefings to review previous call-outs from the prior week, which will include the following personnel:
 - a. Primary and secondary detectives/investigators;
 - b. The on-scene investigative supervisor^[A18];
 - c. MCST primary detective/investigator and MCST supervisor; and
 - d. District Attorney Office representatives.
 - ~~— Primary investigator;~~
 - ~~— Homicide and/or Impact MPACT sSergeant;~~
 - ~~— MCST primary detective and MCST supervisor;~~
 - ~~— District Attorney Office rRepresentatives and~~
 - ~~— OMI representative (if needed);~~
2. In the event of a violent crimes call out, Impact Unit personnel will maintain communication with the victim and provide information regarding any arrests and/or developments in the case.
3. In the event of a homicide, Homicide Unit personnel ~~The primary Homicide detective and the Homicide Ssergeant~~ will meet with the victim's family as soon as possible ~~after they have received the death notification~~ to provide the death notification. The primary Homicide detective keeps the family informed of any arrests and/or developments in the case. Detectives should utilize the District Attorney's Victim Impact Unit to assist with this process and to help the family.

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F. Homicide Reports

1. Cases are to be submitted to the District Attorney's Office in accordance with time limits prescribed by court discovery rules and Local Rule 2-400 of the 2nd Judicial District.
2. Once an arrest is made, the primary Homicide detective provides all available electronic reports and documents to the appropriate screener at the DA's Office.
3. The detective uses approved department technology for submission of reports.
4. Reports and electronic documentation are kept confidential to protect the case, pending any future investigative efforts.
5. Submission of felony cases will be done in accordance with SOP - Submission of Cases to the District Attorney.

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G. Homicide Cases

1. All homicide cases are assigned to a Homicide detective.
2. Cases will remain assigned to detectives until all leads are exhausted.
3. When all leads in a case are exhausted and ~~the case is closed~~, the case is reviewed by the Homicide Sergeant, Cold Case Sergeant and the Violent Crimes Lieutenant. They will determine if the case should be forwarded to the Cold Case Unit.
4. The Homicide Unit Sergeant will hold weekly briefings on the status of active homicide cases.
5. 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 will ~~remain~~ be removed from primary on-call status and ~~remains~~ in the Homicide Unit in a Temporary Duty (TDY) status, if approved by the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) ~~Deputy~~ ~~Commander~~ ~~Chief of Police~~, until the cases are submitted for supervisor review and approved.
6. When a detective submits a memo of retirement, the detective is removed from on-call status approximately 2-weeks ~~6 months~~ prior to the proposed retirement date in order to complete existing caseload. The homicide detective should provide the



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earliest possible notice prior to retirement to ensure case management and integrity.

Cold Cases

Cold Case Homicide detectives have investigative responsibility for all unsolved murders in which the principal investigator has exhausted all leads. They will also have investigative responsibility at the request of a Violent Crimes supervisor.

Cold Case Detective Responsibilities:

- Maintain all files of unsolved cold case homicides in a secure environment;
 - Maintain cases in the case management system for information tracking, and crime analysis;
 - Assume case responsibility of reopened cases and conduct follow-up investigation, including but not limited to, interviewing or re-interviewing witnesses, informants, or suspects;
 - Prepare and submit a monthly activity report;
 - Assist officers, the District Attorney, or other agencies in documenting and/or directing information concerning cold case homicides;
 - Analyze cold homicide cases with any new and available forensic technologies, where appropriate;
 - Correspond with other agencies within New Mexico and throughout the nation regarding cold case homicides cases;
 - Maintain a working relationship with the New Mexico Survivors of Homicide support organization, and
 - Assist other homicide or violent crime investigating units (i.e. Robbery, Crimes against Children, FASTT, etc.) within CID whenever necessary.
- The Cold Case Homicide Unit notifies the original primary detective (if still working for the Department) when a cold case is being worked, and gives the detective periodic progress updates. Under circumstances as determined by a Violent Crimes supervisor, a case may be returned to the original detective for investigation or completion.
- Cold Case priority is determined by the following factors:
- Statutory Requirement;
 - Statute of limitations;
 - Legal issues examined; [A19]

a.