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Dispatch

801.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice

This policy establishes guidelines for the basic functions of Dispatch. It addresses the immediate information needs of the Department in the course of its normal daily activities and during emergencies.

801.2 POLICY

Best Practice

It is the policy of the Fitchburg Police Department to provide 24-hour telephone service to the public for information and for routine or emergency assistance.

The Department provides two-way radio capability providing continuous communication between Dispatch and department members in the field.

801.3 SECURITY

Best Practice

The communications function is vital and central to all emergency service operations. The safety and security of Dispatch, its members and its equipment must be a high priority. Special security procedures should be established in a separate operations manual for Dispatch.

Access to Dispatch shall be limited to Dispatch members, the Shift Sergeant, command staff and department members with a specific business-related purpose.

801.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice

801.4.1 SUPPORT SERVICES COMMANDER

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

The Chief of Police shall appoint and delegate certain responsibilities to the Support Services Commander.

The responsibilities of the Support Services Commander include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Overseeing the efficient and effective operation of Dispatch in coordination with other supervisors.
- (b) Scheduling and maintaining telecommunicators time records.
- (c) Supervising, training and evaluating telecommunicatorss.
- (d) Ensuring the radio and telephone recording system is operational.
 1. Recordings shall be maintained at least 30 days or in accordance with the established records retention schedule and as required by law.
- (e) Processing requests for copies of Dispatch information for release.

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- (f) Maintaining Dispatch database systems.
- (g) Maintaining and updating Dispatch procedures manual.
 - 1. Procedures for specific types of crime reports may be necessary. For example, specific questions and instructions may be necessary when talking with a victim of a sexual assault to ensure that his/her health and safety needs are met, as well as steps that he/she may take to preserve evidence.
 - 2. Ensuring telecommunicators compliance with established policies and procedures.
- (h) Handling internal and external inquiries regarding services provided and accepting personnel complaints in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.
- (i) Maintaining a current contact list of City personnel to be notified in the event of a utility service emergency.

801.4.2 ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

Discretionary **MODIFIED**

The Support Services Commander should establish procedures for:

- (a) Recording all telephone and radio communications and playback issues.
- (b) Storage and retention of recordings.
- (c) Security of audio recordings (e.g., passwords, limited access, authorized reviewers, preservation of recordings past normal retention standards).
- (d) Reviewing audio recordings.
- (e) Availability of current information for telecommunicatorss (e.g., Shift Sergeant contact, rosters, member tracking methods, member contact, maps, emergency providers, tactical dispatch plans).
- (f) Assignment of field members and safety check intervals.
- (g) Procurement of external services (e.g., fire suppression, ambulances, aircraft, tow trucks, taxis).
- (h) Protection of essential equipment (e.g., surge protectors, gaseous fire suppression systems, uninterruptible power systems, generators).
 - 1. The alternate power source should be inspected and tested at least monthly or consistent with manufacturer recommendations. Such activities should be documented.
- (i) Protection of radio transmission lines, antennas and power sources for Dispatch (e.g., security cameras, fences).
- (j) Radio interoperability issues.

801.4.3 TELECOMMUNICATORSS

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Telecommunicatorss report to the assigned shift Sergeant. The responsibilities of the telecommunicators include, but are not limited to:

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- (a) Receiving and handling all incoming and transmitted communications, including:
 1. Business telephone lines.
 2. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)/Text Telephone (TTY) equipment.
 3. Radio communications with department members in the field and support resources (e.g., fire department, emergency medical services (EMS), allied agency law enforcement units).
 4. Other electronic sources of information (e.g., text messages, digital photographs, video).
- (b) Documenting the field activities of department members and support resources (e.g., fire department, EMS, allied agency law enforcement units).
- (c) Inquiry and entry of information through Dispatch, department and other law enforcement database systems (e.g., DOT, NCIC, TIME).
- (d) Monitoring department video surveillance systems.
- (e) Maintaining the current status of members in the field, their locations and the nature of calls for service.
- (f) Notifying the Shift Sergeant or field supervisor of emergency activity, including, but not limited to:
 1. Vehicle pursuits.
 2. Foot pursuits.
 3. Assignment of emergency response.

801.5 CALL HANDLING

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

This department provides members of the public with access to the non-emergency telephone number.

When a call for services is received, the telecommunicators will reasonably and quickly attempt to determine whether the call is an emergency or non-emergency, and shall quickly ascertain the call type, location and priority by asking four key questions:

- Where?
- What?
- When?
- Who?

If the telecommunicators determines that the caller has a hearing and/or speech impairment or disability, he/she shall immediately initiate a connection with the individual via available TDD/TTY equipment or Telephone Relay Service (TRS), as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

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If the telecommunicator determines that the caller is a limited English proficiency (LEP) individual, the telecommunicator should quickly determine whether sufficient information can be obtained to initiate an appropriate response. If language assistance is still needed, the language is known and a language-appropriate authorized interpreter is available in Dispatch, the telecommunicator should immediately connect the LEP caller to the authorized interpreter.

If no authorized interpreter is available or the telecommunicator is unable to identify the caller's language, the telecommunicator will contact the contracted telephonic interpretation service and establish a three-party call connecting the telecommunicator, the LEP individual and the interpreter.

Telecommunicators should be courteous, patient and respectful when dealing with the public.

801.5.1 EMERGENCY CALLS

Best Practice

A call is considered an emergency when there is an immediate or potential threat to life or serious property damage, and the timely arrival of public safety assistance is of the utmost importance. A person reporting an emergency should not be placed on hold until the telecommunicator has obtained all necessary information to ensure the safety of the responding department members and affected individuals.

Emergency calls should be dispatched immediately. The Shift Sergeant shall be notified of pending emergency calls for service when department members are unavailable for dispatch.

801.5.2 NON-EMERGENCY CALLS

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

A call is considered a non-emergency call when there is no immediate or potential threat to life or property. A person reporting a non-emergency may be placed on hold, if necessary, to allow the telecommunicator to handle a higher priority or emergency call.

The reporting person should be advised if there will be a delay in the telecommunicator's returning to the telephone line or when there will be a delay in the response for service.

801.6 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

The police radio system is for official use only, to be used by telecommunicators to communicate with department members in the field. All transmissions shall be professional and made in a calm, businesslike manner, using proper language and correct procedures. Such transmissions shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Members acknowledging the telecommunicator with their radio identification call signs.
- (b) Telecommunicators acknowledging and responding promptly to all radio transmissions.
- (c) Members keeping the telecommunicator advised of their status and location.

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- (d) Member and telecommunicators acknowledgements shall be concise and without further comment unless additional information is needed.

The Support Services Commander shall be notified of radio procedure violations or other causes for complaint. All complaints and violations will be investigated and reported to the complainant's supervisor and processed through the chain of command.

801.6.1 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION COMPLIANCE

Federal

Fitchburg Police Department radio operations shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.

801.6.2 RADIO IDENTIFICATION

Best Practice

Radio call signs are assigned to department members based on factors such as duty assignment, uniformed patrol assignment and/or member identification number. Telecommunicatorss shall identify themselves on the radio with the appropriate station name or number, and identify the department member by his/her call sign. Members should use their call signs when initiating communication with the telecommunicators. The use of the call sign allows for a brief pause so that the telecommunicators can acknowledge the appropriate department member. Members initiating communication with other law enforcement or support agencies shall use their entire radio call sign, which includes the department station name or number.

801.7 DOCUMENTATION

Best Practice

It shall be the responsibility of Dispatch to document all relevant information on calls for service or self-initiated activity. Telecommunicatorss shall attempt to elicit, document and relay as much information as possible to enhance the safety of the member and assist in anticipating conditions that may be encountered at the scene. Desirable information would include, at a minimum:

- Incident control number.
- Date and time of request.
- Name and address of the reporting person, if possible.
- Type of incident reported.
- Involvement of weapons, drugs and/or alcohol.
- Location of incident reported.
- Identification of members assigned as primary and backup.
- Time of dispatch.
- Time of the responding member's arrival.
- Time of member's return to service.

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- Disposition or status of reported incident.

801.8 CONFIDENTIALITY

Best Practice

Information that becomes available through Dispatch may be confidential or sensitive in nature. All members of Dispatch shall treat information that becomes known to them as confidential and release that information in accordance with the Protected Information Policy.

Automated data, such as Department of Transportation records, warrants, criminal history information, records of internal police files or medical information, shall only be made available to authorized law enforcement personnel. Prior to transmitting confidential information via the radio, an admonishment shall be made that confidential information is about to be broadcast.

Property and Evidence

802.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice

This policy provides for the proper collection, storage, security and disposition of evidence and other property. This policy also provides for the protection of the chain of custody and those persons authorized to remove and/or destroy property.

802.1.1 PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE ROOM SECURITY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

The Property and Evidence Room shall maintain secure storage and control of all property necessitating custody by the Department. The property and evidence technician reports to the Deputy Chief of Police and is responsible for the security of the Property and Evidence Room. Property and Evidence Room access is maintained only by the property and evidence technicians and the Deputy Chief of Police. An additional key is in a sealed and initialed envelope maintained in the dispatch center. The property and evidence technicians and the Deputy Chief Of Police shall not loan Property and Evidence Room access to anyone and shall maintain access in a secure manner.

Any individual entering the Property and Evidence Room other than the property and evidence technician must be accompanied by the property and evidence technician or the Deputy Chief of Police and must sign in and out on the logbook, giving the date and time of entry and exit, and the purpose. The entry shall be initialed by the accompanying individual.

802.2 DEFINITIONS

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Definitions related to this policy include:

Evidence - Includes items taken or recovered in the course of an investigation that may be used in the prosecution of a case.

Found property - Includes property found by a member or citizen where the owner cannot be readily identified or contacted and has no apparent evidentiary value.

Property - Includes all items of evidence, items taken for safekeeping and found property.

Safekeeping - Includes the following types of property:

- Property obtained by the Department for safekeeping, such as a firearm
- Personal property of an arrestee not taken as evidence
- Property taken for safekeeping under authority of a law

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Property and Evidence

802.3 PROPERTY HANDLING

Best Practice MODIFIED

Any member who first comes into possession of any property shall retain such property in his/her possession until it is entered into the records management system, properly tagged and placed in the designated property locker or storage room, along with the property label. Care shall be taken to maintain the chain of custody for all evidence.

Any property seized by an officer with or without a warrant shall be safely kept for as long as necessary for the purpose of being produced as evidence. Seized property held as evidence shall be returned to its rightful owner unless subject to lawful detention or ordered destroyed or otherwise disposed of by the court (Wis. Stat. § 950.04(1v)(s)).

Where ownership can be established as to found property that has no apparent evidentiary value, excluding contraband, such property may be released to the owner without the need for booking. The property documentation must be completed to document the release of property not booked. The owner shall sign the appropriate form acknowledging receipt of the item.

802.3.1 PROPERTY ENTRY PROCEDURE

Best Practice MODIFIED

All property must be entered prior to the member going off-duty. Members entering property shall observe the following guidelines:

- (a) Complete the property entry into the records management system and label describing each item separately, listing all serial numbers, owner's name, finder's name and other identifying information or markings.
- (b) The officer shall mark each item of evidence with initials and date.
- (c)
- (d) Complete an evidence/property tag and attach it to each package or envelope in which the property is stored.
- (e) Place the case number in the appropriate field of the evidence/property tag.
- (f) The original property form shall be submitted with the case report.
- (g) When the property is too large to be placed in a temporary property locker, the item may be temporarily stored in any department supply room or other location that can be secured from unauthorized entry. The location shall be secured to prevent entry and a completed property label placed into a numbered property locker indicating the location of the property. Department property and evidence technician will be notified by the officer entering that property.

802.3.2 CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Best Practice MODIFIED

All controlled substances shall be entered using the same property entry procedure, as well as narcotics cards. Drug paraphernalia shall also be entered separately.

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802.3.3 EXPLOSIVES

Best Practice MODIFIED

Officers who encounter a suspected explosive device shall promptly notify an immediate supervisor. The bomb squad will be called to handle explosive-related incidents and will be responsible for the handling, storage, sampling and disposal of all suspected explosives.

Explosives will not be retained in the police facility.

802.3.4 EXCEPTIONAL HANDLING

Best Practice MODIFIED

Certain property items require a separate process. The following items shall be processed in the described manner:

- (a) Any evidence collected which may contain biological samples, should be properly labeled as such.
- (b) Property stained with bodily fluids, such as blood or semen, shall be air-dried in a secure location (e.g., locked drying cabinet) prior to processing.
- (c) License plates found not to be stolen or connected with a known crime should be released directly to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. No formal property booking process is required.
- (d) All bicycles and bicycle frames require a property record. Property tags will be securely attached to each bicycle or bicycle frame. The property will be placed in the bicycle storage area.
- (e) All cash shall be counted in the presence of another officer and the envelope initialed by both officers. A supervisor shall be contacted for cash in excess of \$1,000. The supervisor shall also witness the count and will initial and date the property documentation and specify any additional security procedures to be used. A currency form will be included in the packaging of the cash.
- (f) All evidence collected by personnel processing a crime scene requiring specific storage requirements pursuant to laboratory procedures should clearly indicate storage requirements on the property label.
- (g) Items that are potential biohazards shall be appropriately packaged and marked to reduce the risk of exposure or contamination.

City property, unless connected to a known criminal case, should be released directly to the appropriate City department. No formal booking is required. In cases where no responsible person can be located, the property should be booked for safekeeping in the normal manner.

802.4 PACKAGING OF PROPERTY

Best Practice MODIFIED

All property should be packaged in compliance with Wisconsin Division of Criminal Investigations standards or standards set by this department.

Certain items require special consideration and shall be booked separately as follows:

- (a) Controlled substances

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- (b) Firearms (ensure they are unloaded and rendered safe))
- (c) Property with more than one known owner
- (d) Drug paraphernalia
- (e)
- (f) Contraband
- (g) Biohazards
- (h) Consider separately packaging any original container or packaging, including controlled substances packaging, to permit latent print or other evidence recovery

802.4.1 PACKAGING CONTAINER

Best Practice

Members shall package all property, except controlled substances, in a suitable container that is appropriate for its size. Knife boxes should be used to package knives or any other sharp items. Handgun boxes should be used for handguns. Syringe tubes should be used to package syringes and needles.

A property tag shall be securely attached to the outside of all items or group of items packaged together.

802.4.2 PACKAGING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

The officer seizing controlled substances shall retain such property in his/her possession until it is properly weighed, packaged, tagged and placed in an evidence locker. Prior to packaging and if the quantity allows, a presumptive test should be made on all suspected controlled substances. When conducted, the result of this test shall be included in the officer's report.

Controlled substances shall be packaged in an envelope of appropriate size, available in the report room. The booking officer shall initial the sealed envelope and the initials shall be covered with cellophane tape. Controlled substances shall not be packaged with other property.

The booking officer shall weigh the suspected controlled substance in the container in which it was seized. A full description of the item, along with packaging and total weight of the item as seized, will be placed in the case report and on the property label. After packaging and sealing as required, the entire package will be weighed and the Gross Package Weight (GPW) will be written on the outside of the package, initialed and dated by the packaging officer.

The GPW will be verified every time the package is checked in or out of the Property and Evidence Room. Any discrepancies shall be noted on the outside of the package. Any change in weight should be immediately reported to the Detective Bureau Section supervisor.

A completed property tag shall be attached to the outside of the container, as well as a narcotics form. The chain of custody shall be recorded within the records management system.

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802.4.3 RIGHT OF REFUSAL

Best Practice MODIFIED

The property and evidence technician has the right to refuse any piece of property that is hazardous or that has not been properly documented or packaged. Should the property and evidence technician refuse an item of property, he/she shall maintain secure custody of the item in a temporary property locker or other safe location and inform the submitting officer's [and](#) supervisor.

802.5 RECORDING OF PROPERTY

Best Practice MODIFIED

The property and evidence technician receiving custody of evidence or property shall record all transfer or change in location of evidence and property in the records management system.

A unique property number shall be created for each piece of property received. The records management system shall record, by property number, the date received, case number, tag number, item description, item location and date disposed. A unique property number shall be obtained for each item or group of items from the records management system. This number shall be recorded on the property tag and the property control card.

802.6 PROPERTY CONTROL

Best Practice MODIFIED

Each time the property and evidence technician receives property or releases property to another person, he/she shall enter this information in the records management system. Officers desiring property for court shall contact the property and evidence technician at least five days prior to the court day.

802.6.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER PERSONNEL

Best Practice MODIFIED

Every time property is released or received, an appropriate entry in the records management system shall be completed to maintain the chain of custody.

Request for analysis of items other than controlled substances shall be completed on the appropriate forms and submitted to the property and evidence technician. This request may be filled out anytime after booking of the property or evidence.

802.6.2 TRANSFER OF EVIDENCE TO CRIME LABORATORY

Best Practice MODIFIED

The transporting member will check the evidence out of property, indicating the date and time in the records management system and the request for laboratory analysis.

Any transfer of evidence to the crime laboratory requires:

- (a) The name and contact information of the person submitting the evidence.
- (b) Appropriate packaging and conveyance of evidence to the laboratory.

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- (c) Necessary documentation accompanies evidence at time of transmittal.
- (d) Adequate receipts and signatures to support chain of evidence.

The property and evidence technician releasing the evidence must complete the required information in the records management system. The lab forms will be transported with the property to the examining laboratory. Upon delivering the item, the officer will record the delivery time on both copies and indicate the locker in which the item was placed or the member to whom it was delivered. The original copy of the lab form will remain with the evidence and the copy will be returned to the Records Section for filing with the case.

802.6.3 STATUS OF PROPERTY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Each person receiving property will make the appropriate entry to document the chain of custody. Temporary release of property to officers for investigative purposes, or for court, shall be noted in the records management system, stating the date, time and to whom it was released.

Any member receiving property shall be responsible for such property until it is returned to the Property and Evidence Room or released to another authorized person or entity.

The return of the property should be recorded in the records management system, indicating date, time and the person who returned it.

802.6.4 AUTHORITY TO RELEASE PROPERTY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

The property and evidence technician shall make reasonable efforts to confirm the ability to release property prior to doing so. These efforts include, but are not limited to, reading the police reports, communicating with the primary investigator, and communicating with the District Attorney's Office. If the property and evidence technician cannot determine whether property can be released, he/she will maintain the property, and it will be the primary investigator's responsibility to determine the status of the property.

For property in custody of the Department for investigatory or prosecutorial purposes and owned by a victim or witness, a property and evidence technician shall, upon the request of the owner:

- (a) Provide a list describing the property, unless such release would seriously impede an investigation.
- (b) Return the property expeditiously, unless the property is contraband or required as evidence.

Upon the direction of a prosecuting attorney, property held as evidence of a crime may be photographed and released to the owner.

802.6.5 RELEASE OF PROPERTY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

A reasonable attempt shall be made to identify the rightful owner of found or stolen property or evidence not needed for an investigation.

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Property belonging to a crime victim shall be promptly released to the victim unless needed for evidence within 10 days of being taken unless the property is weapons, contraband or is otherwise excluded (Wis. Stat. § 950.04(1v)(s)).

Release of property shall be made upon receipt of an authorized release form, listing the name and address of the person to whom the property is to be released. The release authorization shall conform to the items listed on the property label or must specify the specific item to be released. Release of all property shall be properly documented.

With the exception of firearms and other property specifically regulated by statute, found property and property held for safekeeping shall be held for a minimum of 30 days. During such period, property personnel shall attempt to contact the rightful owner by telephone and/or mail when sufficient identifying information is available. Property not held for any other purpose and not claimed within 30 days after notification (or receipt, if notification is not feasible) may be auctioned to the highest bidder at a properly published public auction (Wis. Stat. § 66.0139(2)). If such property is not sold at auction or otherwise lawfully claimed, it may thereafter be destroyed. The final disposition of all such property shall be fully documented in related reports.

A property and evidence technician shall release the property to the owner or finder, upon valid identification and proper documentation presented by the owner or finder, for which an authorized release has been received. A signature of the person receiving the property shall be recorded on the original property label.

Upon release or other form of disposal, the proper entry shall be documented in the records management system.

802.6.6 DISPUTED CLAIMS TO PROPERTY

Best Practice

Occasionally more than one party may claim an interest in property being held by the Department, and the legal rights of the parties cannot be clearly established. Such property shall not be released until one party has obtained a court order or otherwise establishes undisputed right to the property.

All parties should be advised that their claims are civil. In extreme situations, legal counsel for the Department may be asked to file an interpleader in court to resolve the disputed claim.

802.6.7 CONTROL OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Best Practice

The Property and Evidence Room will be responsible for the storage, control, and destruction of all controlled substances coming into the custody of this department, including paraphernalia as described in Wis. Stat. § 961.571(1)(a).

802.6.8 RELEASE AND DISPOSAL OF FIREARMS

State

A firearm may not be released until it has been verified that the person receiving the weapon is not prohibited from receiving or possessing the weapon by 18 USC § 922(d) or Wis. Stat. § 968.20(1m).

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The Department shall make best efforts for a period of 30 days after the seizure of an abandoned or stolen firearm to protect the firearm from harm and return it to the lawful owner. At the expiration of such period, the firearm or other deadly weapon may be processed for disposal in accordance with Wis. Stat. § 66.0139, Wis. Stat. § 165.81 and Wis. Stat. § 968.20(3)(b) and consistent with this policy.

802.7 DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

All property not held for evidence in a pending criminal investigation or proceeding, and held for 30 days or longer where the owner has not been located or fails to claim the property, may be disposed of in compliance with existing laws upon receipt of proper authorization for disposal (Wis. Stat. § 66.0139(2)).

Upon any release or sale of any property, the proper notation shall be made in the records management system. Proceeds from the sale of unclaimed property shall be deposited into the City treasury, minus reimbursement for department expenses.

802.7.1 EXCEPTIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Best Practice

The following types of property shall be destroyed or disposed of in the manner and at the time prescribed by law or by a court of competent jurisdiction:

- Weapons declared by law to be nuisances
- Animals, birds and equipment related to their care and containment that have been ordered forfeited by the court
- Counterfeiting equipment
- Gaming devices
- Obscene matter ordered to be destroyed by the court
- Altered vehicles or component parts
- Controlled substances
- Unclaimed, stolen or embezzled property
- Destructive devices
- Any property used in the commission of a crime

802.7.2 RETENTION OF BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

State **MODIFIED**

The Property and Evidence Room supervisor shall ensure that no biological evidence held by the Department is destroyed prematurely or without adequate notification pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 968.205 to the following persons, when applicable:

- (a) The defendant

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- (b) The defendant's attorney
- (c) The appropriate prosecutor
- (d) Any sexual assault victim
- (e) The Detective Bureau Section supervisor

Biological evidence shall be retained for a minimum period established by law, the Property and Evidence Room supervisor or the expiration of any sentence imposed related to the evidence, whichever time period is greater. Following the retention period, notifications should be made by certified mail and should inform the recipient that the evidence will be destroyed after a date specified in the notice unless a motion seeking an order to retain the sample is filed and served on the Department pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 968.205(5). A record of all certified mail receipts shall be retained in the appropriate file. Any objection to, or motion regarding, the destruction of the biological evidence should be retained in the appropriate file and a copy forwarded to the Detective Bureau Section supervisor.

Biological evidence related to a homicide shall be retained indefinitely and may only be destroyed with the written approval of the Chief of Police and the head of the applicable prosecutor's office.

802.8 INSPECTIONS OF THE PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE ROOM

Best Practice

On a monthly basis, the Detective Bureau Section supervisor shall inspect the evidence storage facilities and practices to ensure adherence to appropriate policies and procedures.

- (a) Unannounced inspections of evidence storage areas shall be conducted semi-annually, as directed by the Chief of Police.
- (b) An annual audit of evidence held by the Department shall be conducted by a Section Commander, who is not routinely or directly connected with evidence control, as assigned by the Chief of Police.
- (c) Whenever a change is made in personnel who have access to the Property and Evidence Room, an inventory of all evidence/property shall be made by an individual not associated with the Property and Evidence Room or function, with the assistance of the new personnel, to ensure that records are correct and all evidence property is accounted for.

Records Section

803.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice

This policy establishes the guidelines for the operational functions of the Fitchburg Police Department Records Section. The policy addresses department file access and internal requests for case reports.

803.2 POLICY

Best Practice

It is the policy of the Fitchburg Police Department to maintain department records securely, professionally and efficiently.

803.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice

803.3.1 ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice MODIFIED

The Chief of Police shall appoint and delegate certain responsibilities to an Administrative Services Manager. The Administrative Services Manager shall be directly responsible to the Chief of Police.

- Overseeing the efficient and effective operation of the Records Section.
- Scheduling and maintaining Records Section time records.
- Supervising, training and evaluating Records Section staff.
- Maintaining and updating a Records Section procedure manual.
- Ensuring compliance with established policies and procedures.
- Supervising the access, use and release of protected information (see the Protected Information Policy).
- Establishing security and access protocols for case reports designated as sensitive, where additional restrictions to access have been implemented. Sensitive reports may include, but are not limited to:
 - Homicides
 - Cases involving department members or public officials
 - Any case where restricted access is prudent

803.3.2 RECORDS SECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice

The responsibilities of the Records Section include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Maintaining a records management system for case reports.

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1. The records management system should include a process for numbering, identifying, tracking and retrieving case reports.
- (b) Entering case report information into the records management system.
 1. Modification of case reports shall only be made when authorized by a supervisor.
- (c) Providing members of the Department with access to case reports when needed for investigation or court proceedings.
- (d) Maintaining compliance with federal, state and local regulations regarding reporting requirements of crime statistics.
- (e) Maintaining compliance with federal, state and local regulations regarding criminal history reports and auditing.
- (f) Identifying missing case reports and notifying the responsible member's supervisor.
- (g) Forwarding reports of suspected prescription drug law violations, opioid-related drug overdoses, narcotic-related deaths or controlled substance prescription thefts to the Wisconsin prescription drug monitoring program pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 961.37.

803.3.3 RECORDS SECTION PROCEDURE MANUAL

Discretionary

The Administrative Services Manager should establish procedures that address:

- (a) Identifying by name persons in reports.
- (b) Classifying reports by type of incident or crime.
- (c) Tracking reports through the approval process.
- (d) Assigning alpha-numerical records to all arrest records.
- (e) Managing a warrant and wanted persons file.

803.4 FILE ACCESS AND SECURITY

Best Practice

The security of files in the Records Section must be a high priority and shall be maintained as mandated by state or federal law. All case reports including, but not limited to, initial, supplemental, follow-up, evidence and any other reports related to a police department case, including field interview (FI) cards, criminal history records and publicly accessible logs, shall be maintained in a secure area within the Records Section, accessible only by authorized members of the Records Section. Access to case reports or files when Records Section staff is not available may be obtained through the Shift Sergeant.

The Records Section will also maintain a secure file for case reports deemed by the Chief of Police as sensitive or otherwise requiring extraordinary access restrictions.

803.4.1 ORIGINAL CASE REPORTS

Best Practice

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Records Section

Generally, original case reports shall not be removed from the Records Section. Should an original case report be needed for any reason, the requesting department member shall first obtain authorization from the Administrative Services Manager. All original case reports removed from the Records Section shall be recorded on a designated report check-out log, which shall be the only authorized manner by which an original case report may be removed from the Records Section.

All original case reports to be removed from the Records Section shall be photocopied and the photocopy retained in the file location of the original case report until the original is returned to the Records Section. The photocopied report shall be shredded upon return of the original report to the file.

803.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

Best Practice

Records Section staff has access to information that may be confidential or sensitive in nature. Records Section staff shall not access, view or distribute, or allow anyone else to access, view or distribute any record, file or report, whether in hard copy or electronic file format, or any other confidential, protected or sensitive information except in accordance with the Records Maintenance and Release and Protected Information policies and the Records Section procedure manual.

803.6 TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDERS AND INJUNCTIONS

State

No later than 24 hours after being notified by a court that a restraining order or injunction regarding domestic abuse, child abuse or at-risk individuals has been issued, extended, modified or vacated, the Administrative Services Manager shall ensure the information is entered into the appropriate databases and is available to other law enforcement agencies (Wis. Stat. § 813.12; Wis. Stat. § 813.1285; Wis. Stat. § 813.115).

Animal Control

806.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for interacting with animals and responding to calls for service that involve animals.

806.2 POLICY

Best Practice

It is the policy of the Fitchburg Police Department to be responsive to the needs of the community regarding animal-related issues. This includes enforcing local, state and federal laws relating to animals and appropriately resolving or referring animal-related problems, as outlined in this policy.

806.3 HUMANE OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

State

Animal control services are generally the primary responsibility of Civilian Service Employees and include the following (Wis. Stat. § 173.07):

- (a) Animal-related matters during periods when Civilian Service Employees is available.
- (b) Ongoing or persistent animal nuisance complaints. Such complaints may be scheduled, if reasonable, for handling during periods that Civilian Service Employees is available for investigation and resolution.
- (c) Follow-up on animal-related calls, such as locating owners of injured animals or notifying owners when animals are taken into custody (Wis. Stat. 173.13(3)).
- (d) Enforcement of state laws and ordinances relating to rabies control and cruelty to animals (Wis. Stat. § 173.03(3); Wis. Stat. § 95.21; Wis. Stat. § 951.01 et seq.).

Members who are designated as Humane Officers shall successfully complete the required basic and continuing education animal control courses required for certification by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (Wis. Stat. § 173.05).

806.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice

Members who respond to or assist with animal-related calls for service should evaluate the situation to determine appropriate actions to control the situation.

Due to the hazards of handling animals without proper training and equipment, responding members generally should not attempt to capture and pick up any animal, but should keep the animal under observation until the arrival of appropriate assistance.

Members may consider acting before the arrival of such assistance when:

- (a) There is a threat to public safety.

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Animal Control

- (b) An animal has bitten someone. Members should take measures to confine the animal and prevent further injury.
- (c) An animal is creating a traffic hazard.
- (d) An animal is seriously injured.
- (e) The owner/handler has been arrested or is incapacitated. In such circumstances, the member should find appropriate placement for the animal.
 - 1. This is only necessary when the arrestee is expected to be in custody for a time period longer than would reasonably allow him/her to properly care for the animal.
 - 2. With the owner's consent, locating appropriate placement may require contacting relatives or neighbors to care for the animal.
 - 3. If no person can be found or the owner does not or cannot give consent, the animal should be taken to a designated animal care facility.

806.5 ANIMAL CRUELTY COMPLAINTS

State

Laws relating to the cruelty to animals should be enforced, including but not limited to § Wis. Stat. § 951.01 et seq.

- (a) An investigation should be conducted on all reports of animal cruelty.
- (b) Legal steps should be taken to protect an animal that is in need of immediate care or protection from acts of cruelty.

806.6 ANIMAL BITE REPORTS

Best Practice

Members investigating an animal bite should obtain as much information as possible for follow-up with the appropriate health or animal authorities. Efforts should be made to capture or otherwise have the animal placed under control. Members should attempt to identify and notify the owner of the final disposition of the animal.

806.6.1 QUARANTINE

State

If the member has reason to believe the biting animal is infected with rabies or has been in contact with a rabid animal he/she shall order the animal to be quarantined (Wis. Stat. § 95.21(4); Wis. Stat. § 95.21(5)).

806.7 STRAY DOGS

Best Practice

If the dog has a license or can otherwise be identified, the owner should be contacted, if possible. If the owner is contacted, the dog should be released to the owner and a citation may be issued, if

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appropriate. If a dog is taken into custody, it shall be transported to the appropriate shelter/holding pen (Wis. Stat. 174.042(3)).

Members shall provide reasonable treatment to animals in their care (e.g., food, water, shelter).

806.8 DANGEROUS ANIMALS

Best Practice

In the event responding members cannot fulfill a request for service because an animal is difficult or dangerous to handle, the Shift Sergeant will be contacted to determine available resources, including requesting the assistance of animal control services from an allied agency.

806.9 PUBLIC NUISANCE CALLS RELATING TO ANIMALS

Best Practice

Members should diligently address calls related to nuisance animals (e.g., barking dogs), because such calls may involve significant quality-of-life issues.

806.10 DECEASED ANIMALS

Best Practice

When a member becomes aware of a deceased animal, all reasonable attempts should be made to preliminarily determine if the death of the animal is related to criminal activity.

Deceased animals on public property should be removed, sealed in a plastic bag and properly disposed of by the responding member.

Members should not climb onto or under any privately owned structure for the purpose of removing a deceased animal.

806.11 INJURED ANIMALS

Best Practice

When a member becomes aware of an injured domesticated animal, all reasonable attempts shall be made to contact the owner or responsible handler. If an owner or responsible handler cannot be located, the animal should be taken to a designated animal care facility.

806.12 DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

When it is necessary to use a firearm to euthanize a badly injured animal or stop an animal that poses an imminent threat to human safety, the Firearms Policy shall be followed.