

DALTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

	<i>Effective Date</i> May 1, 1998	<i>Number</i> GO88-4.8
<i>Subject</i> Preliminary Investigations		
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I. Policy

It is the policy of the Dalton Police Department that Officers shall perform a thorough preliminary investigation of all incidents, both dispatched and self-initiated, and alleged crimes in a manner that ensures the proper gathering of facts and information relevant to the incident; the protection and integrity of the crime scene; attention to the medical and emotional needs of the victims of crime; identification of witnesses and suspects; and adequate and thorough documentation of required reports to ensure a successful prosecution and disposition of each case.

II. Definition

Preliminary Investigation – The activities that begin when an Officer is dispatched or assigned to proceed to a crime or becomes engaged in a self-initiated police activity and leading up to a determination by responding Officer(s) that no further action is necessary, an arrest(s) by the responding Officer(s) is made, or a Supervisor determines the investigation should be forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division (CID). A preliminary investigation is a fact-finding process which must be carried out thoroughly and accurately. The nature of the incident or alleged crime will determine the extent of the preliminary investigation and the Officer's responsibilities.

III. Preliminary Investigations by Patrol Officers

- A. Patrol Officers are responsible for conducting preliminary investigations for the majority of cases reported to the Department and for most self-initiated police activity.
- B. The responding Officer is responsible for conducting a thorough preliminary investigation and proper protection, documentation, and collection of all evidence, statements, and interviews, unless he or she is properly relieved. The Officer may be relieved by another Officer or an Investigator upon their acceptance of responsibility for the incident or scene.
- C. Officers shall, at a minimum:
 1. Make the scene safe.

2. Make a determination and call for medical assistance, if needed, and provide care while waiting for medical personnel, if possible.
 3. Observe all conditions and events, and record the remarks made by anyone at the scene.
 4. If possible, identify and locate all persons involved in the case or incident, including complainants, victims, witnesses, and suspects.
 5. Maintain and protect the crime scene, and arrange for the collection of evidence or process the scene themselves.
 6. Interview the complainants, victims, witnesses, and suspects. Officers shall follow the guidelines in directive GO98-4.4, Conducting Interviews and Interrogations.
 7. Inform victims and / or witnesses of the case number, if known, and explain the subsequent steps in the processing of the case. Advise the victims and / or witnesses to contact the Officer / Investigator if they discover new information or details or if the suspect or anyone else threatens or otherwise intimidates them.
 8. Provide a telephone number that the victims and / or witnesses may call to report additional information about the case or to receive information about the case.
 9. When applicable, provide each victim and / or witness of a crime with a Crime Victim's Bill of Rights notification. Provide victims and / or witnesses with information pertaining to counseling, medical attention, victim advocacy, or other measures that are applicable for the situation.
 10. Complete an incident report detailing the findings of the Officer, including the evidence that was collected, interviews obtained, suspects identified, and future steps that will be taken in the case.
 11. Complete all supplemental reports on actions taken after the initial incident report has been completed.
 12. Keep their Supervisor updated on the status of the investigation.
- D. In an unusually serious or complex situation, immediate action by Criminal Investigations Division (CID) personnel may be warranted. CID shall be notified of any case that is of a serious nature, when it is apparent a lengthy follow-up investigation may be necessary. This may include, but is not limited to, cases involving:
1. Homicide
 2. Suspicious Death

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3. Suicide
 4. Rape
 5. Robbery
 6. Kidnapping
- E. The Dalton PD Investigative Checklist (DET DPDIC 120810) may be used during preliminary and / or follow-up investigations to assist with tracking all required investigative functions.

IV. **Identifying and Arresting Suspects**

- A. The arrest of a person is a very serious matter and should be done only after sufficient facts are gathered to establish probable cause for an arrest and those facts are supported by reasonable independent investigation.
- B. Identification of suspects for the purpose of arrest shall be conducted using the guidelines established in directive GO91-7.10, Lineups and Pretrial Identifications.
- C. A prudent Officer will err on the side of caution when making an arrest for an offense not committed in his or her presence.
- D. Before making an arrest or obtaining a warrant, the Officer shall consider the following factors:
1. The need to protect the victim(s)
 2. The nature of the crime committed
 3. The time and place of occurrence
 4. The lapse of time between the crime and the arrival of the Officer(s) on the scene
 5. Whether the offender is known to the Officer or a good description of the offender is available
 6. What information was used to identify the suspect (witness statements, video, lineup, show-up, social media, photos on Department or other electronic files, etc.)?
 7. Are those forms of identification acceptable for probable cause?
 8. Has the suspect been properly identified?
 9. Is there enough information to obtain a warrant?

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10. Has contact been made or an interview attempted with the suspect(s) in the case?
 11. Are there any other steps that can be taken to strengthen the case?
- E. The Officer shall discuss the facts and other information with a Supervisor, if possible, and evaluate the decision to make an arrest in cases where an offense was not committed in the presence or immediate knowledge of an Officer.

V. **Supervisor Responsibilities**

- A. Go to the crime scene on incidents involving death, rape, serious bodily injury, major property loss, or upon request.
- B. Ensure that the responding Officer(s) has adequate resources to effectively protect the crime scene, interview witnesses, canvass neighborhoods, etc.
- C. Confer with and provide guidance to the Officer(s) during the preliminary investigation.
- D. Request investigative assistance from CID, if deemed necessary.
- E. Review the Officer's actions and all incident reports, supplemental reports, and documents related to the preliminary investigation to evaluate the need for further action and accuracy of reports.
- F. The Supervisor is responsible for determining if the preliminary investigation is complete, needs further attention by the Officer, or should be referred to CID.

VI. **Follow-up Investigations by Patrol Officers**

- A. Patrol Officers may be assigned to follow up on an incident or alleged crime after an arrest has been made or after the Officer has completed the preliminary investigation and the case remains active. The successful resolution or prosecution of a case is not guaranteed at the point when a suspect is arrested.
- B. Follow-up investigations are beneficial in securing the full facts of the case and often yield further evidence and facts. The following shall serve as a guide in determining when a follow-up investigation should be turned over to CID:
 1. When the follow-up investigation requires prolonged contact with an outside agency.
 2. When the follow-up may pertain to an ongoing investigation in CID.
- C. When any of the above conditions exist, the Officer shall confer with his / her Supervisor prior to engaging in a follow-up investigation.
- D. Supervisors shall utilize the Case Management table within the Department's Records Management System to keep track of follow-up investigations that have

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been assigned to Officers. This includes assigning due dates for Officers to have completed or updated the status of assigned follow-up investigations.

- E. Officers shall conduct all assigned follow-up investigations in a timely manner, complete supplemental reports detailing their actions, and keep their Supervisor advised of the status of their assigned cases.
- F. Supervisors are responsible for updating the Case Management table when supplemental reports are submitted regarding follow-up investigations that have been assigned to Officers.
- G. Supervisors shall routinely audit their Officers' assigned follow-up investigations in the Case Management table to ensure assignments and case statuses are up-to-date.

This policy supersedes any previous policies issued.

BY ORDER OF

CHIEF OF POLICE

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