

# Bowie Police Department - General Orders



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| TITLE: FIELD INTERVIEWS   | NUMBER:<br>411        |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/5/16  | REVIEW DATE:          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AMENDS <input type="checkbox"/> RESCINDS | DATE: 2/1/10, 2/23/12 |

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| AUTHORITY<br><br><b>Chief John K. Nesky</b> | ACCREDITATIONS STANDARDS<br>CALEA STANDARDS: 1.2.3, 1.2.9a,<br>42.1.6 | TOTAL PAGES<br><br>3 |
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## I. POLICY

Bowie Police Officers must understand the legal basis and authority for conducting field interviews. Officers are encouraged to use this investigative tool consistent with applicable constitutional law and Department policy. Field interviews, when documented properly, can contribute greatly to crime analysis and serve as a source of information as well as a means of developing suspects and witnesses.

## II. PURPOSE

Field interviews documented on Field Observation Reports (FOR) are a means of collecting intelligence information on suspects or suspicious persons. The goal of the Bowie Police Department is to provide consistent, accurate, and timely information on suspects and suspicious persons regarding criminal activity. The Field Interview System shall be utilized to disseminate current information on criminal suspects to investigative personnel and to officers assigned to the Patrol Division. (CALEA 1.2.3.a)

## III. FACTORS / CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Officers are encouraged to proactively patrol their assigned areas for suspicious person(s) and circumstances.
- B. Upon finding suspicious person(s) or circumstances, the officer shall immediately notify Communications of his/her location and give a brief description of the individual(s), vehicle(s) or circumstance.
- C. Officers shall use their safety skills to approach and interact with suspicious activity and/or person.
- D. Officers shall never stop an individual based solely on the person's race, gender, sex, national origin or sexual or religious preference. Officers will have articulable suspicion utilizing their training, knowledge and experience when stopping individuals suspected of suspicious activity. (CALEA 1.2.9.a)

- E. **Reasonable suspicion** that criminal activity is afoot is the key element on which an officer should base his/her decision whether to stop a person and if a field interview is appropriate. The following factors should also be considered:
1. Is the suspected person in a public place or a place the Officer has a right to be?
  2. Are there objective facts on which to suspect that the person may commit, is committing, or has committed a crime?
  3. Is there a reasonable suspicion to believe that the person is carrying a concealed weapon that may pose a danger to the Officer?
- F. Field interviews do not have to meet the aforementioned criteria in order for an officer to conduct such an interview, but officers should be aware that:
1. Some citizens are sensitive to any interaction with police and an over-aggressive approach by the officer may result in a lack of important support from the person to be interviewed.
  2. The person to be interviewed is under no obligation to answer questions and may remain silent.
  3. A field interview should be conducted in cases where unusual or suspicious behavior is observed.
- G. As many field interviews result in an arrest, the field interview location must be selected with care.

#### IV. **DOCUMENTATION**

- A. Officers will document field interviews by completing an incident report.
- B. The officer completing an Incident Report is responsible for ensuring the quality of information it contains. (CALEA 42.1.6.b)
- C. It is preferable to have a picture taken of the subject but the subject does have the right to refuse. If the subject refuses, efforts should be made to obtain a photo from other sources such as MVA.
- C.
- D. Officers shall submit their completed Incident Reports to their immediate supervisor for review. The immediate supervisor shall review and sign the report to indicate his/her approval.

- E. All approved Field Observation Reports shall be placed in the Records bin in the mail room along with all other approved Incident Reports.

## **VII. FIREARMS SEARCH REPORTS**

- A. In accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, officers who have made an observation, possess information, through experience or reasonable belief, believe that an individual may be wearing, carrying, or transporting a handgun may be stopped and a limited search performed to protect his/herself and others.
- B. All individuals stopped for the sole belief that an individual may be in possession of a handgun shall have the event documented on the Field Observation Report with the “Stop and Frisk” box checked. The report will be completely filled out regardless of the outcome along with an incident report.