

	Operational General Order	11.03 Preliminary Investigations	PAGE 1 OF 2
	SUBJECT		EFFECTIVE DATE
	Virginia Beach Police Department General Order Chapter 11 - Patrol Operations		03/16/2007
			ORIGINATOR/REVIEW
DISTRIBUTION		CALEA: 42.1.4, 42.2.1 A, B, C	Uniform Division
ALL			
BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:		<i>James A. Coonan</i>	

Purpose

To develop preliminary investigation procedures for patrol officers.

Policy

It is the policy of the Virginia Beach Police Department that thorough and complete preliminary investigations are conducted to provide for a satisfactory conclusion to the investigation. The actions taken by the first officer to arrive at the scene of a crime, after its detection and reporting, comprise the preliminary investigation. A successful preliminary investigation adds value to the investigation and assists the follow-up investigator, as well as providing aid to the patrol officer in those cases where the patrol officer is ultimately assigned as the follow-up investigator. The following procedure provides a general guide to officers in conducting preliminary investigations.

Preliminary Investigative Responsibilities (CALEA 42.1.4, 42.2.1 A, B, C, D)

The following preliminary investigative procedures apply to patrol officers who have responded to or discovered a criminal offense or an investigator who assumes a preliminary investigation due to the nature of the crime.

Upon receipt or notification of an incident or call for service, a general outline for officers to utilize in conducting a preliminary investigation is:

- Proceed to the scene promptly and safely
- Request assistance and deploy additional units as necessary
- Render assistance to the injured
- Determine if a crime has been committed
- Effect an arrest of any suspects
- Locate and identify witnesses
- Interview the complainant/s and witnesses (as a practical matter, suspects are only to be interviewed by the officer/investigator who will be assigned the case)
- Maintain the crime scene and protect the evidence
- When appropriate interview the suspect
- Note all conditions, events, and remarks
- Arrange for the identification and collection of evidence
- Yield the responsibility to the follow-up investigator unless assigned to a patrol officer
- Assist the follow-up investigator, if necessary

After restoring order at the scene of an incident, the officer should separate all witnesses immediately and instruct them not to discuss the case with anyone. This will prevent witnesses from being influenced by

different versions of what took place. Preliminary interviews should be conducted in order to determine such basic information as:

- Has an offense/s occurred
- What is the seriousness of the offense
- What is the identity or location of any offender/s
- What information is needed to broadcast a BOL
- Has the crime scene been established

During the course of developing the information regarding the type of crime that has occurred and the specifics of the incident, the officer responsible for the preliminary investigation should take careful notes. These notes should include:

- Time of arrival at scene
- Weather conditions
- Approximate time of the crime
- Approximate time the crime was discovered
- The identity of other officers present
- Results of any interviews
- The identity of witnesses, suspect, and victim/s
 - Include both those who are present and those who have departed
 - The correct spelling of names
 - Verification of identity
 - Appropriate and current contact information
- Any spontaneous or chance remarks relevant to the case
- Information about physical evidence found at the scene

Responding officers or incident commander should ensure that the proper notifications are made in accordance with General Order 11.02 (First Responder Notifications,) and that the Detective Bureau and Forensic Services have been notified so they can process the scene for evidence and follow up on the investigation.

In certain cases and with the consent of the patrol supervisor, responding officers or incident commanders may assume the responsibility for the criminal investigation through its completion, and conduct the follow-up investigation in accordance with General Order 8.02 (Criminal Investigations.) This course of action may be considered when:

- There is an on-scene apprehension
- The projected time to complete the investigation is conducive to the patrol officers schedule
- The need to interview victims, witnesses and/or suspects will occur within or near the officer's geographic area of assignment

As delineated in General Order 8.02(Criminal Investigations,) officers will notify the Detective Bureau or other investigative units and relinquish the investigation to detectives in the following cases:

- Felony crimes against a person
- Arson
- Stolen and recovered vehicles
- Economic crimes
- Traffic fatalities
- Fugitive cases