

Records Unit

802.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

802.1.1 NUMERICAL FILING SYSTEM

Case reports and crash reports are filed numerically by Records Unit personnel. Case reports are numbered commencing with the four digits of the current year followed by a sequential number beginning with 00001 starting at midnight on the first day of January of each year. As an example, case number 2024-00000001 would be the first new case on a given year. Crash reports are numbered commencing with the last two digits of the current year followed by a sequential number beginning with 00001 starting at midnight on the first day of January of each year (ex:24-000001).

The Department's Desk Officer Reporting System (DORS) reports are numbered commencing with the year followed by a sequential number beginning with 80000001 (2024-80000001). Reference Procedure 322 (Report Preparation Standard Operating Procedures) for additional guidance on DORS reporting.

802.2 POLICY

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

802.3 FILE ACCESS AND SECURITY

The security of files in the Records Unit 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 Unit, accessible only by authorized members of the Records Unit. Access to case reports or files when Records Unit staff is not available may be obtained through the Shift Commander.

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

Most reports including, but not limited to, initial, supplemental, follow-up, evidence, and all reports related to a case shall be maintained electronically within the Department's Records Management System (RMS), which includes Laserfiche Client, and are only accessible to authorized police personnel based on RMS permissions protocol. Permissions shall be managed and audited by the Records Manager with oversight of the Professional Standards Division commander.

Members shall not access, view, distribute, or allow anyone else to access, view or distribute any record, file, photograph, video or report, whether hard copy or electronic file format, except

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in accordance with department policy and with a legitimate law enforcement purpose or as otherwise permitted by law.

802.3.1 ORIGINAL CASE REPORTS

Since all case reports and supporting case documentation are maintained electronically within the RMS, police personnel may have the ability to access and print case reports for authorized police purposes based on their permissions level. These purposes include, but are not limited to, court trials, ND DOT Administrative DUI Hearings, and depositions. All police personnel are responsible to ensure any report printed and removed from any police facility remains in their care until properly disposed of.

Original reports and hard copies of citations, shall not be removed from Records, but copies may be made for official police purposes. All reports provided to members by the Records Unit shall be tracked in a department-approved electronic database.

802.4 RECORDS MANAGER TRAINING

The Records Manager shall receive training in records management, including proper maintenance, retention and disposal of records and the proper release of records under state and federal law.

802.5 REQUISITION OF SUPPLIES

Office supplies shall be made available to all department members through the Records Unit. Unique office supplies may need to be ordered through the Records Manager. Special order supplies shall be requested through the Department's equipment request process.

802.6 RESPONSIBILITIES

802.6.1 RECORDS MANAGER

The Chief of Police shall appoint and delegate certain responsibilities to the Records Manager. The Records Manager shall be directly responsible to the Professional Standards Division commander or the authorized designee.

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

- (a) Overseeing the efficient and effective operation of the Records Unit.
- (b) Scheduling and maintaining Records Unit time records.
- (c) Supervising, training, and evaluating Records Unit staff.
- (d) Maintaining and updating a Records Unit procedure manual.
- (e) Ensuring compliance with established policies and procedures.
- (f) Supervising the access, use, and release of protected information (see the Protected Information Policy).

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- (g) 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:
 - 1. Homicides
 - 2. Cases involving department members or public officials
 - 3. Any case where restricted access is prudent

802.6.2 RECORDS UNIT

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

- (a) Maintaining a records management system for case reports.
 - 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) Establishing a process for collecting and submitting data to appropriate federal data collection authorities (e.g., FBI National Use-of-Force Data Collection), as applicable, for the following types of occurrences:
 - 1. Officer suicides
 - 2. Officer misconduct
 - 3. Uses of force
 - 4. Officer deaths or assaults
 - 5. Crime incidents
 - 6. Deaths in custody

802.7 CONFIDENTIALITY

Records Unit staff has access to information that may be confidential or sensitive in nature. Records Unit staff shall not access, view, 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 Unit procedure manual.

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