

REPORTING

Instead of a “memory refresher” for an officer familiar with the case, the reporter becomes a stand – alone document from which any other officer can testify. Statement of the victim(s), witness(es), Miranda warnings given to defendant(s), consent for search(es), etc., should all be included. The report should contain details regarding the way in which the suspect was identified. Also, the chain of custody of any and all evidence must be well documented.

When writing the report, remember to:

- Avoid the use of pronouns. Be clear as to who said what to whom, and who saw what actions taking place.
- Avoid summarizing statement. Use verbatim quotes as much as possible.
- Use the active voice, not the passive.
- Link any seized items of physical evidence by case number and by inventory number. Specify where these items were found, and by whom.
- Keep the report factual. Avoid conclusionary statements.
- If the report is handwritten, please write legibly.

In order to document the Miranda advisement in your report, you need to do one of the following:

- Write out word-for-word the advisement in your report, or,
- State in the report that you read the defendant his or her rights by a verbatim reading from the department’s Miranda form.

REPORT WRITING

Report writing can either help you or hinder you. In most cases documentation of an incident is required to prove or verify the investigators action or the outcome of a specific situation. The information provided below is a basic guideline to help you understand the basic mechanics of a report or incident documentation.

When report writing, one must remember six simple things:

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|------------------|----------|---|
| 1) Who? | Example: | Who is it or who was assigned the case? |
| 2) What? | Example: | What were you assigned to do or what just happened? |
| 3) Where? | Example: | Where did they go? |
| 4) When? | Example: | When did you go or when did it happen? |
| 5) Why? | Example: | Why did you arrest, why did you interview, why did you do that? |
| 6) How? | Example: | How did you go, how did you arrest, how did you interview, or how was the assignment completed? |

Remember the simple acronym KISS - keep it simple stupid. Keep your report as basic as possible when documenting each situation. I came, I saw, I conquered or you can relate it as - I received the order to arrest, I located the suspect and I arrested him. If you try to detail a report too much it becomes a waste of time and opens up many doors to scrutiny or improper action. When documenting your situation or incident be sure to note that all your actions were legal and lawful. I'm sure the last thing any person wants to do is document the fact that they have broken the law or violated the civil rights of any individual that they have come in contact with.

On the back portion of this section you will find an actual report of a specific arrest that occurred several years ago. The cover page of the report consists of an actual invoice. The invoice states the number of agents and the rate per hour per agent; it also includes other services rendered within the investigation. Page no. 1 of the report states the defendants name, description, case number and charges; it also includes the beginning of the investigation. As you can see the writer of this report chose to use headings for each separate incident. He did not take the five "H's" and the "W" in a literal format. Through their investigation they basically state how they came, they saw, and they conquered. In his final entry he closes the case with a disposition. The disposition could be anything from closing your case to actually leaving it with an open end. In other words, if the defendant was arrested then your case is cleared by arrest. If the case is still ongoing and your investigation is still open, then you would state "Investigation ongoing". Always remember to have your name and identification number on your report to prove who actually prepared the documentation.

Some of you may ask why an arrest report is necessary. The main purpose for the arrest report is to prove your actions to your bondsman or client. If they contracted your services for investigation and apprehension how are you going to prove your expenses and your overall completion of the job? Also, report writing or affidavit preparation is extremely crucial when preparing a motion before the magistrate of a specific judicial district. It's imperative that every person learns how to be a good report writer.

This class alone will not give you all the tools you need to be successful. This is only the beginning. We encourage everyone to constantly seek ongoing education to improve them selves in this industry. Most community colleges have writing classes or even administration of justice classes to assist you in this area. Even police detectives constantly receive updated training in this area. Don't sell yourself short.

Here are a few simple short cuts on how to describe people, places and things:

People

- HMA - Hispanic Male Adult
- BMA - Black Male Adult
- WMA - White Male Adult
- OMA - Oriental or other Male Adult

The same can be applied for females and juveniles just remember to replace the "A" with a "J" for Juvenal and replace the "M" with "F" for a female.

Places

- Describe all residences with addresses and specific streets

Things

- Describe all property on arrested person in a basic format, such as – if your arrested person has diamond rings or gold rings then always describe them as follows:

Diamonds = clear stone

Gold = yellow metal

Silver = white metal

Rubies = red color stone

Emeralds = green color stone

Never list anything as it appears. We as investigators don't have any way of proving legitimate jewelry from costume jewelry. Use this method when taking collateral or processing a person for booking.

The following pages are given to you to assist you with your success of becoming a better report writer.

IDENTIFICATION AIDS

AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE SHOULD BE RECORDED FOR EACH PERSON OBSERVED.

Physical Description

Height _____ Weight _____

Nationality _____

Complexion _____

Visible Scars _____

Tattoos _____

Approximate Age _____ Build (portly, thin etc.) _____

Facial Hair _____

Voice Characteristics (accent, etc.) _____

Glasses (describe frame and lenses) _____

Description of Clothing

Hat or scarf _____ color(s) _____

Shirt/Blouse _____ color(s) _____

Ties _____ color(s) _____

Jacket/Coat _____ color(s) _____

Belt _____ color(s) _____

Pants/Skirt _____ color(s) _____

Shoes _____ color(s) _____

Additional Information

Vehicle: Make _____ Model _____

Color _____ License # _____

Direction of travel _____ Remarks _____

CASE WORKSHEET

Date opened: _____

RE (Defendant's name): _____

ASSIGNED BY: _____

PHONE NO(S): _____

Date Assigned	Date Completed	Date File Returned	Date Payment Received

COMMENTS: _____

FORFEITURE DATE: _____

