



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Guidelines for Case Assignment and Management

Eff. Date 12/04/2025

Purpose

This procedure establishes Madison Police Department (MPD) standards for assigning cases for follow-up. These should be viewed as guidelines; deviation may be appropriate based on the circumstances of a particular case/incident.

Violent Crimes Unit – VCU	
Assignment Criteria	
Homicide or Attempted Homicide	• All cases excluding child deaths (Sensitive Crimes specialty), traffic related homicides/fatalities, and overdose deaths. • Officer involved shootings where a suspect/victim/uninvolved community member is deceased will be investigated by Department of Criminal Investigations (DCI)/other outside agency with assistance of the Officer Involved Critical Incident Team. • A District Detective will be assigned to work with the assigned traffic specialist in cases of vehicular homicide, if requested by the Traffic Section.
Firearm Violations	• Cases involving the discharge of a firearm that result in injury, that intentionally target another (even if no injury), or that result in damage to buildings/vehicles will generally be assigned to VCU. • Other firearm related cases will generally be assigned to Persons Crimes Unit (PCU). These include suicide, clearly accidental discharges with no criminal charges, and incidents lacking evidence of an intended target. • All shots fired cases will initially be routed to VCU for review.
Violent Pattern Felonies	• Includes robberies, armed home invasions, and weapons offenses; will be assigned to VCU as resources permit. • Cases that do not meet the criteria of “violent pattern felonies” will be referred to the PCU. • Cases may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis if additional circumstances exist.
Kidnapping - Adult	• Will assign all cases.
High Profile Cases/Special Circumstances	• Assigned to VCU at Chief’s discretion.

Burglary/Property Crimes Unit – BPCU	
Assignment Criteria	
Burglary	• All cases will be reviewed by the BPCU Detective Sergeant for assignment/follow-up.
Property Theft (including pattern Package Theft, pattern Theft From Auto, pattern Retail Theft)	• All cases will be reviewed by the BPCU Detective Sergeant for assignment/follow-up based on solvability factors and investigative resources
Graffiti, Criminal Damage to Property	• All cases will be reviewed by the BPCU Detective Sergeant for assignment/follow-up based on solvability factors and investigative resources
Domesticated Animal Abuse/Theft	• All cases will be reviewed by the BPCU Detective

	Sergeant for assignment/follow-up based on solvability factors and investigative resources
Stolen Vehicle	All cases will be assigned to a Detective
Arson/Fire Investigation	Assignments will be made in conjunction with or at the request of the Madison Fire Department (MFD) personnel and/or the Detective Lieutenant.

Special Victims Unit - SVU	Assignment Criteria
Infant/Child Death Investigation	All cases where the death was unrelated to either the use of firearms or an adult victim homicide.
Sexual Assault of a Child	All cases involving children will be reviewed by the Detective Lieutenant and/or the Detective Sergeant, and assigned as appropriate.
Physical Abuse of a Child	- Will assign cases that involve significant injury. - Will assign other cases based on individual factors such as injury, previous contact with family, age of child, or need for follow-up.
Child Neglect	- Will assign cases that involve significant injury. - Will assign other cases based on individual factors such as presence of narcotics, length of caregiver abuse, presence of needed resources, dangerousness of living circumstances, etc.
Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC)	- Will assign all tips vetted through DCI. - May proactively work cases as time and resources allow.
Child Protective Services (CPS) Screen-Out Reports	- SVU Supervisors will review all CPS screen-out reports forwarded to MPD and will make an assignment determination on appropriate disposition. - Disposition includes assigned follow-up by Patrol, SVU Detectives or outreach by SVU Supervisors. - If no follow-up is needed, SVU Supervisor or SVU Detectives will generate a case number for the CPS report and enter report contact information into MPD Law Enforcement Records Management System (LERMS) under case incident type "CPS Information".
Kidnapping – Child Victim	- Will assign all cases involving the non-familial abduction of children - Will review and assign cases of familial abduction/significant custody dispute based on individual factors to include concern for the welfare of the child(ren), exhaustion of family court process, parent is in violation of court order(s), and/or child(ren) welfare is unable to be independently verified
Missing/Runaway Juvenile	- Will be assigned to a Detective if any of the following are present: - The juvenile has a mental/physical disability that could subject the juvenile to risk. - The juvenile is under the age of 12. - There is any indication that the juvenile's missing status is involuntary. - The juvenile is part of a custody dispute. - The juvenile's missing status is unusual or unexpected. - The juvenile has been missing more than one week.

	- Juvenile has a history of sexual abuse (i.e., at risk for human trafficking). - Will otherwise be assigned a Patrol officer.
Enticement	Will be assigned to a Detective.
Other sensitive cases	Assigned to SVU at Chief's discretion.

Persons Crime Unit – PCU	Assignment Criteria
Reckless Endangering	- If an arrest has been made, will be assigned only if follow-up is needed. - If suspect is at large and injuries resulted, case will be assigned to a Detective - If suspect is at large and is unknown, case will be assigned if unusual circumstances are present or if a review of the case indicates solvability (witnesses, physical evidence, etc.) - If suspect is at large and is known, case will be assigned to a Detective.
Robbery	- If an arrest has been made, will be assigned only if follow-up is needed. - If suspect is at large and injuries resulted, case will be assigned to a Detective. - If suspect is at large and is unknown, case will be assigned if unusual circumstances are present or if a review of the case indicates solvability (witnesses, physical evidence, etc.) - If suspect is at large and is known, case will be assigned to a Detective. - Communication between VCU and PCU will occur before any cases currently investigated by PCU are assigned to VCU; see VCU - Violent Pattern Felonies assignment criteria.
Death Investigation – deemed “suspicious”	- Death Investigations (non-OD-related) that are deemed suspicious (i.e., based on witness statements, physical evidence, unusual circumstances, etc.) will be assigned to a Detective. - Non-suspicious deaths involving the elderly, people with medical issues, or obvious suicides will not be assigned.
Missing Persons - Adult	- Will be assigned to a Detective on a case-by-case basis, if unusual circumstances exist (i.e., missing person is endangered, presence of unusual behavior, etc.) - Will be assigned to VCU if it is determined that the subject is a victim of foul play.
Battery	- Cases will only be assigned to a Detective if unusual circumstances are present or victim is elderly or vulnerable adult. - Cases may be returned/assigned to Patrol/Neighborhood Police/Resource Officer for additional follow-up.
Substantial/Aggravated Battery	- If an arrest has been made, will be assigned only if follow-up is needed. - If suspect is at large and is unknown, case will be assigned if unusual circumstances are present or if a

	review of the case indicates solvability (witnesses, physical evidence, etc.) If suspect is at large and is known, case may be assigned to Detective/Patrol or NPO/NRO for additional follow-up.
Hate Crimes	May be assigned to a Detective on a case-by-case basis depending on circumstances (felony offense, potential for continuing behavior, etc.)
Threats Complaints (to include Extortion related to threats)	Assigned only if unusual circumstances are present (victim is a public figure, continuing/repeated threats, etc.) Case may be assigned to Patrol/NPO/NRO for additional follow-up.
Weapons Offenses	May be assigned to a Detective if a firearm or other weapon was displayed or other unusual circumstances are present.
Felon in Possession	Will be assigned to a Detective.
Crimes Against Officers (Battery to PO, Significant Exposure, Felony Resist)	Will be assigned to a Detective.
False Imprisonment (Non-Domestic)	- If an arrest has been made, will be assigned only if follow-up is needed. - If suspect is at large and is unknown, case will be assigned to a Detective. - If suspect is at large and is known, case will be assigned if unusual circumstances are present (injuries, continuing threat, etc.).

Sensitive Crimes East/West	Assignment Criteria
Sexual Assaults (1st, 2nd, and 3rd Degrees)	- All cases will be assigned to a Detective, even if an arrest has been made, as most will require additional follow-up. - Cases involving sexual activity between juveniles will be assigned based on District Attorney's (DA's) office prosecution criteria.
Sexual Assault (4th Degree)	- Cases will only be assigned to a Detective if unusual circumstances are present. - May be returned to Patrol/NPO for follow-up.
Lewd & Lascivious	May be assigned to a Detective on a case-by-case basis, depending upon good suspect information, solvability factors, or serial/pattern cases.
Stalking	May be assigned to a Detective on a case-by-case basis depending on circumstances (depth/quality of Patrol investigation, potential for continuing threat/behavior, etc.).
Domestic Cases	- Felony domestic cases involving intimate partners will be assigned. - Cases may be assigned to a Detective if unusual or extreme circumstances exist (i.e. repeat offenders). - Intimate partner domestic cases may be assigned to a Detective or NPO to re-contact the victim as a resource. - At-large suspect information will be provided to Patrol/Community Policing Team (CPT)/NPO personnel.
Court Order Violations (Harassment/DV)	May be assigned to a Detective on a case-by-case

	basis depending on circumstances (depth/quality of Patrol investigation, potential for continuing threat/behavior, etc.).
False Imprisonment (Domestic)	• If an arrest has been made, will be assigned only if follow-up is needed. • If suspect is at large and is unknown, case will be assigned to a Detective. • If suspect is at large and is known, case will be assigned if unusual circumstances are present (injuries, continuing threat, etc.).

Financial Crimes Unit	Assignment Criteria
Financial Crimes (Credit Card/Internet Fraud, Worthless Checks, Counterfeit Currency, Embezzlement, Forgery)	• Will be assigned to a Detective on a case-by-case basis. Factors to consider: • Total loss suffered by the victim • Solvability factors • Available investigative resources • Locality of involved parties • Charging probability • Other positive outcomes • Prevention of continuing criminal activity • Possibility of reimbursement of lost funds • Special victim considerations • Others as appropriate
Extortion (Financial)	• Will be assigned to a Detective on a case-by-case basis, depending upon the circumstances.

Other Case Types	Assignment Criteria
Officer Involved Critical Incident	• See Officer Involved Critical Incident SOP.
Court Order Violations	• May be assigned to a Detective on a case-by-case basis depending on circumstances (depth/quality of Patrol investigation, potential for continuing threat/behavior, etc.).
Annoying Phone Calls	• Not assigned to a Detective unless unusual or extreme circumstances are present.

When the case assignment guidelines provide discretion or when considering deviating from them, the following factors should be considered:

- Solvability Factors:
 - A reliable victim or witness is available
 - A suspect has been named or identified
 - A workable description of the suspect has been recorded via video or from an eyewitness statement
 - Significant information about the suspect(s) location has been recorded (local community member or longtime customer, etc.)
 - The suspect has been previously seen at the scene of the crime
 - A suspect vehicle that contains a partial plate or unique physical characteristics is reported to law enforcement
 - Stolen property that is traceable to the owner (cell phone, serial numbers, photos of the property, etc.)
 - A significant or distinctive modus operandi (M.O.)
 - Useable physical evidence (deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), fingerprints, bullet casings, etc.)

- Seriousness or type of crime and value of loss
- Additional factors that could lead to a case assignment in the event the case lacks few or any solvability factors:
 - Cases that have a major impact on the community.
 - Cases that have a linked M.O. that occurred outside the jurisdiction.
 - Management decision to have the case investigated.

Case Load Management

Detective Lieutenants and/or supervisors shall check in with detectives assigned to them on a quarterly basis at a minimum. The purpose of the check in is to discuss individual cases currently assigned to the Detective and for the Detective Lieutenant and Detective to work cooperatively to achieve optimal performance.

- The following should be discussed during the check-in:
 - Caseload and individual case management
 - Review cases that have been open for six months or longer
 - Evaluate work product that is incomplete or needs improvement
 - Address any performance issues
 - Identify training needs or training opportunities
 - Mentor inexperienced Detectives and provide feedback
 - Give positive feedback and acknowledge good work

Management of All Active Homicide Cases

- Oversight of all homicide cases will stay with the district or section originally assigned. Depending on the circumstances, the case may be reassigned to a different section or detective. Oversight of the case will still be the responsibility of the section originally assigned.

Management of Evidence Associated with Assigned Cases

- Upon assignment, all evidence associated with the case will receive a final disposition date based on the statute of limitations associated with the crime being investigated. Property Clerks will make an entry into LERMS of the disposition date.
- Property Clerks will continue to send property disposition notifications to the Detective assigned to the case and the District Detective Lieutenant at three-month intervals.
- If after three months a case is still active, the assigned Detective should make a notification to the property room indicating the case is still open.
- A list of evidence with cases that have disposition dates beyond the statute of limitations will be sent to the Detective Lieutenant of the Detective assigned the case for final disposition.
- Detective Lieutenants will be expected to meet with the assigned Detective and determine an appropriate disposition for evidence that remains in the property room beyond the statute of limitations.

Management of Cases Previously Assigned to a Retiring or Promoted Detective

Detective/Investigative Lieutenants will complete the following upon notification of retirement or promotion of investigative personnel under their command:

- Ensure all open cases currently assigned to investigative personnel are either closed or reassigned
- Make certain all open homicide cases are organized and prepared in a standardized manner that ensures a smooth transition to the newly assigned detective
- Visibly inspect all desks, lockers, squads, and storage areas to ensure they contain no unresolved cases, evidence, or property

- Detectives who announce their retirement intentions or are promoted out of the rank of Detective should immediately meet with their Detective Lieutenant and discuss a timetable for the disposition of evidence associated with their cases
- Detective Lieutenants should contact the Property Room Supervisor and have a list created which identifies all property associated with the retiring Detective's cases
- The retiring Detective will immediately need to begin the process of determining a disposition for all property and continue the process until all property has a disposition
- Detective Lieutenants should schedule monthly/weekly meetings with the Detective to assess the progress of case dispositions assigned to the retiring Detective
- The goal should be for all property to receive a disposition a month prior to retirement. At the one month prior to retirement mark, Detective Lieutenants should meet with the retiring Detective and discuss any cases that remain open due to an appeal, case status, or pending court action
- Evidence stored in the property room past the retirement date of the case Detective should have a future review date in place for the eventual disposition of evidence associated with the case
- Detectives who give a two-week notice should be removed from active case work and spend the remaining two weeks doing property dispositions
- All electronic case files under the control of the retiring Detective should be purged or moved to records

Original SOP: 06/08/2017

(Combination of Management of Cases Assigned by Follow-Up SOP and New SOP Guidelines for Case Assignment and Management: 06/08/2017)

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