

Field Notetaking and Report Writing

BLET: 08

TITLE: FIELD NOTETAKING AND REPORT WRITING

Lesson Purpose: To present to the student the purpose, value and components of field notes and law enforcement reports in conjunction with the proper methods used in preparing these documents.

Training Objectives: At the end of this block of instruction, the student will be able to achieve the following objectives in accordance with the information received during the instructional period.

1. List in writing three purposes of the officer's field notes.
2. List six one-word questions that should be answered when developing field notes.
3. Given a hypothetical representation of a field situation, record field note information correctly in accordance with learned criteria.
4. List and describe in writing four uses of law enforcement reports.
5. Given a hypothetical representation of a field situation, write a complete and accurate report using departmental approved forms or the DCI-600 series forms: Incident/Investigation Report, Continuation Page and Supplementary Investigation Report.

Hours: Twelve (12)

Instructional Method: Conference/Practical Exercises

Materials Required: Lesson Plan
Pen/Pencil/Paper

Training Aids: VCR and Monitor
Overhead Projector
Transparencies

Field Notetaking and Report Writing

Flip Chart or Chalkboard

Handouts

Videos:

1. Field Notetaking & Reports, MTI (1975)
2. Report Writing, MTI Film & Video (1987)
3. Report Writing Videotape Series, LERC and Dean Berry Associates, Inc. (1990)
4. Surviving Report Writing, Medina Productions (1997)

References:

Aretakis, Patricia. Field Notetaking and Report Writing.@ Basic Law Enforcement Training Manual. Salemburg, NC: NC Justice Academy, 1983.

Blintliff, Russell L. How to Write Effective Law Enforcement Reports. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991.

California Basic Training Guide (5.2, 5.3, 5.4). Sacramento, CA: The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, n.d.

Dienstein, William. How to Write a Narrative Investigation Report. Springfield, IL: C. C. Thomas, 1964.

Frazer, Barbara and Davis, Joseph N. Painless Police Report Writing. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Regents/Prentice Hall, 1993.

Instructor's Guide to Report Writing. Northbrook, IL: Motorola Teleprograms, Inc., 1974.

Miller, Dennis S. How to Write a Police Report. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers, Inc., 1993.

Nelson, John G. Preliminary Investigation and Police Reporting. Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1970.

Patterson, Frank M. and Smith, Patrick D. A Manual of Police Report Writing. Springfield, IL: C. C. Thomas, 1968.

Ross, Alec and Plant, David. Writing Police Reports. Northbrook, IL: Motorola Teleprograms, Inc., 1977.

Attached Documents: Sample (blank forms) of Incident/Investigation Report, DCI-600F; Continuation Page, DCI-602F; Supplementary Investigation, DCI-603F.

DCI Format Instructions for Incident/Investigation Report.

DCI Format Instructions for Supplementary Investigation Report.

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Sample (completed) copy of Robbery and Aggravated Assault Report, DCI-600F (Incident/Investigation Report); DCI-603F (Supplementary Investigation).

Sample (completed) copy of Breaking, Entering and Larceny Report, DCI-600F (Incident/Investigation Report); DCI-602F (Continuation Page); and DCI-603F (Supplementary Investigation).

Handout - ASpelling List for Law Enforcement Personnel.@

Handout - ALaw Enforcement Vocabulary.@

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TITLE: FIELD NOTETAKING AND REPORT WRITING - INSTRUCTOR NOTES

1. This block of instruction should be taught utilizing the handouts and conducting the practical exercises when indicated in the instructor's lesson plan. (The practical exercises follow these instructional notes.) It is recommended that the students spend as much time as possible doing the exercises. Students should also write several reports based on scenarios provided and developed by the instructor. All of the student writing should be thoroughly edited by the instructor.
2. The standard DCI 600 form(s) that include the Incident/Investigation Report and the Supplementary Investigation should be covered in detail along with this lesson plan. Two sample reports are attached to provide some guidelines. Have students review (edit) the following sample cases for accuracy and completeness: "Robbery" and "BE&L."
3. There are several videotapes that are recommended to be shown during this block of instruction. The instructor should preview each and use them when it most appropriately assists the students=progress with the material.
4. The instructor must have ample copies of blank DCI forms to be used in this block of instruction. Forms may be obtained from DCI or copy attached blank forms.
5. The following information pertains to Practical Exercise #10 (Video: Report Writing Series by LERC Dean Berry; allow approximately **three** hours for this exercise).
 - a. Show video clip #1 - "The Write Stuff." Discuss.
 - b. Show video clip #2 - "The Call"
 - (1) Have students take "field notes" during video.
 - (2) After showing of video, have students fill out Incident/Investigation Form DCI-600-F. **Stop at narrative section; see h. below; tape #8.**
 - (3) Review and answer questions.
 - c. **(Optional)** Show video clip #3 - "Powerful Little Words." Discuss.
 - d. **(Optional)** Show video clip #4 - "Action Words." Discuss.
 - e. Show video clip #5 - "Factual Statements." Discuss.
 - f. Show video clip #6 - "Everyday Language." Discuss.
 - g. Show video clip #7 - "Organization of Thoughts." Discuss.
 - h. Show video clip #8 - "Structure of Ideas." Discuss

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- (1) Allow students to complete narrative in Incident/Investigation Form DCI-600-F. Reference b. #2 above.
 - (2) Review and discuss.
- i. Have students complete "Supplemental Report" DCI-603-F with additional information. **"Step-son Jeff Hall dies in hospital."**

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I. Introduction

A. Opening Statement¹

NOTE: Begin presentation with opening slide, AField Notetaking and Report Writing.®

People who are not directly involved with the law enforcement profession often view the role of the officer as a series of dangerous and glamorous tasks. The media usually focuses on those brief instances where the officer is required to engage in gun battles, high speed chases, and other incidents which are considered "front page" material. Attention must also be given to the officer's vital responsibility in documenting these events.

B. Training Objectives

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to reveal ATraining Objectives,® then continue to click until each is covered.

C. Reasons

In spite of the numerous changes within the law enforcement profession, one of the basic functions which a uniformed officer performs more than any other is writing reports. As the first officer on the scene, the uniformed officer conducts the preliminary investigation, and depending on departmental and/or jurisdictional policy, may be responsible for the entire investigation. The officer may conduct an outstanding investigation, but unless that officer can explain his actions and describe the particulars of the event in clear, accurate, and legible writing, no one will ever be aware of how good his investigation was.

II. Body

NOTE: Show video Field Notetaking and Reports (11 minutes).

A. Field Notes²

1. Definition - Field notes are brief notations concerning specific events which the officer encounters in the performance of his duties. The collection of an individual officer's notes can serve as a general index to the officer's memory.

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2. Purpose of field notes

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to reveal APurpose of Field Notes.@

a. Report writing

- (1) Field notes provide the basis for reports. The officer's field notes provide a skeletal frame of the significant factors related to an event which can later be developed into a complete report.
- (2) The field notes can document the parties contacted with regards to a specific event and record the parties' involvement with the incident. Thus, the field notes can prevent duplication of further fact finding efforts by identifying individuals who have already been contacted as well as pointing out individuals who may make significant contributions to the investigation.
- (3) An officer's field notes provide greater accuracy in documenting time, events, and statements than the officer's memory.

b. References

- (1) Field notes serve as a handy reference for further investigation. Information contained in field notes can be used as an initial starting point for further investigative efforts.
- (2) Field notes can be compared to other subsequent investigative notes for inconsistent patterns of statements and/or behavior of principal parties involved.
- (3) Sketches included in the field notes can be used at a later time to reconstruct the crime scene, thereby presenting the investigator with a graphic illustration that compliments his written description of the scene.

NOTE: Inform students sketches will be taught in BLET ACriminal Investigations@ block. However, instructor should briefly mention and describe a rough crime scene sketch.

c. Evidence

- (1) Notes are a permanent record and may be used as evidence.

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- (2) Notes may be used to refresh your memory when testifying.
- (3) Accurate and complete field notes can be a valuable aid in ensuring the admissibility of evidence related to a crime scene.

3. Uses of officers= field notes

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to reveal AUses of Officers= Field Notes.@

- a. Basis for final report
- b. Record specific events

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to continue.

- c. Identify individuals
- d. Identify locations and times
- e. Chronology of investigation
- f. Reveal inconsistencies
- g. Reveal leads

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to continue.

- h. Refresh memories
- i. Used as evidence
- j. Ensure admissibility of evidence

4. The Field Notebook - A law enforcement officer should consider the notebook to be an essential part of his equipment. While some officers have a better memory than others, prompt recording of all information relative to an incident or crime assists the officer in recalling pertinent details at a future date.

- a. Types of notebooks: The notebook should be one that can easily be carried in the officer's hip pocket. A notebook with dimensions of approximately 42" by 6" is recommended.

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- (1) Looseleaf notebook - This type of notebook has the advantage of page removal for easy case-by case filing. Its main disadvantage is that persons can imply notebook alterations took place prior to courtroom testimony.
 - (2) Bound notebook - In a bound notebook the pages cannot be altered easily; however, under the scrutiny of cross-examination or discovery, notes pertinent to other investigations contained in the notebook may be compromised.
- b. Identify your notebook:
- (1) Put your name, rank, and departmental identification number on the inside of your notebook.
 - (2) Indicate the date you started using the notebook as well as the date you finished using it. File the notebooks chronologically, preferably in your locker at the station.
 - (3) On the cover sheets of the notebook include pertinent information that can be utilized in the field.
 - (a) Telephone numbers of specialized police units, e.g., vice, juvenile, detectives, battered spouses shelters, etc.
 - (b) Telephone numbers of other law enforcement and community service agencies.
 - (c) Any other important reference information.
 - (d) At the start of your tour of duty, enter the date, your assignment, name of your partner and supervisor and weather conditions.
- c. Information contained in field notes

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to reveal "Information Contained in Field Notes."

- (1) I.D. investigating officers
- (2) Dates and times

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to continue.

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- (3) Locations
- (4) Sketches
- (5) Names or identification
- (6) Results of interviews

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to continue.

- (7) Investigative leads
- (8) Weather conditions
- (9) Telephone numbers
- (10) Addresses

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to continue.

- (11) Descriptions of people, places, things

d. Writing instruments

- (1) Pencil - The use of a pencil creates the tendency of writing notes in a hurried manner resulting in entries that are often poorly written and/or illegible. Pencilled notes have a tendency to become smudged due to the friction between pages of the notebook.
- (2) Pen - The use of a pen induces more care in taking notes and as a result, they tend to be more legible. In addition, pen notes are more permanent.
- (3) Whether a pen or pencil is used, notes should be handwritten or handprinted. The use of a typewriter for notes should be avoided to preclude the criticism that the original handwritten notes were edited to exclude or add certain information or that the notes were typed by someone other than the actual investigator.

5. Proper methods of notetaking

- a. Entries in the notebook - Field notes should contain information pertinent only to the event under examination. All notes of a personal nature, extraneous information, or personal opinions should be omitted. Field notes should be accurate, complete, and

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legible. They should be understandable to another investigator should he take over the investigation.

- (1) All available data as to the who, what, where, when, why and how should be noted.

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to reveal AProper Methods of Notetaking.@

NOTE: Refer students to handout, "Guidelines for Determining Who, What, Where, When, How, With What, Why, With Whom, How Much."

- (a) Who? Include information about the victim, suspect, perpetrator, witnesses, and the owner and/or proprietor. Indicate full names with accurate spelling.
- (b) What? Include the types of premises attacked, property taken, lost, or found, vehicles used, evidence found, etc.
- (c) Where? Include the location of the crime scene, victims, witnesses, suspects, property involved and evidence.
- (d) When? This question pertains to the date and time the offense was committed, the time property was found, and the time the suspect was apprehended.
- (e) How? This question pertains to the general manner in which the crime was committed. The suspect's operational characteristics are described in relation to the commission of the crime.
- (f) With What? Include the type of tool(s) or weapon(s) used in the crime and how did the criminal travel to and from the scene.
- (g) Why? Include specific and accurate information describing possible motives involved in the commission of the crime.
- (h) With Whom? This question pertains to the criminal associates and activities.

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- (i) How Much? This question pertains to the amount of money taken and damage caused by the perpetrator.
- (2) Use a consistent format in entering information in your field notebook.
 - (a) A record of the time and date of arrival should be made.
 - (b) Weather conditions should be noted upon arrival.
 - (c) The officer should note and record his/her observations and the condition of the scene upon his arrival.
- b. In the event of errors in notes, the errors should not be erased. A line should be drawn through the error(s) and initialed by the officer.
- c. Abbreviations, if used, should be those commonly used in correspondence.
- d. The use of shorthand notes should be avoided because of the variety of shorthand systems in use, the errors which may occur in transcribing, and the fact that many people have no knowledge of shorthand techniques.

NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #1. (1) Show video Report Writing (21 minutes); (2) Have students take notes while viewing first part of video; (3) Stop video immediately after suspects arrest and have students write a narrative report; (4) After they complete their narrative report, finish showing the video; (5) Allow approximately 50 minutes for this practical exercise.

- 6. Taking initial statements
 - a. Definition: A statement is a literal reproduction of actual words spoken by an individual.
 - b. Have the person tell the story in his/her own way.
 - c. Have him or her tell it to you again slowly and write it down in your notes verbatim.
 - d. If officers ask follow-up questions to elicit necessary information, write questions in notes as well.

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- e. Read it back to the person using their own language as much as possible, omitting any side issues irrelevant to the investigation.
- f. Use his/her own words including cursing or street talk.

7. Photographs

NOTE: Briefly explain crime scene photography. Also mention that photography will be taught in the BLET ACriminal Investigation@ block.

Photographs are admissible evidence if they fairly and accurately represent what you saw at the scene. Thus photographs should be taken before the scene is altered (e.g., outlining a body with chalk). Fellow officers should not be included in the photographs unless absolutely necessary. The photographs must be labeled for identification and carefully maintained by the investigator until needed in court. As a minimum the label should include the following:

- a. Photographer's name
- b. Case number
- c. Type case

B. Report Writing

- 1. Purposes and uses of reports - Police reports serve a variety of purposes:

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to reveal "Uses of Law Enforcement Reports."

- a. Permanent written record
- b. Contain statistical information

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to continue.

- c. Intelligence information
- d. Assist with prosecution

- 2. Elements of effective reporting - Basically a good report is one that enables any person to reconstruct the events exactly as they occurred. The report contains all of the essential facts so that a party who was not at the scene

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can understand exactly what happened. Reports must be factual, clear, concise, complete, and objective.

a. Factual - The report must be factual because the acts of commission or omission which comprise the elements of the crime must be proven in fact.

- (1) Knowledge of the case - Report the facts about an offense as you have observed them or as they have been reported to you by a witness to the incident.
- (2) Objectivity - The officer must strive to produce an objective report which is restricted to the facts of the incident.
- (3) Opinions - Enter personal opinions, conclusions, or preconceived ideas in your report with the greatest of caution. Opinions should be labeled clearly as an opinion.
- (4) Accuracy - Collect your information and facts carefully as well as thoroughly. It is the reporting officer's responsibility to check the report for accuracy. Inaccurate mathematical calculations as well as misspellings could result in your testimony being diminished. If spelling or arithmetic is a problem, use a dictionary or a calculator.

b. Clear - Make your report easy to understand by using simple language and logical order.

- (1) Use concrete words; avoid using words and phrases that are vague, ambiguous, or have double meanings.
- (2) The report narrative should follow the time sequence of events. The facts of the incident are reported as they occurred in time.

c. Concise - Make your reports brief and avoid wordiness.

- (1) In your efforts to be brief do not sacrifice accuracy, completeness, or clarity.
- (2) Use ordinary words and short sentences. Long, involved sentences often complicate your report and may cause the reader to misinterpret your meaning.
- (3) Include only pertinent facts in your report. Avoid irrelevant, superfluous, or ambiguous information.

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- d. Complete - Remember that the smallest detail of a crime may turn out to be the essential factor that results in the ultimate determination of guilt or innocence. Remembering to ask who, what, where, when, how, and why will help you to avoid overlooking any of the elements of completeness.
 - e. You will need to write in-depth narrative reports with complete sentences and paragraphs, so the report will be clear about what has occurred and so no details are left out that may aid in identifying the perpetrator.
 - f. It is possible, especially with some accident reports, to get by with short sentences and descriptive phrases. As with any report, you are trying to save time and space. In incident reports, short sentences, descriptive phrases, and fragments may work as long as it is clear as to what actually occurred. Most of the time you are going to write longer sentences in order to give the reader a clear understanding.
 - g. Objective - Avoid trying to prove something you want to be true. All facts, favorable and unfavorable to the disposition of your case, must be included in your report. Your ultimate objective is determining truth.
3. Necessity of good reports
- a. Every phase of law enforcement work involves activities or incidents that need a written account.
 - b. What you write describes for the judge, jury, prosecution and defense what happened.
 - c. Each person who reads the report has to be able to visualize what happened.
4. Dictate narrative reports
- a. If you are dictating a report about an event you have investigated, you will need to be as thorough and complete as you would be in a written report.
 - b. Dictation should be in complete sentences and paragraphs so that it will be clearly stated what you have learned.
 - c. It is not the responsibility of the person transcribing the dictation to fill in unfinished sentences or information.

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- d. Without complete sentences the report may not look like the case you investigated and reported.
5. Writing reports consisting primarily of check-off boxes or fill-in blanks (e.g., dispatch card, accident report, etc.)
 - a. Check-off boxes or fill-in blanks are helpful in most cases.
 - b. These boxes, blanks, or types of reports work well with standardized items and descriptions.
 - c. They speed up time in completing reports and in some incidents aid the officer in making certain the officer taking the report gets the information that is necessary. It benefits everyone and should be utilized whenever possible.

NOTE: Show video Surviving Report Writing (15 minutes). Refer to Surviving Report Writing Instructor Manual for additional information.

C. Filling Out Report Forms

NOTE: Click on forward arrow to reveal, [A Filling Out Report Forms](#).

NOTE: Review NC Division of Criminal Information Format Instructions for "Incident/Investigation Report."

NOTE: Review DCI-600F (Incident/Investigation Report) and DCI-602F (Continuation Page) forms.

NOTE: Review NC Division of Criminal Information Format Instructions for [ASupplementary Investigation Report](#).

NOTE: Review sample cases using DCI-600F, DCI-602F, and DCI-603F.

NOTE: Review [handout, A Spelling List for Law Enforcement Personnel](#).

NOTE: Review [handout, A Law Enforcement Vocabulary](#).

1. Always use black ink since blue or any other color cannot be microfilmed.
2. Every report should be printed (not written) or typed.
3. Every block should be filled in. Do not leave any blank unless instructed or designated for someone else's use. Use N/A (not applicable), UNK (unknown) or draw line through when appropriate.

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4. Every report must be legible.
5. Report crimes in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes and departmental policy.
6. Prepare written reports to record injuries to prisoners.
7. Names - All proper names, including businesses must be spelled out in full. (No initials, aliases, or nicknames unless specifically asked for.) Write last name, first, then middle or maiden if married female unless otherwise instructed by departmental policy.
8. Addresses - The apartment, suite, or room number is an integral part of the address. Do not give only Post Office Box #'s. Military personnel must be identified by unit number and the name of a ship, station, or military installation. Indicate each address by street, number and where no street number is available, use the distance and direction from a known geographical location. Give the permanent address and if the person is temporarily staying in the city, list it in the narrative if there is insufficient room in the block provided to list both.
9. Telephone - Give both residence and business if possible. Include the extension when applicable.
10. Dates - Dates will be written in six digit form--month, day, year. Example: 010198 (Jan. 1, 1998).
11. Time - Military time must be used. Example:

1:00 a.m. - 0100	1:00 p.m. - 1300
2:00 a.m. - 0200	2:00 p.m. - 1400
3:00 a.m. - 0300	3:00 p.m. - 1500
4:00 a.m. - 0400	4:00 p.m. - 1600
5:00 a.m. - 0500	5:00 p.m. - 1700
6:00 a.m. - 0600	6:00 p.m. - 1800
7:00 a.m. - 0700	7:00 p.m. - 1900
8:00 a.m. - 0800	8:00 p.m. - 2000
9:00 a.m. - 0900	9:00 p.m. - 2100
10:00 a.m. - 1000	10:00 p.m. - 2200
11:00 a.m. - 1100	11:00 p.m. - 2300
12:00 a.m. - 1200	12:00 p.m. - 2400
12. Witnesses - Obtain complete information. This is necessary to locate a witness for interview or court. If space is inadequate, list in narrative, i.e., age, sex, race, phone number, and address.

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13. Sex, Race, Age - These should be obtained as accurately as possible through observation, interview, or by questioning. The following standard abbreviations should be used:

Sex: Male--M Female--F

Race (RAC):

Race must be indicated by one of the following one-character alphabetic codes:

<u>Race</u>	<u>Code</u>
American Indian or Alaskan Native - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Americas and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.	I
Asian or Pacific Islander - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Sub-continent or the Pacific Islands.	A
Black - A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.	B
White - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa or the Middle East.	W
Unknown	U

Age: This is the age of the person on his last birthday. A spread of years may be used when age must be estimated (25-30). Give date of birth when it can be obtained.

14. Value - Estimate and record the total value of all property stolen. Property value should always be reported if possible.

Note: Value is essential in determining whether certain crimes are a misdemeanor or a felony.

15. Signatures - The investigating officer should sign the report and give his or her number.

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16. Descriptions

a. Persons

For the purpose of report writing, it is essential that the description of any person who is the subject of police attention be detailed. Emergency descriptions identifying a fleeing suspect obtained for immediate broadcast should be supplemented by further questioning of complainant or witnesses before the officer submits his report. In addition to NAME, NICKNAME, AND ADDRESS, the description should include:

SEX: M or F

RACE: (Refer to 12 above)

AGE: A span of ages may be used if the exact age is unknown, such as 25-30. Use the exact date of birth if known.

HEIGHT: Obtain by comparison with yourself or others present. Sample Entry: 5'11"

WEIGHT: Obtain by comparison with yourself or others present. Sample Entry: 185 lbs.

BUILD: Use explanatory terms, such as slim, husky, etc.

HAIR: Include here the type, such as straight, curly, kinky, etc. Include the condition of baldness, such as frontal, total, crown. Note the type of haircut and possibility of a wig. Give color.

<u>Hair Color (HAI)</u>	<u>Code</u>
Black	BLK
Blond or Strawberry	BLN
Brown	BRO
Gray	GRY
Red or Auburn	RED
Sandy	SDY
White	WHI
Unknown	XXX

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EYES: Describe shape and color. Note suspects use of glasses.

<u>Color</u>		<u>Code</u>
Black		BLK
Blue		BLU
Brown	BRO	
Gray		GRY
Green		GRN
Hazel		HAZ
Maroon	MAR	
Multi-colored		MUL
Pink		PNK
Unknown		XXX

SKIN TONE: Use terms such as light, brown., olive, ruddy, etc.

<u>Skin Tone</u>		<u>Code</u>
Albino	ALB	
Black		BLK
Dark		DRK
Dark Brown		DBR
Fair		FAR
Light		LGT
Light Brown		LBR
Medium	MED	
Medium Brown	MBR	
Olive		OLV
Ruddy	RUD	
Sallow	SAL	
Yellow	YEL	

BEARD AND MUSTACHE: State if clean shaven. If not, describe beard and/or mustache.

POSTURE: Describe as normal, erect, slouchy, round-shouldered, etc.

VOICE OR SPEECH: Describe as uneducated, educated, high, low, loud, shrill, deep lisp, foreign accent, etc.

WORDS SPOKEN: List any expression or words used by the suspect.

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EARS: Ask the victim or witness to describe the shape and size, the ear lobes, whether the ears are set close to the head or stand out from the head, or anything unusual about the ears.

NOSE: Describe the nose as Roman, turned up, pug, broad, large, small, long, etc.

MOUTH: Describe the mouth as large, small, wide, thick lips, hair lip, etc.

CHIN: Describe the chin as to shape; square, narrow, broad, long, pointed, deep or shallow, cleft, etc.

TEETH: Outstanding characteristics about the teeth such as short, long, sharp, broken, gold, braced, stained, uneven, missing etc. Speech impediments are sometimes caused by such things as false teeth, tooth caps, gumpads or tooth putty, etc.

MOVEMENTS: What were the suspect's movements - slow, fast, nervous, calm, direct, hesitant, confused, etc? Also list any peculiar mannerism such as scratching, rubbing the forehead or eyes, feet shuffling, use of hands to emphasize commands or speech, etc.

ODOR: What odors were coming from the suspect's breath or body, such as alcohol, burnt marijuana, after shave, etc.

REMARKS: List any additional information that will assist in identifying the suspect.

Use narrative section for description information if not enough room is provided in the blocks.

- b. **CLOTHING:** Head to foot: describe hat, shirt, tie, coat, trousers, socks and shoes.

Clothing - Generally

Give name of article to be described. Always indicate size, color, maker's label, laundry or cleaner's marks, and kinds of materials.

Men's Suits: State whether double or single breasted, number of buttons, two or three piece (coat, vest, and pants; or coat and two pair of pants), evening, street, sport, kind of lining, plain or pleated trousers, etc.

Men's Coats: State whether overcoat, short jacket, raincoat, single or double-breasted. Describe type of trimming, lining and if belted.

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Men's Miscellaneous Clothing: Include shorts, shirts, socks, sweaters, ties, shoes, scarves, pajamas, dressing gowns, etc.

Women's Dresses: State whether evening, street, house or suit. Describe kind of trimming (such as fur, lace, metallic, contrasting or self trim). State whether one or two piece style.

Women's Coats: State whether full length or short, princess, box or swag type. Whether evening, sport or dress. Describe; color and kind of lining, trimming, buttons, etc. Give complete and full description of fur coats, kinds of fur, lining, etc.

Women's Miscellaneous Clothing: Include lingerie, underwear, pajamas, stockings, shoes, socks, sweaters, scarves, shawls, waists, skirts, kimonos, house coats, play-suits, slacks, leotards, etc.

Children's and Infant's Clothing: Follow general description as given for men's and women's clothing.

c. Jewelry

After giving the name of the article to be described, include the following:

Color(s) and kind(s) of metal(s)

Number, kind, color, and size of stones

Type of mounting--Filigree, plain, engraved, etc.

Type of setting--Basket, Tiffany, sunken, box etc.

Inscriptions

Examples follow:

Rings: State kind of metal; State kind, size and number of stones (diamond, ruby, etc.). Describe whether plain, engraved or filigree. Describe any jewelers marks, inscriptions or initials.

Watches: State make (Elgin, Hamilton, Waltham, etc.) movement, case, and jewel numbers size of watch, type of case (open face or hunting), number of adjustments. Describe whether plain, engraved or set with stones. If it has a chain or wrist band attached, give color, material, length, etc.

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Necklaces: State length, number of strands, matched or graduated stones or beads, strung on thread or chain (give kind and color). Describe clasp.

Pendants: State size and shape, whether strung on chain, ribbon, cord or thread; give color and type; describe clasp.

Broaches and bar pins: State size and shape and whether plain, engraved or filigree. State if pin has safety clasp attached.

Stickpins: State size, shape, and kind of stones; state whether safety clasp attached.

Bracelets: State width; describe whether link filigree, solid, flexible or half-clasp type; describe whether plain or engraved stone set; state if safety chain attached and describe type of clasp.

Earrings: State style and length; describe whether screw, clasp, or pierce type; describe stones, color, etc.

Emblems, Charms, Lodge Pins, etc.: State size and shape; state name of lodge, fraternity or club (Elks, Eagles, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Chi, nurses or military service pins, American Legion, etc.)

Buckles and Other Miscellaneous Articles of Jewelry: State size, color, shape, stones, etc.

If any of the above are matched sets (ring, pin, necklace, bracelets, etc.) so state. State whether costume, antique, or modern type jewelry.

CAUTION: When officers are personally describing items of recovered jewelry in property reports, indicate colors rather than materials. Example: "Broach, yellow colored metal, red and white stones." NOT "Gold pin with rubies and diamonds."

d. Household articles

Give name of the article being described.

Examples follow:

Rugs: State size, color or combination of colors; describe whether plain or design, whether domestic or oriental; give type (Axminster, Wilton, Broadloom, etc.); give maker's name when known; describe whether fringed or bordered; describe all marks, such as stains, tears, mends, cleaner's marks, etc.

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Bedding: Include sheets, pillow cases, blankets, spreads, quilts, comforters, mattress covers, etc. State what article is, then give a complete description of size, color, material, laundry marks, and monograms.

Dishes and Glassware: State whether complete sets, giving pattern and number of pieces (both china and glass); describe whether porcelain, pottery, cut glass, blown glass or ordinary china or glass. Give maker's label or mark, monograms, or other marks.

Silverware: Include flatware (table silver, knives, forks, spoons, etc.) as well as hollow ware (coffee, tea, and chocolate sets, and complete silver services.) Give maker's label and kind of silver (sterling, plated, or pewter); give owner's initials or other inscriptions; describe type of pattern and number of pieces to set.

Clocks: State kind, color, size, movement, and case numbers; describe whether china, porcelain, bronze, iron, wood, plastic, glass, leather, etc. State whether mantel, kitchen, boudoir, grandfather, traveling, etc.; give maker's label; state whether 8-day type, and if chime clock, kind of chimes.

Furniture: State what article is and give complete description, stating kind of wood or metal, color, kind of material covering and trimming. In cases of matched sets, such as bedroom, dining or living room furniture, give number of pieces in set and state number of pieces stolen.

Pianos, Radios, and Television Sets: Pianos--give maker's label and serial number and state if upright, baby grand, spinet, etc. Radios and television sets--state maker's label and serial number; describe whether console, table model, midget, transceiver, portable; describe whether low or high boy type; size of screen, etc. Give kind of wood or metal; show color and kind of trim, if any.

Lamps: State whether floor, bridge, table, or boudoir; give kind of wood or metal; give number of globes; state whether reflector type; if it has a base light, describe kind, color, and size of shade. In case of table and boudoir lamps, state whether statuary, glass, china, pottery, or metal base.

Miscellaneous: Include ornaments, pictures, statuettes, bric-a-brac. Describe in detail, stating particularly any labels, serial numbers or other identifying marks.

- e. Other property

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Give name of article to be described.

Firearms: State maker's name, caliber or gauge, give color of metal and serial numbers; describe handles or stocks; list any marks, inscriptions, or initials. State whether revolver, automatic, pistol, pumpgun, rifle or shotgun.

Tires: State size and maker's name; give color and tread; list serial numbers, if available, describe whether mounted on rim with wheel and tube or alone.

Drugs: State amount, kind, manufacturer, container size, valuation, and any other descriptions.

Office Machines: State maker's name, model and serial numbers, and color; describe any other marks, labels, or inscriptions; give dimensions of machines.

Cameras and Equipment: State maker's name, model number, serial number, lens numbers and names, shutter numbers, type of camera, and describe kind of material of camera, projectors, and cases.

Electrical Equipment: Include toasters, irons, curling irons, bulb sockets, generators, motors, waffle irons, percolators, portable water heaters, bottle warmers, refrigerators, etc. State maker's name, kind of material, color, size, model and serial numbers, wattage, voltage, and any initials or other marks or inscriptions.

Building Equipment: Includes lathe, wire, plaster, bricks, stucco, glass, marble, lumber, roofing material, paint, nails, cement, etc., give size, color, maker's name, number or amount of articles lost or stolen, as well as any lot or serial numbers available.

Optical Goods: Include spectacles and cases, opera glasses, binoculars, telescopes and cases, etc. State maker's name, color, material of article, and case, serial and model numbers; give initials or other marks of identification.

Books: State name of book, author, publisher's name, color and kind of material of binding; give approximate size of book as well as any writer's inscriptions such as owner's name, book-plates, or author's signature.

Doctor's and Dentist's Instruments: Include stethoscopes, blood-testing apparatus, type-needle outfits, etc. State maker's name,

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size, serial numbers, model numbers, material, color and marks of identification; also give case size and color.

Musical Instruments: Include banjos, saxophones, guitars, trombones, trumpets, violins, clarinets, piccolos, flutes, etc. State maker's name, color of material, numbers or other marks of identification. Also describe carrying cases.

Knives: (other than table) Include hunting, pocket, butcher, etc. State color, kind of material of handles, numbers, maker's name, inscriptions, etc.; describe carrying case, if any.

Pens and Pencils: Include fountain pens, pen and pencil desk sets, etc. Give maker's name, color, size, whether men's or women's, numbers, initials, or other marks of identification.

Smoking Material: Include pipes, tobacco, cigarettes, cigars, lighters, cases, etc. State color and size of pipes, amount of tobacco, number of cigars or cigarettes, maker's name, etc.

Sewing Machines: State maker's name and brand name, serial number of both machine and motor; describe whether wood or metal, table, desk, or portable type, give any other marks or inscriptions.

Sporting Goods: Include fishing poles, tackle, lines, tents, awnings, skis, snow shoes, toboggans, etc. State maker's name, numbers, color, kind of material, initials, or other inscriptions.

Groceries: State kind of article, brand label, number of article and any other general description available.

Toilet Articles and Cosmetics: Include brushes, combs, mirrors, perfume bottles, manicure sets, powder, cold cream, shampoo, toothpaste, lipstick, hair oil, soap, etc. State size, color, material, maker's or brand name, initials, numbers or other marks of identification.

Tools: Include carpenter, plumbing, electrician, machinist, mechanic, etc. State kind of tool, serial number, maker or brand name, initials or other marks of identification, number of tools lost or stolen and size.

Animals, Birds and Fish: Include dogs, cats, horses, pigs, cows, poultry, birds, goldfish, etc. State kind of animal, bird, or fish; give size, color, name, age, licenses, and other description available.

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Automobile Supplies and Equipment (other than tires): Include spotlights, wheels, tubes, carburetor, spark plugs, bumpers, etc; state size, color, maker's name, serial numbers, number of articles, and other marks of identification.

Leather Goods: Include trunks, suitcases, purses, briefcases, sample cases, belts, suspenders, Gladstone and Boston Bags, saddles, billfolds, etc. State size, color, maker's name, serial numbers, initials or other marks of identification.

Bicycles: State name, size, color, kind of seat, brake, tires, baskets, horns, lights, serial number, license number, initials and other identifying marks.

Remember! On all articles listed, always show the maker's or brand name, serial and model numbers, size and color, and value. Show any initials or other identifying marks. If the owner is not sure of the value, give an estimate, e.g., "Approximately \$40" or "Estimated value \$40"--do not leave blank. Use the fair market value. The total value of stolen or recovered property must agree with the value of each listed item. Check addition or multiplication.

f. Vehicles

All reports requiring a vehicle description shall be recorded in accordance with the Automobile Description Code given below.

Color: List colors from top to bottom or front to back--"black over grey." If the vehicle is in three colors, list in descending order--"white over green over black." Suggested colors and their designations are listed as follows:

<u>Color</u>	<u>Code</u>
Aluminum	SIL
Beige	BGE
Black	BLK
Blue	BLU
Blue, Dark	DBL
Blue, Light	LBL
Bronze	BRZ
Brown	BRO
Burgundy	MAR
Chrome	COM
Cooper	CPR
Cream	CRM
Gold	GLD

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Gray		GRY
Green		GRN
Green, Dark		DGR
Green, Light		LGR
Ivory		CRM
Lavender		LAV
Maroon	MAR	
*Multicolored	MUL/COL	
Orange	ONG	
Pink		PNK
Purple	PLE	
Red		RED
Silver		SIL
Stainless Steel	COM	
Tan		TAN
Turquoise		TRO
White		WHI
Yellow	YEL	

Where the vehicle is one color, enter the appropriate three-character code describing that color, for example, VCO RED.

When describing a vehicle of two colors, the order of listing should be from top to bottom or front to rear, for example, VCO WHI/BLU.

*When describing a vehicle of more than two colors, enter the multicolored code and list the actual colors in the Miscellaneous Field, for example, VCO MUL/COL and MIS VCO/RED/WHI/BLU, MIS VCO/RAINBOW COLORS, or MIS VCO/SEASHORE SCENE.

Year: Year of Manufacture. For this purpose a vehicle is described by using the last two digits--"79" Oldsmobile.

Make: Record the primary factory name of the vehicle.

Body Style: When giving the body style, state whether the vehicle is a two-door or four-door and use convertible or station wagon when appropriate. Manufacturer's trade names should also be given as these often indicate distinctive shapes and silhouettes.

License: Record the state of registration of the license number, the year of issue, and the license plate number.

Ident/Motor Indicate the identification number of the

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Number: vehicle. In the event the automobile has no identification number, include the motor number.

g. Evidence

Give the disposition of each piece of evidence listed in the report.

h. Weather - Always give the weather at the time the incident occurred.

Clear--CL

Fair--F

Overcast--O

Rain--R

Snow--Sn

Sleet--Sl

Hail--H

Ice--I

D. Writing Mechanics

1. To understand basic writing skills, it is important to go back to what you learned in grammar school. You must utilize the basic standards of clear written communication.

2. The grammar you need to know:

a. Noun - names something (tangible or intangible) or someone

(1) Person or title of his job (George, girl, sergeant)

(2) Place (Alaska, home)

(3) Thing (baton, weapon, handcuffs)

(4) Quality (strength, courage)

(5) Feeling (happiness)

b. Pronoun - substitutes for a noun (e.g., he, them, they)

c. Verb

(1) A verb expresses an act, occurrence, or mode of being (shoots, runs, attacks)

(2) A word that connects the noun or pronoun subject to words that describe that noun or pronoun (is, was)

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NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #2, "Use of Verbs."

3. A sentence has to have a noun or pronoun subject and a verb. All other words add additional information about the noun or pronoun subject and the verb.
4. Sentence pattern
 - a. Start each sentence with the subject (noun or pronoun) and follow with the verb.
 - b. Avoid introductory phrases or phrases that separate the subject from the verb.

Example: After telling him what he knew, the informant left.
Correct: The informant left after telling him what he knew.
 - c. The second sentence lets the reader know instantly and precisely what the sentence is about.
 - d. REMEMBER! Start each sentence with the subject and follow with the verb and add anything else necessary for clarity.

NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #3, "Sentence Patterns."

5. Problems with pronouns
 - a. Fundamental rule - pronouns always agree with the nouns for which they substitute.
 - b. Second fundamental rule - pronoun refers to the immediate preceding noun.

NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #4, "Pronoun Usage."

6. Use of first person
 - a. Always use the first person (not "this officer" or "this investigator").
 - b. "This officer" or "this investigator" makes writing unnatural - just write it the way you would say it.

NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #5, "First Person."

7. Specificity and verb quality

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a. Stay away from ambiguous words such as indicated, contacted, notified, advised, etc.

b. Be immediate and direct.

Example: Examination revealed a deficiency in his job-oriented aptitude. Correct: He failed the test.

c. Do not hint or suggest what happened, tell it exactly.

WRONG: I contacted the complainant.

RIGHT: I telephoned the complainant.
I wrote the complainant a letter.

WRONG: I apprehended the suspect.

RIGHT: I placed the suspect under arrest and handcuffed him.

d. Use the most specific word that you can substantiate.

WRONG: The crowd moved.

RIGHT: The crowd shifted.
The crowd ran.
The crowd scattered.
The crowd turned.
The crowd dissolved.

NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #6, "Clarity and Directness."

8. Use of active voice

a. All police reports should be written in active voice (subject doing the acting, not subject being acted upon.)

WRONG: The bridge railing was struck by the car.

RIGHT: The car struck the bridge railing.

b. Active voice is more immediate, direct, and usually uses fewer words.

NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #7, "Active Voice."

9. Punctuation - Every sentence must be punctuated at the end or it is not a sentence. (e.g., ?, !, .).

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10. Distinguishing between fact and opinion

- a. Factual information gives the reader more details.

WRONG: The car was moving at an unsafe rate of speed.

RIGHT: The car was moving at 70 mph.

WRONG: He looked as though he had a gun in his pocket.

RIGHT: I saw the outline of a gun in his pocket.

- b. When you give a professional opinion, say so.

EXAMPLE: It is my opinion based on the physical evidence reported above that driver #1 was in fact driving the vehicle which struck and killed the pedestrian.

- c. Use the most specific word that you can substantiate. For example, if you do not know that a ring is gold, list it as yellow metal or gold colored metal.

- d. Review of writing mechanics

- (1) Full sentences - noun or pronoun subject and verb
- (2) Punctuation ending every sentence
- (3) Sentence pattern - noun or pronoun subject at start of every sentence followed by verb
- (4) Use active voice
- (5) Use specific words for specific details
- (6) Clear verb use
- (7) Keep pronouns straight
- (8) Exactness of expression
- (9) Use of first person

E. Narrative

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The narrative section of the report tells the story of what happened to whom and why.

1. The narrative does not have to be interesting or to have style; it merely needs to be understood and complete.
2. Tell what happened in chronological order.
3. Write it the way you would say it using the same words (omitting slang or confusing abbreviations).
4. Summarize in writing the statements of witnesses and complainants.
 - a. Summarizing statements will decrease time spent filling out reports.
 - b. This will allow more time to spend on investigating any leads that you may have.
 - c. A general summarization will get the point across as to what has occurred without being so wordy, but any specific statement that is important to the report must be written verbatim.

The following is an example of a paragraph written in the first person:

At approximately 1500 hours on 18 July 89 I received a burglar alarm call at 100 E. Trade St., Smith's Pawn Shop. Upon arrival, I observed the front window of the pawn shop smashed out. After a thorough search of the building, the officers on the scene determined that the suspect(s) did not gain entry into the building.

5. Put person's actual statements in quotations.

NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #8, "Rewriting Narrative" (One).

NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #9, "Rewriting Narrative" (Two).

- F. Continuation Page (DCI-602F)

The "Continuation Page" should be completed when additional narrative is necessary for the completion of the investigation report or supplementary report.

NOTE: See attachment, ADCI-602F (Continuation Page).@

- G. Supplementary Investigation Report (DCI-603F)

NOTE: See attachment, ADCI-603F (Supplementary Investigation).@

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The Supplementary Investigation report should be completed after the original investigation report has been filed. The supplemental report is used to indicate additional investigative information to the original case.

NOTE: See attachment, ADCI Format Instructions for Supplementary Investigation Report.®

H. Rules of Privacy and Security to Control Access to Departmental Records

1. Persons are entitled to a certain amount of privacy whether they are the complainant or the accused.
2. By maintaining the amount of privacy that is recommended within legal guidelines you are more likely to maintain your integrity.
3. Persons are more likely to provide information when they feel their privacy will be protected.
4. Also, by maintaining privacy of the person accused until guilt or innocence has been determined, you prevent ruining the reputation of someone who may have been falsely accused.
5. All departmental records should be secured and controlled.
6. If reports are not controlled, you will risk losing investigations that you are working on.
7. The information could leak out to persons that are under investigation and this may permit suspects to confront witnesses and cause them to change their stories.
8. It may also help suspects to destroy evidence before you can legally obtain it.
9. Students should also be aware of G.S. 132-1.4. With certain limited exceptions, this section limits disclosure of criminal intelligence information and information regarding criminal investigations conducted by public law enforcement agencies. Generally, such information is not public record and is not subject to disclosure. There are several exceptions to this general rule, most of which concern information arising out of arrests by law enforcement agencies.

NOTE: Conduct Practical Exercise #10. Show LERC video, Report Writing Videotape Series. Have students write an incident and supplemental report after viewing the video. (See Instructor Notes for details)

III. Conclusion

- A. Summary - Cover objectives with class.

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NOTE: Click on forward arrow then on [click here](#) to review all training objectives.

- B. Questions from Class
- C. Closing Statement

NOTE: Click on far left arrow to return to opening slide.

Report writing is an essential tool to the accomplishment of the police mission. Every law enforcement officer should be familiar with the proper notetaking techniques and methods used in preparing reports based on these field notes. Law enforcement professionalism cannot exist without report writing professionalism as well.

It does not matter how effective your investigation is, if it is not reported completely, accurately, and understandably. A poorly written report is no better than a poor investigation. **You are judged by what you write.**

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NOTES

1. Patricia Aretakis, *Field Notetaking and Report Writing*, Basic Law Enforcement Training Manual (Salemberg, NC: NC Justice Academy, 1983).

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.