General Order

Houston Police Department

ISSUE DATE:	NO.
February 22, 2022	800-13

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 800-13, dated July 2,2019

SUBJECT: COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF POLICE SERVICE INFORMATION

POLICY

The Houston Police Department shall collect, store, and disseminate police service information as outlined in this General Order or as approved by the Chief of Police. The department tracks many of the services it provides for various purposes including, but not limited to, proper manpower and resource allocations, personnel management, and accountability to the public.

Police service information is the term used to describe the combination of crime event data and computer aided dispatch (CAD) event data. This can include new information as streams come in about in-progress and recent events. The collection and dissemination of police service information is a vital function of the Houston Police Department. These processes impact not only internal operations, but also how the department interacts with external groups such as other law enforcement and government agencies, private citizens, business groups, elected officials, and the media.

This General Order applies to all employees.

DEFINITIONS

CAD Event. A recorded occurrence that requires a response or action, or for informational purposes to document an event. A computer aided dispatch (CAD) event includes citizen requested service, directed service, and officer created service. Each CAD event generates an Event Display Record (a.k.a. call slip), which contains a unique event number (a.k.a. incident number) for tracking purposes.

CAD Event Reports. Reports maintained on the department's Intranet Portal and that serve as the Police Department's official source of information for all CAD events and response times. These reports and the information contained in the reports are generated and maintained in accordance with the standard operating procedures of HPD's Emergency Communications Division, Crime Analysis & Command Center Division, Office of Technology Services and Office of Planning & Data Governance.

CAD Event Warehouse. The electronic warehouse that houses all recorded HPD CAD event data. This warehouse is contained within the Crime Analysis Server (CAS) and is maintained by HPD's Office of Technology Services. The data maintained in this warehouse are used to generate the CAD event reports published on the department's Intranet Portal.

COPLINK. A software application accessible via the department's Intranet Portal that provides single search access to internal HPD databases including, but not limited to, HPD incident reports, calls for service, and gang information; parolee and probationer information; municipal court data; Harris County warrants; and Harris County jail population. *COPLINK* is used by officers to generate tactical leads and support investigations with link analysis and geographical tools.

Crime Event Data. Data and information about an occurrence that are collected and entered directly into the Police Department's records management system under a unique incident number and recorded in an incident report.

Crime Event Warehouse. The electronic warehouse containing all HPD *crime event data*. This warehouse is contained within the Crime Analysis Server and is maintained by HPD's Office of Technology Services. The information maintained in this warehouse is used to conduct crime analysis, generate various internal departmental reports, and upload information to *COPLINK*, *Operational Support System* (OSS), and the City of Houston public website.

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) program used by law enforcement agencies for collecting and reporting crime event data. National criminal offense data types are divided by two major groups: Group A offenses and Group B offenses.

Operational Crime Summary Report. A monthly statistical report that is compiled and generated by the department's Office of Planning & Data Governance after all the incident reports for the previous month have been through the staff review process. This report is considered the Police Department's official crime statistics report. Data from this report are available on the department's public website and are subsequently published in the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System* (NIBRS).

Operational Support System. A near real-time reporting system that is primarily utilized by Houston Police Department Command Staff, supervisory staff, and crime analysts.

1 COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF CRIME EVENT INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

An incident report of a crime event can be generated in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, an officer responding to a *CAD event* or a citizen making a report by using a self-reporting online system, by reporting as a walk-in at a police facility, or by telephoning the Teleserve Unit or Patrol Desk Unit. Regardless of the method by which it is generated, each incident report shall be loaded directly into the department's records management system. The *crime event data* is maintained in the *crime event warehouse* by the department's Office of Technology Services.

Once all of the incident reports for a particular month have been through the Staff Review Unit process, the Records Division shall upload the monthly statistics to the DPS website, so that the *Operational Crime Summary Report* can be compiled by the HPD Office of Planning & Data Governance (Planning). The information contained in the Operational Crime Summary Report shall be used for press conferences and briefings by the Chief of Police or the Mayor. Information in the *Operational Crime Summary Report* shall be used for public release of official *National Incident-Based Reporting System* (NIBRS) crime statistics for the department, including responses to open records requests for HPD's official NIBRS information. Planning is responsible for uploading public crime statistics data (redacted to the 100 block) to the crime statistics section of the department's website. Planning is also responsible for producing the Annual Crime Report, crime analysis and other internal operations require additional real-time information.

For that reason, crime event data are exported from the department's records management system into the Crime Analysis Server (CAS) every 4 hours and once daily into *COPLINK*. The crime event data stored in the CAS are used throughout the department to conduct crime analysis, generate internal reports, and update the *Operational Support System*. *COPLINK* is used to generate tactical leads and support investigations with link analysis and geographical data. It is a software application that is accessible via the department's Intranet Portal.

Employees may access crime event data to assist them in conducting civic meetings whenever the department's *Operational Crime Summary Report* for that particular month is not yet available. However,

because this information may or may not have been through the staff review process, when utilizing data from sources other than the *Operational Crime Summary Report*, employees shall inform all attendees the statistics being discussed are not the official Police Department NIBRS crime statistics.

Planning is responsible for the review and release of crime event data to universities, research institutions, open records requests, or other law enforcement or government agencies requesting HPD crime event statistics. Requests for HPD crime event information not specifically addressed in this General Order shall be directed to Planning for an open records request. Only the Chief of Police may approve the release of HPD crime event information to another City of Houston department or elected official.

2 COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF CAD EVENT INFORMATION

Information in the *CAD event warehouse* is used to generate a variety of *CAD event reports* documenting event types/codes, event sources, and response times. CAD event reports are located on the department's Intranet Portal. CAD event reports are considered the department's official records with regard to CAD event information and the information from these reports shall be used for press conferences and briefings by the Chief of Police or the Mayor. Information in the CAD event reports shall be used for any public release of official CAD event information for the department, including responses to open records requests. Open records requests for CAD event information not found in the CAD event reports shall be handled in accordance with General Order 800-10, **Police Records**. Public requests for CAD event data shall be coordinated through Planning.

Some of the information from the CAD event warehouse is downloaded to the Operational Support System dashboard for quick access by employees needing the information for civic meetings. Since information on the OSS dashboard may include categories that are grouped differently than the information listed in the CAD event reports on the department's Intranet Portal, employees shall inform all attendees the statistics being discussed are not the official HPD CAD event statistics.

Only the Office of the Chief of Police may release HPD CAD event information to another City of Houston department or elected official. The Crime Analysis & Command Center Division may release CAD event information to other law enforcement or government agencies. Planning will assist the Office of the Chief of Police in any request and may release certain CAD event information as it relates to studies, surveys, or other formal reports that may be a part of a memorandum of understanding signed by the Chief of Police or approved as part of the Open Data project. These projects often times require collaboration over an extended period of time to ensure datasets are presented within context. Other requests for CAD event information not addressed in this General Order shall be directed to Planning for an open records request.

Troy Finner
Chief of Police