

# **COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**Subject: INFORMANTS AND SOURCES**

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## **I. Purpose**

To establish policies and procedures for the use of informants and other individuals in a confidential or operative capacity.

## **II. Statement of Policy**

It shall be the policy of the Covington Police Department to cultivate the use of individuals wishing to cooperate in the furtherance of law enforcement functions. It is also the policy of this department to carefully control the nature, manner, and means by which these individuals are utilized.

## **III. Definitions**

- A. Confidential Informant (C.I.) – An individual who, through close or criminal association with others involved in criminal conduct, provides information or assistance of investigative significance, usually, but not necessarily, in an ongoing capacity and usually motivated by expectation of personal gain of some nature.
- B. Confidential Source (C.S.) – An individual who, through legal business or personal connections, provides information of investigative significance at the request of an investigating officer, usually motivated by friendship or civic concern.
- C. Concerned Citizen – A citizen, with no criminal connection to an investigative target who, usually on a one-time basis, cooperates with this department in an investigation. This individual is characterized as an ordinary citizen, usually with no criminal history or background and with firm ties to the community and motivated by a civic concern to assist law enforcement.

## **IV. Informants – Procedures**

It is the policy of this department to ensure the anonymity of informants wherever and whenever possible. The information gathered shall be limited to criminal conduct and to potential threats to the community. Informant development for a criminal investigation should utilize incident reports, victim/witness statements, physical evidence, etc.

- A. Whenever practical, contacts between department personnel and paid informants should be made by at least two (2) officers or by one (1) officer with a cover officer nearby.
- B. When only one officer is making contact with an informant without a cover officer, the officer contacting the informant should notify the Captain of Patrol, the Special Ops supervisor, or another officer of his meeting and approximately how long he will be.
- C. Officers should strive to understand the informant's role in criminal investigation in an effort to minimize possible embarrassment or liability to the department as a result of a misunderstanding.
- D. At the beginning of any officer/informant contact, a full and complete understanding between parties must be agreed upon, including:
  - 1. The amount and method of payment.
  - 2. Guidelines on the expenditure of advance or expense money.
  - 3. Procedures to be followed in the event the informant is arrested.
  - 4. What information can the informant provide?
  - 5. Why does the informant want to aid the police?
  - 6. Establish the informant's reliability.
- E. This department will have a no tolerance policy toward criminal activity in exchange for a continuing relationship with an informant.
- F. When recruiting informants, officers have a responsibility to relate the emotional and physical factors exhibited by the informant to the anticipated task.
- G. Officers may use probationers and/or parolees depending on the circumstances of the investigation. Officers should make contact with the probation or parole officers just so they are aware of the need.
- H. When meeting an informant, the officer should always select the place and time. Locations and times should vary to avoid developing a pattern.
- I. The officer should not permit an informant to take charge of a relationship, meeting or investigation. The officer must retain control.
- J. Juveniles should not be used as an informant without the consent from their parents and the approval of the Division Captain or his designee.
- K. A single officer should not contact female informants, unless the meeting is discussed with and approved by the Division Captain or his designee or the Special Ops Supervisor.

**V. Informant Files**

- A. All informants' files will be considered highly confidential and will be kept in a locked file by the Patrol Captain or his designee. Narcotics informant's files are also confidential and will be kept in a locked file. No information is to be released

from these files or concerning a confidential informant without the approval of the Patrol Captain or his designee. Out of date information will be removed, as necessary, but at least every five years.

- B. Each investigator will obtain the following information on each paid informant.
  - 1. Full name and assigned code name.
  - 2. Date of birth.
  - 3. Address.
  - 4. Sex.
  - 5. Race.
  - 6. Place of employment (if applicable).
  - 7. Telephone number.
  - 8. Name, address and telephone number of person(s) to contact in case of emergency.
  - 9. Criminal history.
  - 10. Payments made to informant.
  - 11. Information received.
  - 12. Informant's involvement in operations.
- C. Each officer/investigator will make a file displaying the informant's number on the outside and which contain all the information described in paragraph B above. The file will be secured in the informant file.
- D. Informant files will be locked and maintained separately from other investigative files. Access to general informant's files will be limited to the Patrol Captain or his designee. Access to narcotics informant's files will be limited to the Patrol Captain or his designee and to others assigned to the Narcotics Unit. The Chief of Police shall have the authority to review any of the informant files maintained by this department.

## **VI. Investigative Funds**

- A. When money is needed for the purpose of buying drugs and/or paying for drug information, it should be handled by the Patrol Captain or his designee.
- B. The department's PE/PI (Purchase Evidence/Purchase Information) account shall be maintained by the Patrol Captain or his designee and normally will not exceed \$500.00. Whenever the fund balance reaches \$150.00 or less, the Patrol Captain or his designee shall submit a memo to the Chief of Police requesting monies to replenish the account to a \$500.00 balance.
- C. In the event money is needed for a specific operation or information that exceeds \$500.00, a memo will be submitted by the Patrol Captain or his designee to the Chief of Police explaining the details of amount and circumstances.

- D. Whenever an investigator disburses funds for information, he must turn in a receipt signed by the informant using the informant's real name and the informant's assigned number and a statement of information received.
- E. Fees paid to informants should be predicated upon:
  - 1. Quality information.
    - a. Is the information good enough for a warrant?
    - b. Is the information current?
    - c. Can the information be verified?
  - 2. Quantity of information.
  - 3. Risk factors involved.
- F. In order to maintain the quality of information received, fees paid to informants should be paid on a "cash on delivery" basis, after the information has been received.
- G. The Chief of Police shall have the authority to conduct a quarterly audit of all records, accounts, and disbursements of funds paid to informants.
- H. The Patrol Captain or his designee will maintain a ledger to show the amount and date of each disbursement of funds to informants.

**VII. Use of Informants by Patrol Personnel**

The procedures described above shall apply to the use of informants by patrol personnel. Any information given by an informant to an officer shall be relayed by the officer to his supervisor and then to the Patrol Captain or his designee.

Patrol supervisors will not ordinarily be allowed to disburse money for informant information. An officer who wishes to pay an informant must receive approval from the Captain of Patrol or his designee.

***This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.***

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

*Stacey L. Cotton*  
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Chief of Police