



# Town of Lexington

## Police Department

**Subject:** Records Management and  
Dissemination

Reference: 1.2.5, 82.1.1, 82.1.2, 82.1.4, 82.1.7, 82.2.1, 82.2.2,  
82.2.3, 82.2.4, 82.3.1, 82.3.2, 82.3.4, 82.3.6

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**By Order of:** Mark J. Corr, Chief of Police

**Policy &  
Procedure**

# 82A

*The Municipal Police Institute, Inc. (MPI) is a private, nonprofit charitable affiliate of the Massachusetts Chief's of Police Association. MPI provides training and model policies and procedures for police agencies. This policy is an edited version of MPI policies on Records Management and Records Requests.*

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The Records function is important and critical for the effective delivery of law enforcement services to satisfy legal requirements and responsibilities. The Chief of Police or a designee, shall direct, coordinate, and control storage and dissemination of records. Only those persons authorized will have access to agency files, which include: [82.1.1 (a)(b)]

- Report control
- Records maintenance
- Records retrieval
- Dissemination of records
- Fingerprints
- Photographs

It is the Policy of the Lexington Police Department that:

1. Dissemination of Department records shall be strictly controlled according to the guidelines of CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information), Massachusetts General Law Chapter 66 §10, which relates to inspection and examination of Public Records and guidelines set forth in this policy.

2. A police report shall not be released without prior approval from the Chief of Police, Captain of Operations, or their designee. [82.1.1 (c)]

## PROCEDURES

- A. The primary goals of the Records Management are as follows:
  1. To furnish accurate and complete information when, where, and to whom required, in order to manage and operate the Department effectively.
  2. To control the creation of information so that only meaningful and required data is originated and retained.
  3. To process and control information as efficiently and effectively as possible.
  4. To provide records control in a cost efficient yet qualitative manner.
  5. To provide the records user with maximum service so that information can be quickly and easily obtained.
  6. To provide management with an accurate retrieval format, so that sound and timely decisions can be made.
  7. To provide external agencies and organizations with whatever information is legally obtainable.
  8. To process and retain only those records that have special value to the department or have a legal requirement to be maintained: **Records retention shall be in accordance with Mass General Laws and RS-14-81 revised June 2010, Records Retention Schedule for Police Departments.**
  9. To prepare, update, and disseminate all records in an accurate and timely manner.
- B. All calls for service will generate a journal note to be entered into the central computer system referred to as "CRIMETRACK PRO IV". Dispatchers or other support staff typically enters these notes as soon as they are received. The following are examples when a journal note will be entered into the system: [82.2.1 (a)] [82.2.2 (a-e)]
  1. Reports of crime.
  2. An investigation is initiated.
  3. Criminal and non-criminal related calls for service.

4. Incidents involving arrests or legal process.
- C. Data Entry [82.2.2 (a-e) [82.1.4]
1. It is essential that calls for service generate a complete and accurate journal note entry. Dispatchers and support staff must enter all pertinent information into the journal notes.
    - a. The log note "Action Code" which defines the nature of the call **must accurately reflect** what actually happened. How the call was dispatched may be different from the actual event. For example, an officer assigned to investigate "Lost Property" may discover that a "Larceny" has occurred. All staff are authorized to correct the action code.
    - b. The Commanding Officer will review all journal entries for accuracy. This should be done several times during a duty shift.
  2. The Chief of Police or designee, typically a Captain, is responsible for management of the following records:
    - a. Department Written Directive System.
    - b. Motor Vehicle Citations.
    - c. Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS).
    - d. Crimetrack review and updates.
    - e. Release of Police reports.
- D. Officer Reports [82.2.3, 82.2.1(a)]
1. A Log entry into the Crimetrack system will be made when dispatchers or officers receive information that meets the required criteria for recording. All applicable information relative to this incident shall be recorded in the proper fields within the Crimetrack system. A unique incident number is automatically generated for that call for service. Specific required information for the log entry and all reports should include: full name, address, telephone, date of birth and social security number for all victims, witnesses or person(s) involved. Every effort should be made to get the basic minimum information of a name and date of birth.
  2. In addition to the information being put into the log entry by the dispatcher or officer, the Crimetrack system will automatically time stamp each entry with the following information (times may also be manually entered):
    - a. Time incident was received (R).

- b. Time of officer being dispatched (D).
  - c. Time of officer arrival (A).
  - d. Time officer cleared the call (C).
3. It is important that the action code chosen for a specific incident accurately represents the category of the offense. These action codes will be referenced and used in the gathering of information for a monthly National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to the Massachusetts Department of Public Safety and the Federal Bureau Investigation, as well as for our own crime and traffic analysis purposes. The Captain of Operations is responsible for reporting these statistics. [82.1.4]
4. Listed below are the forms/reports most frequently used in the daily operations of the Department. Police officers will be responsible for completing these and any other forms or reports as required by the Department. The following may require a police report and an entry into the Crimetrack system where a unique case number will be generated, as well as a complete narrative: [82.2.1 (a)(b)(c)(d)]
- Incident Reports
  - Arrest Reports
  - Motor Vehicle Inventory
  - Traffic Crash Reports
  - Motor Vehicle Citations will not generate a log entry. (Exceptions will be when a citation is issued for a criminal summons or arrest in which an incident number will be generated in the log).
  - Massachusetts Traffic Stop Data Collection Form if a motor vehicle citation is not issued.

E. Report Review

1. In order to ensure that all reports filed by officers are complete and accurate in their content, it shall be the responsibility of the Commanding Officer to inspect log entries, review reports from officers assigned to them and, as needed, forward reports needing follow-up to the Detective Bureau or other appropriate agency. In this capacity, s/he will review all officer reports and dispatch reports for: [82.2.1 (e), 82.2.4]
  - a. Neatness, legibility, spelling, and grammar.
  - b. Content of report:
    - i. All required data is entered in its proper location.
    - ii. Consistency with regards to events being presented in a logical and non-conflicting manner.

- iii. Reflects compliance with established investigative procedures.
    - iv. All elements of the crime are included.
  2. A determination as to whether the incident has been classified properly in order to comply with local, state, and federal NIBRS procedures.
  3. When a report is complete it shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police or designee, typically the Captain of Operations who handles the review process.
    - a. When a printed report is not necessary, the Commanding Officer will record on the triplicate Report Review Form the case number of each report reviewed.
    - b. One copy of the Report Review Form will be forwarded to the Chief of Police, one to the Captain of Operations, and one to the Detective Bureau Commander.
    - c. The Chief of Police should also receive a copy of the cover sheet of any arrest or protective custody.

F. Administrative Report Review

1. The Captain of Operations shall review all reports submitted. Upon review of officer and dispatch reports, the Captain of Operations shall take the following action:
  - a. Initiate corrective action for any deficiencies by routing the report back to the officer through the Commanding Officer.
  - b. Maintain files on each officer's errors or omissions for the purpose of assisting individuals in improving their report writing skills through additional training.

G. Storage of Records

1. The responsibility for the filing and maintenance of the following Department records falls under the supervision and control of the Chief of Police, a designee or the Prosecutor. This shall be done in the following prescribed manner: **[82.1.1 (a)] [82.2.1 (c)] [1.2.5]**
  - d. All information regarding any person brought before the court by this Department for any offense, including motor vehicle violations, shall have his/her respective master name file updated to reflect the activity.
  - b. All information regarding any juvenile brought before the court by this Department for any offense, including non-criminal motor

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vehicle violations shall have his/her master name file updated to reflect the activity. These master name files and criminal histories or involvement will be distinguished from that of an adult by color-coded folders and computerized flagging.

- c. All reports and folders regarding pending adult court cases shall be filed and maintained in a locked area in the Central Records and assessable to the Department Prosecutor.
  - d. All reports and folders regarding pending juvenile court cases shall be separately filed and maintained in a locked file.
  - e. All adjudicated juvenile and adult court cases, and all other officer's reports of incidents, shall be filed according to the Master Name number and incident number.
  - f. Dispatchers and officers shall enter all necessary data in the master file of the Crimetrack system. This information, whenever possible, shall include; [82.3.1]
    - Full name
    - Address
    - Date of birth
    - Social security number
    - License number
    - Phone number
2. All Department traffic crash reports shall be submitted to the Traffic Bureau and filed by case number. All operators' crash reports shall be filed in the same manner.
  3. All arrest records, shall contain: [82.2.1 (b)]
    - a. The booking sheet,
    - b. Fingerprint cards, (when applicable)
    - c. Criminal history sheet,
    - d. Drivers history (for motor vehicle offenses), and
    - e. Photograph (when applicable)
  4. Arrest records shall be filed by Master Name number and incident number and maintained by the Department Clerk.
  5. Fingerprints and booking photographs shall be taken in all felony arrests, domestic violence arrests and drug related arrests. Incidents involving minor arrests shall include a photo; fingerprints will be at the discretion of the Commanding Officer. If this department has previously arrested a person and fingerprinted that individual, new prints will be at the discretion of the Commanding Officer. [1.2.5]

6. Motor vehicle citations should be reviewed by the Commanding Officer and then submitted to the Traffic Bureau. It will be the Traffic Bureau's responsibility to complete the Registry of Motor Vehicles Master Audit Sheet. These sheets shall be numbered in accordance with the citation book assigned to each officer and contain the required information for each citation issued. Upon completion of the Master Audit Sheet, the Chief of Police or his/her designee shall sign it.
    - a. Upon completion of a citation book, officers shall hand them in, as soon as practical with each "officer copy", to the Traffic Bureau for audit purposes.
    - b. A copy of the Master Audit Sheet will be sent to the Registry of Motor Vehicles Distribution Center.
    - c. Upon completion of the Master Audit Sheet, the citation book shall be returned to the officer for his/her records. Officers may discard them by shredding.
    - d. "Department" copies of the citations are maintained in the Traffic Bureau. Officers, upon receiving a new citation book, will sign the Citation Book Log located in the Traffic Office.
  7. All individual Department copies of motor vehicle citations shall be filed chronologically by Traffic Bureau staff. [82.3.4 (a)(b)(c)]
- H. Access, Segregation, Security of Records:
1. All operational reports shall be accessible via the Crimetrack system at all times in order to facilitate investigations and other matters of duty being performed by officers of this Department. [82.1.1 (b)]
  2. The Detective Bureau Commander shall be responsible for maintaining an index of stolen, found, recovered, and evidentiary property. Said index shall be contained in the Crimetrack system. Officers will be able to conduct a computer search for property and items entered into the system at anytime. [82.3.2 (c)]
  3. All Department records are maintained under the overall control of the Chief of Police, who may designate a Keeper of the Records from time to time. The records shall not be opened to any public view. No visitor, whether on official or unofficial business, shall be allowed to enter the Central Records for the purpose of perusing or reviewing any Department records, nor shall any officer or employee allow or condone this act, if observed. [82.1.1 (a)]

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4. Dissemination of Department records shall be strictly controlled according to the guidelines of CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) and Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66, Section 10, which relates to inspection and examination of public records and to the acceptable fees to be charged for photocopies of same. A copy of each of these documents shall be kept in a conspicuous place in Central Records and Traffic Bureau. All officers, clerks, and employees shall be expected to refer to these regulations if there is any question regarding dissemination of Department records. [82.1.1(b)] [82.1.7]
  5. Patrol Officers will not have access to print reports at any location not under the control of the Commanding Officer.
  6. In the interest of preserving the security of the Department's records, only authorized personnel shall have access to the Central Records office. Authorized personnel include the Chief of Police, Captains, Lieutenants, Sergeants, Prosecutor, and authorized clerical staff.
  7. Under no circumstances will original copies be removed from the Police Department, except under subpoena. [82.1.1 (b)]
  8. The Central Records shall remain locked when records personnel are not present. Persons with authorized access must re-secure the area upon leaving. [82.1.1 (a)]
- I. Department Records/Crimetrack
1. The Lexington Police Department currently utilizes the CRIMETRACK PRO IV computer system for records management. This system is outlined in Policy and Procedure **13A-General Management**.
  2. The Crimetrack system automatically assigns incident numbers to every new entry into the system for both incidents and the Master Name files. These numbers will be utilized as the permanent identification number for a particular incident and or individual. Reports shall be filed utilizing these numbers.
  3. The Crimetrack system will reflect all involvement histories for both adults and juveniles. Juveniles will be identified in red capital letters in the mastername screen. [82.3.6]
- J. Access to Department Crimetrack System
1. In an effort to ensure confidentiality of all police intelligence, all employees of the Department will use a password to access the Crimetrack system. The password will act as a marker for all computer inquiries. The Chief of Police or Captain of Administration shall maintain the quality control of the system. [82.1.9]

2. All access to criminal history records that are maintained in the Crimetrack system shall be subject to the same procedures as stored copies in the file system. Any release of computerized records shall be held to the conditions of M.G.L. c 6 § 172. [82.1.9]
3. Officers and selected civilian personnel will receive training in the use of the Department's Crimetrack system.
4. The Crimetrack system shall be utilized in completing field reports. The field reports may consist of, but are not limited to the following forms: [82.2.1(a)(b)(c)(d)]
  - Crash Report Forms
  - Citations
  - Criminal Complaint Information Checklist
  - M/V Inventory Forms

K. Procedures for Juvenile Records Management [82.1.2]

1. All juvenile arrest files, photographs, and fingerprint cards shall be marked in a manner to distinguish them from adult files (blue folders vs. plain color or green traffic folders). Access to arrest information concerning juveniles is limited to those personnel who have a legal right to this access.
2. No juvenile arrest information shall be disseminated without the approval and authorization of the Chief of Police, his designee, or the Prosecutor. The dissemination shall be compliant with this policy. [82.1.2]
3. Whenever a juvenile reaches the adult age of seventeen (17) years old, juvenile records will retain their classification while any **new** arrest will be processed as an adult arrest.
4. All reports of pending court cases involving juveniles shall be maintained by Prosecutor and/or Department Clerk. Access shall be limited to those officers who are part of the investigation. Upon disposition of the case, the folder shall be placed in the Central Records. Access to these records will be a on a need-to-know basis **ONLY**, for all personnel. Overall responsibility for the collection, retention, and dissemination of these records lies with the Chief of Police or his designee.
5. The Prosecutor shall be responsible for the expungement of any juvenile records ordered by the court. In addition to the record keeping and expungement responsibilities mentioned above, the Prosecutor shall be responsible for:

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- a. The coordination, preparation, and disposition of all court cases in which a juvenile is involved
- b. Consulting with arresting or complaining officers regarding disposition of juvenile matters and advising them of possible and potential diversionary programs available as alternatives to incarceration, advising officers of final disposition.
- c. Being familiar with juvenile diversionary programs offered through the court and other public and group organizations.
- d. Conferring with prosecuting District Attorneys regarding these alternatives.