

# Cobb County Police Department

## Policy 3.18

### RECORDS MANAGEMENT

<b>Effective Date:</b> October 1, 2019	<b>Issued By:</b> Chief C.T. Cox
<b>Rescinds:</b> Policy 3.18 (November 1, 2017)	<b>Page 1 of 4</b>
The words "he, his, him," which may appear in this policy, are used generically for clarity and ease of reading. These terms are not meant to imply gender and relate to all employees of the Department.	

The following records management guidelines serve as reference for the maintenance of records at the unit, precinct, and Department level.

#### I. CENTRAL RECORDS

Central Records is responsible for establishing and/or following records management guidelines for the processing, retrieval, dissemination, and storage of records within the Department. Central Records maintains the original reports consisting of, but not limited to, incident reports, traffic crash reports, citations, officer's dailies, and vehicle impound releases. Records may be stored in a computer-based Records Management System (RMS), or in paper format.

#### II. PRIVACY AND SECURITY OF RECORDS

##### A. Security and Access

1. All Department records will be maintained securely; electronic records should be in a password protected system. If, at any point, the security of Department records becomes compromised, the unit commander will be notified immediately.
2. Access to Department records will be limited to authorized personnel only.
  - a. Employees may access records in the performance of their duties, and shall only share records with persons not employed by the Department, or other criminal justice entities, in the performance of duty, and in conformance with policy, procedure, and law.
  - b. Some criminal justice entities outside the Department may have direct access to records (i.e. – the Cobb County Court System) and others may be granted access on a case-by-case basis. If there is any question as to the individual's authority to access records, the Records Custodian or his designee should be contacted.
  - c. Individuals not listed above may have access to Department records under the provisions of the Georgia Open Records Act. Only the

Records Custodian or his designee shall have the authority to grant access to these individuals.

**B. After Hours Accessibility**

Reports and other records are available to personnel on a continual basis via the Records Management System. Personnel who have trouble accessing the system should notify their supervision.

**C. Juvenile Records**

Records in which the victim or suspect/offender is 16 years old or younger, will be classified as juvenile records, and are generally marked “Juvenile” when printed.

1. Fingerprints, photographs, and other forms of identification for juveniles should not be collected, disseminated, or retained by Department personnel, except as evidence, or intelligence information gathered in accordance with MCS policy.
2. Juvenile records will be kept separate from adult records; physical records will be maintained in a locked room, electronic records will be in a password protected system. Access to all records pertaining to juveniles is restricted to authorized personnel only.
3. After an individual reaches adult age, any juvenile records for that person will remain in the juvenile file. Records regarding any activity as an adult will be maintained with all other adult records.
4. Expungement will be handled in accordance with Central Records standard operating procedures.

**III. REPORT SUBMISSION**

Accurate, timely, and complete reports are fundamental to this Department’s efficient and effective operation. Therefore, the following guidelines will be followed:

- A.** Reports should be typed in the appropriate module of the Department’s Records Management System (RMS). However, if no module exists for the type of report to be entered, or should the RMS be inoperable, reports may be typed or printed legibly in black ink on approved report forms.
- B.** Reports by uniform personnel will be completed and submitted to a supervisor by the end of the shift, unless prior approval has been granted. Generally, no more than a three- day extension should be permitted.
- C.** The supervisor will check each report for accuracy and completeness.

### **3.18 Records Management**

**Page 3 of 4**

- D.** After each report has been read and checked by the supervisor, he will enter his name in the proper section, indicating that the report has been approved.
  - 1. Reports completed electronically in the RMS, will be submitted to the main server electronically by the end of the shift.
  - 2. Reports that are not entered into the RMS will be forwarded to Central Records by the end of the shift.

#### **IV. REPORT ACCOUNTING SYSTEM**

- A.** On a daily basis, each field unit (e.g. – the precincts, STEP, DUI, Rangers, etc.) should complete a Daily Activity Report noting his activities for the day. The Daily Activity Report should include a listing of all calls answered, paperwork completed (with associated case numbers), and other events conducted.
- B.** Detective unit commanders are responsible for regularly reviewing all incident and supplemental reports submitted by the field. Traffic crash reports will be reviewed by the Hit and Run Unit. Reports that require further investigation, or contain pertinent information to a specific function of the Department, will be assigned to the appropriate unit for review/follow-up. Supervisors whose personnel are assigned cases for follow-up investigation will be responsible for monitoring the progress of those investigations while the case is active.

#### **V. DISTRIBUTION AND RELEASE OF RECORDS**

Central Records is the main repository for all reports completed by all agency components, except as authorized by policy.

##### **A. Distribution of Records**

- 1. Incident/supplemental reports are available to the court system.
- 2. All traffic crash reports that occur on public roadways are sent to the State of Georgia Accident Reporting Bureau. Traffic crash reports are also available to Cobb County DOT.
- 3. Central Records shall ensure citations and juvenile complaint forms are sent to the appropriate court.
- 4. Whenever a vehicle is impounded by an officer, the driver of the wrecker service removing the vehicle will be provided with a copy of the vehicle impound inventory form.
- 5. All other reports will be distributed on an as-needed basis in accordance with policy, procedure, and law.

**B. Release of Records**

1. The following reports may be released to all involved parties (suspects, victims, and witnesses) at the precinct level, free of charge:
  - Traffic crash reports
  - Vehicle impound releases (see Policy 5.19 “Vehicle Impounds”)
  - Initial incident reports that do not involve:
    - Juveniles
    - Stalking
    - Rape or sexual abuse
    - Domestic violence where no arrest was made
    - Health/mental health issues (e.g. – suicide, natural death, person injured, emotionally disturbed persons, etc.)
2. Certain records are available on-line via the Department’s website.
  - a. Traffic crash reports are available to all involved parties/witnesses.
  - b. The date/time, location, case number, and crime type of certain incidents are available to all visitors of the website.
3. Release of all other records should be referred to Central Records and handled in accordance with the Georgia Open Records Act.

**VI. RECORDS MAINTAINED OUTSIDE OF THE RECORDS SECTION**

Most reports generated by Department personnel are maintained by Central Records. However, some records, usually of either a confidential nature or containing such information which renders them more appropriately stored in a specific unit or section, are maintained outside of Central Records. Examples of other sections and units which maintain reports and records are, but are not limited to, Personnel, Training, Internal Affairs, MCS Organized Crime, and the Detective Units.

**VII. UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING (UCR) PROCEDURES**

Data for the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) will be retrieved from the RMS. UCR reports will be submitted to the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) on a monthly basis by Central Records.