10 THINGS

Law Enforcement Executives Can Do To Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcomes

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE
SINCE 1893

BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

Dear reader:

One homicide victim is one too many. Yet we also understand the challenging and quite complex nature of homicide investigations. Homicide, homicide investigations, clearance rates, and productive communication with the public are all critical concerns for law enforcement and communities nationwide. And despite recent across-the-board improvements in homicide clearance rates, we know that we can do better.

How are some agencies so successful in their homicide investigations? What are the ingredients for successful homicide investigations? What can law enforcement executives do to support homicide investigations, investigators, and the communities they serve?

To answer these questions, the U.S. Department of Justice, through the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), partnered with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR) to gather data, evidence, and best practices from several law enforcement agencies around the country in an effort to share their successes with you.

As a result, I am pleased to announce two similar, yet complementary, publications that represent BJA's ongoing commitment to reducing crime and violence through evidence-based and results-driven efforts. One publication details effective investigative practices; the other focuses on the administrative environment necessary to support successful homicide investigative outcomes. Together, they will assist law enforcement executives and homicide units in effectively managing homicide investigations.

The first publication, *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances,* provides insight into "what works" in homicide investigations and identifies effective approaches and key elements of practice for managing these investigations. The resulting "process map" is offered as a guide for increasing clearances in U.S. law enforcement homicide investigations.

The second publication, *10 Things Law Enforcement Executives Can Do to Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcomes,* looks beyond clearance rates to offer a starting point for executives to extend their support of homicide investigations, investigators, and their communities.

Each component highlighted in these publications—administration and investigation—is essential for effective policing. I encourage you to read both publications. They can be found at the BJA, IACP, and IIR web sites: www.bja.gov, www.theiacp.org, and www.iir.com.

I want to thank the IACP and IIR for their work in producing such practical and relevant publications. BJA, IIR, and IACP have a longstanding relationship and a shared interest in promoting promising practices in law enforcement. It is our sincere hope that every law enforcement agency in the nation can improve homicide investigations by adopting practices identified in these publications.

Sincerely,

Denise E. O'Donnell
Director

10 Things

Law Enforcement Executives Can Do To Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcomes

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

The International Association of Chiefs of Police is grateful to a number of individuals who lent their time, talents, and expertise to this project. Their efforts were instrumental in developing this report, discussion points, and the ten recommendations for law enforcement executives to positively impact homicide investigations. We thank:

- Michael Medaris, Senior Policy Advisor, and the leadership at U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance for their overwhelming support of this project, their guidance, and their commitment to improving the way investigations are understood and conducted.

- Our National Advisory Group on this project for its guidance and support. Advisory group members are listed in Appendix E.

- The many individuals and agencies who welcomed our request for and participated in our site visits, focus groups, and interviews conducted with investigators and police leadership across the country. Thank you for your candidness and thoughtfulness in helping us advance these timely issues. Agency participants for the focus groups and site visit agencies are listed in Appendix F.

- Each of the attendees at the open forum in San Diego for their thoughtful participation and openness to share the challenges and successes of their respective units and related matters.

- The Homicide Research Working Group for its research assistance.

- The many individuals who provided review and comment on this document throughout its development.

Executive Summary

Homicides are challenging events for communities and they are often complex from an investigative standpoint. Although the crime may be clear-cut, the multifaceted issues surrounding it (public perception of safety and police effectiveness, witness cooperation, media and political pressures, etc.) can be daunting to a police agency and, in particular, the executive. Careers are often made or broken by a chief's response to and management of homicides.

One of the standard benchmarks of police effectiveness is the homicide closure rate, which is a critically important figure that demands attention at the highest level of law enforcement leadership. However, focusing on the homicide closure rate alone can offer a limited perspective on public safety and police performance overall. In this report, executives are encouraged to consider additional activities and measures to supplement the closure rate in evaluating and improving performance in a homicide unit. Further, this shift should be made *with* community involvement to increase its understanding of how units and agencies function.

This report does not suggest that introducing additional measures of performance and safety will be accepted immediately nor that case closure rates are less deserving of attention; rather, the process of looking more holistically at homicide investigation outcomes must start now and develop in partnership with others—to improve perception, understanding, and overall effectiveness. This begins with the executive making improved homicide investigation outcomes (including closure rates) a priority and being willing to implement change. This report offers a starting point for executives and highlights 10 recommendations that will help executives support homicide investigations, investigators, and the communities they serve.

A critical step in this process is for an executive to connect his/her commanders, supervisors, and investigators with the tools and resources they need to be successful. While this report focuses on the administrative environment necessary to support successful homicide investigative outcomes, a companion guide—*Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, which was made possible with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and available through the Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR)—details effective investigative practices. Both components—administration and investigation—are essential for effectively impacting homicide investigation outcomes.

10 Recommendations for Executives:

1. Invest in your relationship with your homicide unit
2. Have a system in place for standardized and structured management of investigations
3. Mandate information sharing
4. Support investigations with appropriate resources
5. Assess your current response to victims/survivors
6. Build up/reinforce your partnerships
7. Build community cachet and give them options
8. Manage political and public expectations of homicide investigations
9. Know your numbers
10. Measure closure and beyond

10 Things Law Enforcement Executives Can Do To Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcomes

Introduction

Historically, case closure rates have been a significant indicator of success (or failure) for local law enforcement. With a current national average homicide closure rate of 64.8%[1], department rates nearing or above that level are seen as successful in their approach to homicide investigations. Without doubt, closure rates are important to the field and certainly can provide a broad-brush indication of performance.

However, it is also important to look beyond summary closure statistics to another critical issue: investigative policies and practices that dictate success and drive closure rates. Specifically, it is important for law enforcement leaders to take actions that reinforce best practices in major crime investigations. Given that homicide cases can be closed for a variety of reasons and in some cases even without an arrest (*see Appendix A for Uniform Crime Reporting Criterion*), the goal of this report is to focus on practices that ensure police effectiveness and community safety, which will ultimately impact case closure rates.

Homicides can be complex crimes with devastating consequences for communities and law enforcement agencies alike. There are many factors that influence homicide response (for more information, see Riedel, 2008), unique to each community, including:

- Rates of occurrence
- Solvability factors
- Investigative procedures
- Case closure policies
- Proactive efforts by law enforcement to prevent homicides (e.g., information sharing and strategic deployment of resources to interrupt retaliatory homicides, conducting lethality assessments to interrupt domestic homicides)

For these reasons, law enforcement executives should think about homicide response in their agency from a variety of perspectives, not just the number of cases closed. There are additional measures that can supplement the basic understanding provided by closure rates and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how well an agency is meeting the desired outcomes of a homicide investigation. There are several desired outcomes of a homicide investigation, including:

- Identification, apprehension, prosecution, and conviction of the perpetrator
- A sense of justice for the victim/survivor(s)
- A sense of contributing to public safety by the community

When executives can proactively demonstrate and communicate how their agency is working to meet several of the above desired investigative outcomes and use that information to supplement

---

[1] U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the United States 2011: Offenses Cleared, http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/clearances (August 2013).

their closure rate data, they can provide a much more accurate reflection of police effectiveness and community safety. This task includes educating communities about closure rates, particularly what factors lead to a case being closed.

Homicide rates and closures are typically the first order of concern for law enforcement, the media, and the public. It falls to the leadership of the organization to also develop and share the statistics, events, partnerships, protocol updates and revisions, and all other administrative activities that take place in the agency *before, during, and after* active investigations that contribute to closure rates and desired investigative outcomes. Pushing the information out and involving the community as much as possible can have a significant and positive impact on increased understanding of the agency's effectiveness. The goal is to have agency performance and effectiveness as well as community safety measured in a host of ways that *comprehensively* provide a more accurate picture.

Background

Recognizing that many law enforcement executives have identified homicide rates, response, investigation, and closure rates as critical concerns for their communities, IACP, in partnership with BJA, launched a project to explore these issues and make recommendations to law enforcement leaders. These recommendations are the result of an extensive review of existing literature and research; a series of focus group discussions with homicide experts, detectives, and chiefs; an open forum with various law enforcement leaders; and several site visits to various agencies to observe homicide detectives and supervisors across the country. The IACP recognizes that this issue is complex and multi-faceted; this guide will probably not answer every question or respond to every concern an executive may have. This guide

should, however, serve as a launching point for law enforcement leaders to consider the current practices in their agency and their relationship with their community. Law enforcement leaders are also encouraged to review and share the companion guide, *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, available from IIR (and developed in partnership with BJA), with homicide commanders and supervisors.

This guide is best viewed electronically to utilize all of the embedded links and bookmarks. Full web page links are provided below in the Recommended Resources section of this document. All links were active at the time of publication; please note that links may become unavailable over time. We have made all efforts to provide a title or description for further research and review.

Recommendations for Executives:

1	Invest in your relationship with your homicide unit
2	Have a system in place for standardized and structured management of investigations
3	Mandate information sharing
4	Support investigations with appropriate resources
5	Assess your current response to victims/survivors
6	Build up/reinforce your partnerships
7	Build community cachet and give them options
8	Manage political and public expectations of homicide investigations
9	Know your numbers
10	Measure closure and beyond

Invest in your relationship with your homicide unit

I spend time with [the homicide unit] during quiet times so the detectives are comfortable when the chief shows up at hot times. I want to see how things are normally, so when a homicide does occur, I can see the difference and understand the changes necessary for better management.

— Chief Les Wiser, Columbia Police Department, SC

Invest heavily in understanding your investigators— who they are, what their needs are, how they work, and how they can best succeed at their work. Make integrity and accountability paramount in the unit. Support them in the selection process to ensure the highest quality of investigators and supervisors serve in the unit, and ensure that those selected receive essential and complementary training to enhance their skills and have the necessary resources to complete their responsibilities.

ACTIONS: *With the homicide unit*, identify the skills and abilities that investigators should have to serve in the unit (interviewing skills, written and verbal communications, ability to prepare for and testify in a criminal court proceeding, etc.). In the selection process, give consideration to detectives with potential and supervisors with experience and the respect of their peers. Support investigators and supervisors with training to enhance their skills and abilities. Spend time with the unit to understand their routines, activities, and processes in order to better support them in the most appropriate ways. Get to know the unit before and between investigations (Management by Walking Around[2]) to build lines of communication and understanding of what you expect from them, and communicate regularly what they can expect from you. Set high expectations and have mechanisms for accountability throughout your supervisory chain. Be

willing to remove detectives who are not performing to standards.

Management by Walking Around (MBWA) has been found to be particularly helpful when an organization is under exceptional stress. It is no good practicing MBWA for the first time on such occasions, however. It has to have become a regular practice before the stress arises. (The Economist, 2008)

A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference (1989) by Tom Peters

Tom Peters and Robert Waterman wrote that top managers in "excellent" companies believed in management by walking about. In his second book, Peters said that he saw "managing by wandering about" as the basis of leadership and excellence. As leaders and managers wander about, he said that at least three things should be going on:

- They should be listening to what people are saying.

- They should be using the opportunity to transmit the company's values face to face.

- They should be prepared and able to give people on-the-spot help.

Managing a Homicide Unit is Like Managing a Bullpen

In baseball, if a manager takes someone from the bullpen, the pitcher normally has his head hanging low, thinking he has let the team down or experienced a personal failure, but the manager is respected for making that decision. The manager is replacing the pitcher for the good of the team and the common goal. The manager's decision has nothing to do with punishment. A chief needs to do the same thing; s/he needs to make difficult decisions about leadership within homicide units,

---

[2] Management by walking around. 2009. Police Chiefs Desk Reference Second Edition. A guide for newly appointed police leaders. The International Association Chiefs of Police. Page 6.

— Deputy Chief Craig Howard, Prince George's County Police Department, MD

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: How well do you know your investigators and first-line supervisors? What are their strengths? How well do they operate as a team and with other units? Do they see you during less stressful times or only during a high-profile case? How do they know what you expect? How do you know what they need and how can you best support them? Does communication only happen when poor outcomes have *already* resulted?

2 Have a system in place for standardized and structured management of investigations

There are three things that create an organizational culture that supports quality and thorough homicide investigations: proper training for investigators, supervision of investigators, and a set of standards to follow.

— Director Vernon Keenan, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, GA

Priding your agency on high-quality, consistent, thorough, and well-managed investigations should be the priority. Having and maintaining a system (e.g., standard operating practices, case management system, case file checklist, etc.) that supports these factors is paramount to quality homicide investigations. Without such, it becomes a subjective, inconsistent process open for additional criticism and skepticism. Recognize the complex interplay between witnesses (Riedel & Jarvis, 1998), DNA, and other forensic evidence. Investigators have a huge amount of information to manage and track (McEwen, 2009). Strong case management policy is critical. Create a culture within the investigation bureau that the "end does not justify the means"; make the right decisions for the right reasons, and ensure documentation of those decisions. A "devil's advocate" should review investigative conclusions to ensure they were made and documented with transparency and integrity to combat any occurrence of investigative bias (Rossmo, 2006). Individual and organizational self-evaluation and awareness need to be emphasized, supported, and welcomed. Integrity and accountability should be the foundation and guiding principle for all investigations, as opposed to supporting a target closure number as the desired outcome. Focus on process, not just outcome.

There is a measurable outcome of supervision: paperwork in case jackets. Is it organized? Is it complete? In looking at case jackets, I noticed a trend; if there was bad/incomplete/messy paperwork in the case jacket, it was more likely to be an unsolved/open case...conversely, good paperwork seemed to be associated with a higher likelihood of closure.

— Crime Analyst Sean Goodison, Metropolitan Police Department, DC

ACTIONS: Examine current operations, case management systems, and formalized accountability systems. See Appendix B for samples from Prince George's County (Maryland) Police Department. Review IACP's Wrongful Convictions Summit Report for additional recommendations in this area.

Criminal Investigative Failures, Kim Rossmo, Ph.D., 2006

Cognitive biases include: perception and memory limitations, intuition, heuristics and biases, cause and effect biases, and biases in evaluating evidence. "Some of the brightest scientists, judges, and detectives have fallen victim to these pitfalls." Strategies to avoid these pitfalls include ensuring a culture of open inquiry, critique, brainstorming, and considering various perspectives. Further, make everyone fully aware of these pitfalls and how they naturally happen.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: Is your agency doing everything it can to limit <u>investigative bias</u> and ensure integrity in the investigative process (such as administering double-blind and sequential <u>photo line ups,</u> and <u>recording all interviews</u> and reviewing them, etc.)? What does accountability look like in your agency? Does your homicide unit participate in case reviews in which key stakeholders from within and outside the unit discuss the status of open cases and work together to find solutions? Does the agency conduct regular homicide audits (of open and closed cases) to determine pieces of the process that might not be working well (like getting forensic evidence back in a timely manner)?

Does Utilizing a Computerized Case Management System (CCMS) Increase Clearance? (Keel, 2012)

- Departments that experienced 25-49 homicides per year who utilized CCMS showed a clearance rate of 5% higher than those who did not.

- Departments that experienced 100 or more homicides per year that utilized CCMS had a 5.5% higher clearance rate than those who did not.

3   Mandate information sharing

[The] Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department homicide unit investigates with gang unit officers.

Every time we get a gang shooting, we look towards what potential it has of blowing out of proportion in gang violence. It is not uncommon to have another shooting while you are investigating or calming people down. In gang violence, if the victim survives, the victim might lie because they want revenge and retaliation. We use these treasure troves of intelligence to stop murders.

— Commander Bob Osborne, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, CA

Officers on the street every day have the best opportunity to develop sources of information. Collaboration can improve success throughout the agency, but it may require serious efforts to overcome entrenched subcultures of guarding information, isolation, and insulation. The benefits of such collaboration are limitless, including information that could prevent a homicide such as in a case of retaliation.

Peer-to-Peer Advice: Prince George's County (MD) Police Department and others consistently echo the need to track and work non-fatal shootings to be prepared for the next homicide and better understand the people that may be involved. This requires coordination and information sharing across all investigative units, patrol, and crime analysts.

An Example of How This Works Effectively in Other Critical Fields

Case Study: Mayo Clinic[3]
One of the two core values instilled by Dr. William Mayo (Mayo Clinic) in 1910 was, effectively, practicing team medicine. (Designing the practice around the patient, or "patient-centered care" as some call its rare manifestation today, was the other core value.)

A Mayo surgeon recalled an incident that occurred shortly after he had joined the Mayo surgical

---

[3] Peters, Tom, (no date). Systems have their Place: Second place. Retrieved from http://www.tompeters.com/freestuff/index.php

staff. He was seeing patients in the clinic one afternoon when he received a call from one of the most experienced and renowned surgeons on the Mayo Clinic staff. The senior surgeon stated over the phone that that he was in the operating room performing a complex procedure. He explained the findings and asked his junior colleague whether or not what he, the senior was planning seemed appropriate. The junior surgeon was dumbfounded that he would receive a call like this. Nonetheless, a few minutes of discussion ensued, a decision was made, and the senior surgeon proceeded with the operation....A major consequence was that the junior surgeon learned the importance of inter-operative consultation for the patient's benefit even among surgeons with many years of surgical experience. Further, a senior Mayo oversight team routinely disciplines or even releases doctors, regardless of technical reputation, who fail to practice team medicine.

This example typically boggles the mind of healthcare professionals in seminars, who are used to the strict separation of disciplines and hierarchies of authority and power in their own institutions.

ACTIONS: Update or, if needed, develop procedures and policy for the homicide unit to share information with patrol, all investigative units, analysts, school resource officers, and multi-jurisdictional task forces—and vice versa (both about specific cases and about the roles of each unit to support one another during an investigation, including on scene).

We had a horrible problem in 2005: murders were out of control. We developed an ad hoc task force. We did not make the investigators work each other's cases, but we created a space where they could talk to each other and share information. We created more opportunities for information sharing— electronically through enhanced computer systems, [and] physically through staff meetings and co-locating units in the same building. This created a place where they would bump into each other and share information, formally and informally.

— Commander Bob Osborne, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, CA

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: Are patrol officers trained in debriefing and information development techniques? Are they being made aware of ongoing homicide investigations and their progress? Do your internal units work well together? If not, why? What are the barriers and how can you begin to address them?

...accountability exists at all levels in the organization. It applies in all aspects of community policing, from information sharing and preventing crime to the work of homicide detectives and narcotics officers and, most importantly, patrol officers who interact with the community on a daily basis. Executives and managers at the department were tasked with working with their subordinates to develop protocols for rapid dissemination of the most critical information at all levels. This practice resulted in dramatic reductions in the retaliatory violence often associated with the most violent neighborhoods. The gang unit analyzed information from school resource officers, the daily crime report, gunshot analysis, and sources. They produced a daily gang conflict report that was shared among all units.

— Chief Cathy Lanier, Metropolitan Police Department, DC

4 Support investigations with appropriate resources

The chief needs to sit down with the department leaders; we have regular meetings. Pick the right people. Share the bigger picture. You have to have relationships with those in your organization who know what you expect and that you appreciate them as well. They need to know what we need from them.

— Chief Mark Magaw, Prince George's County Police Department, MD

As chief, you are responsible for ensuring that your investigators have the necessary resources to carry out their work. To do so, you must have ways to identify and address shortfalls, as well as continue to encourage them to identify emerging trends and practices that can foster their success.

ACTION: Review Keel's Keys to Successful Homicide Units and share it with your supervisors.

Research Note: McEwen, 2009, found that using a crime scene specialist in the homicide unit saved, on average, 24 hours of detective time during critical times in the investigation.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: Do your supervisors know how to determine and communicate to you what level of resources are needed for each case (personnel, overtime, travel budget, technology, etc.)? What about ongoing maintenance and development of investigator skill? Are your investigators and supervisors aware of and implementing evidence-based investigative procedures like drilling down on jail calls, administering double-blind sequential photo line ups, or recording all interviews? Are they versed in the impact of trauma on the behavior of victims and witnesses? Are supervisors tasked with researching current investigative strategies and making requisite policy and procedural recommendations? Have they received specialized training in effective interviewing skills?

A brief review of some relevant research findings can be found in Appendix C.

5 Assess your current response to victims/survivors

We partner with a non-profit locally (Impact One) that sends a representative to the trauma center to be with the victim or the victim's family. The

representative can talk down retaliation issues, which has helped drive down crime. We have a weekly anti-violence committee meeting, and detectives help train these representatives. The group uses "prayer walks" for healing actions with the neighborhood, and they help the community address shared fears and talk about the problem. When the non-profit group meets and talks with the community at these kinds of events, it also identifies other problems in the community. The non-profit group and the police department get information we otherwise would not have gotten. It is a real paradigm shift for police.

— Chief (Retired) Alex Hayes, Omaha Police Department, NE

Recognize that one of the greatest sources of investigative information is the victims themselves. Many agencies hold next-of-kin meetings with positive results. Survivors often have the information detectives find most valuable. However, the best time to build rapport with them is *before* the crime takes place. Nevertheless, when crimes happen, victims, survivors, and the community-at-large need you to support them with more than just your investigative efforts. The chief is the "face" of the agency and has a responsibility to connect with the community and reassure them of your commitment to justice for victims. When communities see the chief, they recognize the priority s/he has given to the situation and relationship.

ACTIONS: Read about victim-oriented policing and the seven critical needs of victims and then develop policy and training for supervisors and investigators. Evaluate your next-of-kin notification protocols, and ensure they are maximizing opportunities to strengthen relationships.

Questions to Consider: What initiatives do you currently have to support victims and their families? Are you familiar with the resources available through the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), including the

OVC Help Series for Crime Victims-Homicide? Do you connect with victims and families on the anniversary of the crime? When is the last time you examined your protocols for next-of-kin notifications?

6 Build up/reinforce your partnerships

It is a failure in law enforcement when there is no partnership approach. When an agency tries to work a case without training, they will make a mistake that they will later regret. That is when we (state agency and resources) are needed; you cannot have territoriality if you are going to have good work. A chief has to recognize the limitations of their department when it comes to a homicide. They cannot invest the level of resources in training if it is not a big community problem—so call in expertise. It is key for good professionals to recognize their departments' limitations and call for outside resources as needed. It is a leadership issue.

— Director Vernon Keenan, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, GA

Partnerships foster collaboration, expertise sharing, trust, and positive outcomes for all stakeholders. Units (and agencies) that remain closed to working with others face challenges beyond compare and are often riddled with both internal and external trust issues that signify a host of factors incongruent with successful policing and investigations. The time to challenge the old way of doing things is now.

Examples:

- ◼ DC Metropolitan Police Department partners with Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (overseeing probation, parole, and supervised release)

- ◼ Meridian (MS) Police Department partners with Meridian Housing Authority

- ◼ Orange (MA) Police Department partners with Quabbin Mediation to reduce youth violence

and gang involvement (award winner for 2012 MetLife and Local Initiatives Support Coordination)

- ◼ Frisco (TX) Police Department partners with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Partnership Profile: The **Chicago Women's Health Risk Study** (CWHRS) is a collaborative example of aiming to prevent and better understand violence. CWHRS was established to give police, and other involved groups, information to help women who were experiencing violence, and hopefully to prevent serious injury or homicide. CWHRS has extensively evaluated types of homicide in its work to better understand intimate violence. CWHRS has provided law enforcement with helpful information and insight.

ACTIONS: Review and evaluate your current partnerships. Create, renew, or uphold partnerships with entities such as prosecutors, probation, crime labs, crime scene specialists, researchers (see also Rojek, Alpert, & Smith, 2012), victims' advocacy groups, faith-based organizations, schools, public health, local emergency room doctors, and federal agencies (Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Marshals; U.S. Attorney's Office; etc.). Review the efforts of the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission and determine how a similar effort may assist your agency (see also O'Brien, Woods & Cisler, 2007).

The burden of the murders is still a police issue, but our partners get the idea that they have to help. This changes the culture and uses research that identifies what was done well, and it becomes believable that we can impact homicides working together and relying on research. This initiative [the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission] makes the case for the impact of research.

— Chief (Retired) Patrick Mitchell, Milwaukee Police Department, WI

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: With whom would it be beneficial to have a better working relationship? How are you developing that working relationship? What are your needs and who has that expertise and capability? What is the best collaboration that you have seen in policing and how can you mirror something similar?

7 Build community cachet and give them options

Give 5-0 the 411 with the new Text Tip Line: 50411. Text messages [received from community members] are monitored by members of the department [in Washington, DC] 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Tips are then analyzed and passed on to the appropriate unit or division for follow-up. Because the tip line is anonymous, the sender will not receive a response to the original message[4].

— Metropolitan Police Department, DC

No community wants to see the police only when something bad happens. The community is the lynchpin to solving homicides, and you should develop close relationships with members to maximize crime fighting efforts (see Regoeczi & Jarvis). You need to proactively invest in that relationship and help them understand the basics of the homicide investigative process (combating the CSI effect). Joint cooperation and commitment between the police and the community may not just help clear homicides as they occur; the ultimate result could be a reduction of homicides (see Regoeczi).

*Of the homicide-related videos we have posted to our site, we have had 100% clearance **as a result of tips from the YouTube videos**.* — Nola

Joyce, Administrative Officer, Philadelphia Police Department, PA

Community Building Measures: How Police and Neighborhood Groups Can Measure Their Collaboration (2006): "The research of the Police Community Interaction Project (PCIP) has attempted to take a step back and ask what types of interactive and coordinative processes between police and communities may produce more long-term or sustainable public safety improvements in neighborhoods. Our research suggests that sustainable, safe communities are characterized by community members who can work together effectively, and have the abilities to develop and sustain strong relationships, solve problems, and collaborate effectively to identify goals and get work done."

An Example: The Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership created "a public education campaign intended to communicate a message of community intolerance of violence. These messages were relayed to the community using posters, billboards, and radio commercials. Following implementation of the campaign, interviews were conducted with individuals who had recently been arrested. Self-described gang members, who had been shown to be at high-risk for being involved in firearms violence, were much more likely to report having seen these messages on city busses. This finding then helped target limited resources to the use of posters on buses as a vehicle of communication with individuals most directly affected by firearms violence."

ACTIONS: Evaluate and improve the ways you establish relationships with the community. Reinforce to staff that it is everyone's responsibility to do this at every level. Establish and improve

---

[4] http://mpdc.dc.gov/service/hotlines-tip-lines-and-important-numbers

multiple avenues (both tech-savvy and traditional) for the community to provide anonymous input, tips, and suggestions. Involve the community as much as possible. Get them invested in fighting crime with you. Meet the community in their setting, not yours.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: How do community members submit anonymous tips? How do they know to do this? Do all of your communities have opportunities for favorable interactions with the police? How and when? Do you use social media and in what ways? In what ways do you communicate with the community (including the online community) and what do you share? Can you improve?

8   Manage political and public expectations of homicide investigations

It is the chief's responsibility to take the heat.… Even if all other crime numbers are down, it comes down to the homicide closure rate. We are at a 35-year low on crime—no one cares. The homicide rate is still the focus for politicians and the media. As the chief, I have to run interference for my detectives; that pressure is mine, not the detectives. They put enough on themselves.

— Chief Mark Magaw, Prince George's County Police Department, MD

The pressures related to homicide can be immeasurable—for everyone. The goal should be the best management possible of those pressures and the expectations that create them (see Davies, 2007). To do so requires work *before, during,* and *after* each homicide.

A Handout for the Public: The Duluth (MN) Police Department uses a brochure to inform the community on how its investigative process works. It can be found in Appendix D.

ACTIONS: Develop and improve protocols (including who, when, where, and why) for how information is pushed or addressed from the agency to the public and others. Clearly address who is responsible for sharing information with whom, and ensure that the information has been vetted so that it does not jeopardize the investigation. Develop an ongoing campaign to educate the public and media as to how homicides are investigated, including how they can help.

Example of Investigative Protocol Available to the Public (from the UK):

A Protocol between the Police and Crown Prosecution Service [CPS] in the investigation and prosecution of allegations of rape:

Research shows that there is substantial under reporting of rape and in the last few years there has been a decline in the number of successful prosecutions with less than 6% of reported crimes currently ending in a conviction. The high attrition rate has been widely and critically publicized in the media.

The objectives of this Protocol are:

- To reflect national ACPO [Association of Chief Police Officers] and CPS policy;

- To ensure the adoption of the recommendations of Without Consent;

- To achieve improved and consistent performance in the investigation and prosecution of rape;

- To improve the service to, and increase confidence in the Criminal Justice System for, victims of rape.

Further, the UK government features a police procedures web site alerting the public to how the police operate and what they can expect when

reporting a crime, including follow-up.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: What is the message your agency sends to the community about homicides and homicide investigations? What does your agency do to educate the community about your investigative process and the influence of solvability factors on a case? Who interacts with the media—is it the chief? The homicide commander? The public information officer? If it is not the chief, does the public understand why it is someone else?

*They [the media] want to push, rush, and hurry for the 5 o'clock news, but it is important to frame the position and work with a sense of urgency, **not** around the construct of the media's operations. A previous mayor had a "5-minute rule." The mayor needed to know the details of the incident in 5 minutes. You cannot do it; you get it wrong, and it is a mess. The information you provide in that short of time is inevitably wrong, and important facts like the number of shots or victims has to be changed. We try and take a step back from that and do not rush out the information. We are strategic with the flow of information that is accurate and what <u>you</u> want out, when you want it out.*

— Commissioner (Retired) Frederick Bealefeld, Baltimore Police Department, MD

9   Know your numbers

You cannot evaluate and improve what you do not measure. Data on homicides (rates of occurrence, location, solvability factors, etc.) and closure rates allow for comparisons over time, both internally and externally with other agencies of like-size and scope (as appropriate). They also offer the community a quantifiable measure that allows for some understanding of the state of violent crime in the community. Without this verified data, the community is left to wonder and make assumptions. It is also important to recognize that numbers can be misleading and problematic if not provided with

context and/or interpretation; however, not having them or understanding them is far worse.

Example: The Idaho Statistical Analysis Center (ISAC) is part of the Idaho State Police. The purpose of ISAC is "the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of statistics related to crime, illegal drugs, victim services, and the administration of justice." The purpose of the <u>ISAC web site</u> is "to give criminal justice agencies and community organizations access to ISAC publications and other statistical information which can be used for development and analysis of policies, operations and programs."

ACTIONS: Look closely at homicide and closure <u>rates</u>. Ensure someone is accountable for identifying, collecting, analyzing, and reporting the numbers to you.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: Are there trends over time? Is your agency faced with unique factors due to location, cultural considerations, or greater stranger involvement? Does everyone in your agency know the numbers and understand the inclusions and limitations of them?

10   Measure closure and beyond

Homicides give you pressure, and daily you try and keep pressures off of the detectives. But they are going to feel it. You are only as good as your last closure; you feel it daily—we are made or broken on the homicide issue. I spend 90% of my day talking about murders. The media calls and asks, what is your closure rate? They want it right this second. It is really only a snapshot of right now and a constant daily battle to have good numbers.

— Major (Retired) Michael Straughan, Prince George's County Police Department, MD

Closure figures only tell part of the story about agency response and public safety. If the public

only has access to case closure data and not to other information to provide context for the closure data, they can only use that data in isolation to measure safety and police performance. You need to measure more than just closure to understand and educate others as to the nature of policing and safety in your community. Success can be measured in many ways, as can failure. Progress is often only identified in the course of understanding your numbers and complementary measures over time.

New Research Suggests Alternative Measures of Homicide Investigations Success (Brookman & Innes, 2013)

Alternative definitions of homicide investigative success for law enforcement leaders to consider: (1) outcome success (identification, prosecution, and conviction of factually guilty offenders); (2) procedural success (quality of the investigative process and systems implemented); (3) community impact reduction success (increasing community reassurance and public confidence); and (4) preventative success (prediction, prevention, and preemption of future homicides).

ACTIONS: Start tracking and measuring an output in addition to case closure. (There are numerous outputs you could consider: number of times an investigation contributed knowledge to another case, number of times an investigation led to the identification of other crimes, implementation of a method to track survivor satisfaction with the investigative efforts and follow-up, etc.) Once you start tracking, make certain someone is responsible for reviewing and analyzing this information (and recommending changes to policy and procedure, as may be necessary). Work with the public to ensure that they know what you are looking at and why (how it affects crime overall). Help the public understand ways they can evaluate and understand police performance and public safety.

A good investigation or a closed case doesn't necessarily lower the homicide rate; but partnerships can. — Commander David Faulkner, Phoenix Police Department, AZ

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: What are the other outputs you measure or might want to consider measuring? Why? How and who will they help? What are the ways in which you are educating or working with the media and/or public to identify what other elements are important and can be tracked? Do you conduct community satisfaction surveys? Why or why not?

Summary

These recommendations will help agencies improve the outcomes of their homicide investigations. Some of these steps may even reduce homicide rates (e.g., prevention as a result of interrupting retaliatory homicides through timely information sharing) and prevention of a potentially wrongful conviction. Best practices in homicide investigations, including use of available technology, are ever-changing; therefore, it is imperative that law enforcement leaders empower their supervisors and detectives to constantly consider new, more effective, and more efficient ways to conduct investigations. Consider conducting an audit of closed cases to look for opportunities to improve your process in the future. We encourage you to continue to explore these issues with your peers.

References and Additional Reading:

Braga, A., Flynn, E., Kelling, G., and Cole, C. (2011). Moving the work of criminal investigators toward crime control. National Institute of Justice and Harvard Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety.

Brookman, F. and Innes, M. (2013). The problem of success: What is a "good" homicide investigation? *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy*, DOI:10, 1080/10439463.2013.771538.

Cronin, J., Murphy, G., Spahr, L., Toliver, J., and Weger, R. (2007). Promoting effective homicide investigations. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Davies, H. J. (2007). Understanding variations in murder clearance rates: The influence of the political environments. *Homicide Studies*, 11:151-164.

Jarvis, J. and Regoeczi, W. (August 2012). Homicide Solvability: Research in Brief. *The Police Chief*, 79: 10–11.

Keel, T. (April 2012). Detecting Clues in Homicide Management, Revised. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Keel, T. (2008). Homicide Investigations: Identifying best practices. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Law Enforcement Bulletin,* Volume 77, Number 2.

Keppel, R. D. and Weis, J. G. (1994). Time and distance as solvability factors in murder cases. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 39: 386-401.

McEwen, T. (2010). The role and impact of forensic evidence in the criminal justice system. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

McEwen, T. (July 2009). Executive Summary Evaluation of the Phoenix Homicide Clearance Project: Final Report.

O'Brien, M., Woods, L., and Cisler, R. A. (2007). The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission: An interagency collaborative process to reduce homicide. *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, 106(7):385-388.

Peters, T. and Austin, N. (1989). A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference, Collins.

Ranalli, M. (January 2012). Wrongful convictions and officer safety: shifting the focus to the process. *The Police Chief*, 79: 26–29.

Regoeczi, W. C. (forthcoming). The importance of communication, coordination, and context in reducing lethal violence. In *A Culture of Violence: Murder in New Orleans*. Edited by Dee Wood Harper, D.W., Voigt, L., and Thornton, W.E.

Regoeczi, W. C. and Jarvis, J.P. (forthcoming). Beyond the social production of homicide rates: Extending social disorganization theory to explain homicide case outcomes. *Justice Quarterly*.

Richardson, D. and Kosa, R. (2001). An examination of homicide clearance rates: foundation for the development of a homicide clearance model. Police Executive Research Forum.

Riedel, M. (2008). Homicide arrest clearances: A review of the literature. *Sociology Compass*, 2(4):1145-1164.

Riedel, M. and Jarvis J. (1998). The decline of arrest clearances for criminal homicide: Causes, correlates, and third parties. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 9:279-306.

Rojek, J., Alpert, G., and Smith, H. (2012). The prevalence and characteristics of police practitioner-researcher partnerships. *Police Quarterly*, 15(3): 241-261.

Rossmo, K. (2006). Criminal investigative failures: Avoiding the pitfalls. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, September: 1-8.

Schroeder, D. and White, M. (September 2009). Exploring the use of DNA evidence in homicide investigations: Implications for detective work and case clearance. *Police Quarterly,* 12: 319-342.

Sullivan, T. (2004). Police experiences with recording custodial interrogations. Northwestern University School of Law: Center on Wrongful Convictions.

Tyler, T. and Fagan, J. (2008). Legitimacy and cooperation: Why do people help the police fight crimes in their community? *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law*, 6.231: 231-275.

Wellford, C., Bond, B., and Goodison, S. (2011). Crime in New Orleans: Analyzing crime trends and New Orleans' responses to crime.

Wellford, C. and Cronin, J. (2000). Clearing up homicide clearance rates. *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 243.

Wells, G., Steblay, N., and Dysart, J. (2011). A test of the simultaneous vs. sequential lineup methods: An initial report of the AJS national eyewitness identification field studies. American Judicature Society.

Recommended Resources
(links and web addresses provided):

- IACP Wrongful Convictions Summit Report: http://www.theiacp.org/

- Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances: http://www.iir.com/

- Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission: http://city.milwaukee.gov/hrc

- Chicago Women's Health Risk Study: http://www.jrsa.org/events/conference/presentations-06/Block.htm

- AJS: A Test of the Simultaneous vs. Sequential Lineup Methods: http://www.ajs.org/wc/pdfs/EWID_PrintFriendly.pdf

- ACPO Murder Investigations Manual (2006): http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2006/2006CBAMIM.pdf

- Homicide Research Working Group: http://homicideworkinggroup.cos.ucf.edu/publications/index.php

- International Homicide Investigators Association: http://www.ihia.org/

- Presentation by Deputy Chief Kimerer, Seattle (WA) Police Department, 2006: http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Publications/kimerer.pdf

- Presentation by Charles Wellford, University of Maryland: http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Publications/wellford.pdf

- Bureau of Justice Assistance: https://www.bja.gov/

- Bureau of Justice Statistics: https://www.bjs.gov/

- FBI Victim Assistance/Support Guidance: http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/victim_assistance/coping

- Metro PD DC Text Tip Line: http://mpdc.dc.gov/service/text-police-50411

- FBI Uniform Crime Reports: http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr

- Serving Survivors of Homicide Victims During Cold Case Investigations: A Guide for Developing A Law Enforcement Protocol: http://www.sheriffs.org/sites/default/files/uploads/guidefordevelopingalawenforcementprotocolaugust172011.pdf

IACP Tools and Policies—all located within www.theiacp.org

- IACPNet

- IACP's Center for Social Media

- IACP's Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims Initiative

- IACP's Model Policy on Eye-Witness ID

- IACP's Guidebook on Improving Partnerships Between Law Enforcement Leaders and University Based Researchers

- Police Chiefs Desk Reference Second Edition: A guide for newly appointed police leaders

- The CompStat Process: Managing Performance on the Pathway to Leadership

- Forensic Science: A Fundamental Perspective

- IACP Chief's Council: Recording Interrogations

Appendix A
Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Clearance Definition

Clearances

Part I offenses can be cleared either by arrest or exceptional means.

Cleared by Arrest. An offense is cleared by arrest, or solved for crime reporting purposes, when at least one person is (1) arrested, (2) charged with the commission of the offense, and (3) turned over to the court for prosecution (whether following arrest, court summons, or police notice).

Although it makes no physical arrest, an agency can claim an offense is cleared by arrest when the offender is a person under 18 years of age and is cited to appear in juvenile court or before other juvenile authorities.

Reporting agencies must remember that the number of offenses and not the number of persons arrested are counted in the clearances that they record. Agencies cannot report more clearances than offenses in a given month unless they are scoring clearances of offenses that were reported in previous months.

Several crimes may be cleared by the arrest of one person, or the arrest of many persons may clear only one crime. Further, if several persons are involved in the commission of a crime and only one is arrested and charged, the agency must list the crime as cleared by arrest. When the other persons involved in the crime are arrested at a later date, the agency must not record another clearance because the offense was already cleared following the arrest of the first person.

Cleared by Exceptional Means. In certain situations, law enforcement is not able to follow the three steps outlined under "Cleared by Arrest" to clear offenses known to them. Often they have exhausted all leads and have done everything possible in order to clear a case. If agencies can answer all of the following questions in the affirmative, they can clear the offense exceptionally for the purpose of reporting to UCR.

1. Has the investigation definitely established the identity of the offender?

2. Is there enough information to support an arrest, charge, and turning over to the court for prosecution?

3. Is the exact location of the offender known so that the subject could be taken into custody now?

4. Is there some reason outside law enforcement control that precludes arresting, charging, and prosecuting the offender?

Examples of Exceptional Clearances. Generally, an offense can be exceptionally cleared when it falls into one of the following categories. The list is not all-inclusive; there may be other circumstances in which a law enforcement agency is entitled to an exceptional clearance.

1. Suicide of the offender. (The person who committed the offense is dead.)

2. Double murder. (Two persons kill each other.)

3. Deathbed confession. (The person who committed the offense dies after making the confession.)

4. Offender killed by police or citizen.

5. Confession by an offender who is already in law enforcement custody or serving a sentence. (This is actually a variation of a true clearance by arrest—the offender would not be

"apprehended" but in most situations would be prosecuted on the new charge.)

6. Offender is prosecuted by state or local authorities in another city for a different offense or is prosecuted in another city or state by the federal government for an offense which may be the same. (Law enforcement makes an attempt to return the offender for prosecution, but the other jurisdiction will not allow the release.)

7. Extradition denied.

8. Victim refuses to cooperate in the prosecution. (This action alone does not unfound the offense. The answer must also be yes to questions 1, 2, and 3 in the section Cleared by Exceptional Means.)

9. Warrant is outstanding for felon but before being arrested the offender dies. (The method of death is irrelevant.)

10. The handling of a juvenile offender either orally or by written notice to parents in instances involving minor offenses such as petty larceny. No referral is made to juvenile court as a matter of publicly accepted law enforcement policy.

The UCR Program recognizes that departmental policy in various law enforcement agencies permits discontinuing an investigation and administratively closing cases for which all investigation has been completed. The administrative closing of a case or the clearing of it by departmental policy does not permit exceptionally clearing the offense for UCR unless all four questions mentioned earlier can be answered yes. Additionally, the recovery of property does not clear a case. Clearances in accordance with UCR procedures should have no effect on whether an agency has internal policies as to closing a case or discontinuing active investigation.

Appendix B
Sample Homicide Investigation Checklists

THE FOLLOWING CHECKLISTS WERE PROVIDED AS A SAMPLE TEMPLATE BY PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT IN MARYLAND.

THIS FORM IS TO BE INCLUDED IN ALL CASE FILES AND STARTED ON INITIAL RESPONSE TO SCENE

Victim: Case Number: Date Assigned:

ID#	DATE COMPLETED:	TASK	NOTES
		Received the Case for Investigation	
		Responded to the Crime Scene	
		Neighborhood Canvass	
		Interviewed the Victim's family	
		Interviewed the Witness(s)	
		Interviewed the Suspect(s)	
		NOK notified	
		DNA evidence obtained on scene	
		Submitted the DNA request form	
		Autopsy Report Received	
		Obtained the Evidence Processing Report	
		Obtained other medical reports	
		Obtained scene/other photographs	
		Obtained 911 tapes	
		Witness Identified the Suspect	
		Checked the Victim (s) Computer History	
		Checked the Witness (es) Computer History	
		Checked the Suspect (s) Computer History	
		Resources Checked: ☐ NCIC ☐ MVA ☐ PGPD ☐ MPDC ☐ Field Observation Reports ☐ Other Jurisdictions ☐ Parole/Probation ☐ Jail releases	
		Arrest Warrant Obtained	
		Arrest Warrant Served	
		Victim's family Notified of an Arrest	
		Completed Continuation Report for Arrest	
		Crime Notice sent	
		Case Screened with the State's Attorney's Office	
		Court Disposition Form Submitted	
		Request Audio/Video Tape Interview of Suspect	
		Received Audio/Video Tape Interview of Suspect	

THIS FORM IS TO BE INCLUDED IN ALL CASE FILES AND STARTED ON INITIAL RESPONSE TO SCENE

Victim: Case Number: Date Assigned:

ID#	DATE COMPLETED:	TASK	NOTES
		Case Review with supervisor	
		24 hour checklist completed	
		7 Day checklist completed	
		15 Day checklist completed	
		45 Day checklist completed	
		6 Month checklist completed	
		1 Year checklist completed	
		Reward Flyer completed	
		Search Warrants obtained	
		Additional Resources requested	
		Computer Forensics requested	
		Social Networking sites reviewed	
		Case solvability form completed	
		NED notified	
		RAGE NOTIFIED	
		Request for Communication Tapes	
		ROI completed	
		Case entered into Case Explorer	
		Ballistic Evidence recovered	
		Latent prints recovered	
		Vehicle Impounded	
		Vehicle processing request completed	
		CAD Printout obtained	
		Initial Incident Report obtained	
		Scene notes received from all responding detectives/ officers	
		Roll call attended	
		District Investigative Sections contacted	
		Phone Records obtained	
		WAVE/VCTF Notified	
		Funeral Attended	
		Tag numbers recorded on scene	
		ENTERSECT checked for all people of interest	

**EACH BLOCK IS TO BE COMPLETED AND INITIALED UPON COMPLETION, IF NOT APPLICABLE, PUT N/A IN BOX*

THIS FORM IS TO BE INCLUDED IN ALL CASE FILES AND STARTED ON INITIAL RESPONSE TO SCENE

Victim: Case Number: Date Assigned:

ID#	DATE COMPLETED:	TASK	NOTES
		Autopsy request completed and forwarded to Evidence	
		Autopsy attended	
		Case review with Commander	
		Quarterly case Review	
		Initial letter to family member sent	
		45 Day update letter sent to family member	
		6 month letter sent to family member	
		1 year letter sent to family member	
		All leads exhausted (Verified with Command staff)	
		NED Jumps conducted	
		Area CS's interviewed for leads	
		Project PINPOINT initiated	
		VICAP completed	
		Reached out to Federal partners for CS's	
		Updates given to Homicide Coordinator for morning report accuracy	
		Weapon identified	
		TOPPS meeting attended	
		Networked with MPDC Homicide Detective's	
		Case discussed at homicide meeting	
		Peer review conducted	
		Notes continually updated	
		Case discussed at Major Case Review	
		PIRC attended	
		Pre-trial review with SAO conducted	
		All witnesses located for trial	
		Grand Jury utilized for case	
		HIDTA resources utilized	
		Command staff updated regularly	
		Other:	

**EACH BLOCK IS TO BE COMPLETED AND INITIALED UPON COMPLETION, IF NOT APPLICABLE, PUT N/A IN BOX*

HOMICIDE UNIT

48 Hour - Fresh Homicide Case Review

CCN: _____ VICTIM: _____

LOCATION: _____ DATE: _____

Attendees: _____

_____

_____

■ Lead investigator has received all available information to include notes, etc. from all involved personnel

■ Neighborhood Canvass has been completed or scheduled.

■ Crime Solvers Flyers completed.

■ CDS related. NED notified on _____ at _____ hours.

  Investigator contacted: _____ Response: _____

  _____

Issues/Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

To Do List

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

Commander/Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____

HOMICIDE UNIT

Seven Day – Case Status Review

CCN: _____ VICTIM: _____

LOCATION: _____ DATE: _____

Case file is in proper order according to the Criminal Investigations Manual, and all investigators' notes are included in the proper section of the case file.

■ Continuation report is completed and submitted for previously unidentified victim(s)

■ Unresolved work plans are discussed and if necessary modified completion dates are established *(note in comments)*.

■ Further investigative steps are prioritized *(note in comments)*.

■ Further inquiry has been made of all evidence *(i.e., firearms, fingerprints, DNA, vehicles, etc.)*.

■ Appropriate contact has been established and is being maintained with the victim's family.

■ Further necessary neighborhood canvasses have been completed.

■ All known witnesses have been interviewed and their statements documented in writing and/or audio-video taped.

■ 911 recording has been requested from Public Safety Communications.

■ Brief the Commander, Homicide Section on all case updates with an emphasis on resources needed to further the investigation.

■ Ensure contact has been made with District Investigator to exchange information.
Investigator contacted: _____

■ CSA Commander contacted: _____

■ Roll Call Attended: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Commander/Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____

HOMICIDE UNIT

Forty Five Day – Case Status Review

CCN: _____ VICTIM: _____

LOCATION: _____ DATE: _____

- ■ Ensure unresolved work plans are revisited and resolved.

- ■ Further investigative steps are prioritized (note in comments).

- ■ Inquiry has been made of all evidence results (i.e., firearms, fingerprints, DNA, vehicles, etc.).

- ■ All pertinent locations have been canvassed.

- ■ Available resources have been utilized as needed (i.e., NED, SED, Patrol, Other Agencies, etc.).

- ■ Brief the Commander, Homicide Section on all case updates with an emphasis on resources needed to further the investigation.

- ■ 45-day case update letter to relative completed and mailed.

- ■ Copy of letter in case file.

- ■ Meetings attended: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Commander/Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____

HOMICIDE UNIT

6 Month – Case Status Review

CCN: _____ VICTIM: _____

LOCATION: _____ DATE: _____

- Ensure unresolved work plans are revisited and resolved.

- Ensure all investigative leads and tips have been exhausted (note in comments).

- Inquiry has been made of all evidence results (i.e., firearms, fingerprints, DNA, vehicles, etc.).

- Available resources have been utilized as needed (i.e., NED, SED, Patrol, Other Agencies, etc.).

- Brief the Commander, Homicide Section on all case updates with an emphasis on resources needed to further the investigation.

- 6 Month case update letter to relative completed and mailed.

- Copy of letter in case file.

- Homicide Review and Solvability chart completed.

- Meetings attended: _____

  _____

  _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Commander/Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____

HOMICIDE UNIT

One Year – Case Status Review

CCN: _____ VICTIM: _____

LOCATION: _____ DATE: _____

- ◼ Ensure all work plans are revisited and resolved.

- ◼ All evidence has been reviewed, analyzed and comparisons request (i.e., firearms, fingerprints, DNS, vehicles, etc.).

- ◼ All resources have been utilized as needed (i.e., NED, SED, Patrol, Other Agencies, etc.).

- ◼ Brief the Commander, Homicide Section on all case updates with an emphasis on resources needed to further the investigation.

- ◼ One Year case update letter to relative completed and mailed.

- ◼ Copy of letter in case file.

- ◼ Homicide Review and Solvability chart reviewed and discussed with Cold Case Supervisor.

- ◼ Cold Case Supervisor review comments: _____

  _____

  _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Commander/Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____

(To be placed in Case Folder)

Appendix C
Brief Review of Relevant Research Findings

Sidrow, Christina. "Automated information systems for homicide investigation: A survey of urban police departments." *Police Executive Research Forum*. (1999): n. page. Print.

Department's with high clearance rates have **extensive recurring training** for detectives, **a team work approach** with homicide units, **regular cooperation** with other detective units, and **targeted policing programs** within the community to reduce gang, drug, and violent crime activity.

Jarvis, John and Wendy C. Regoeczi. "Homicide solvability," Research in Brief, The Police Chief 79 (August 2012): 10–11.

Highlighted the need for **training, re-training**, **appropriate manpower, working relationships, community trust,** and **identification of reliable witnesses** toward successful case investigation and closure.

Keel, Timothy, John Jarvis, and Yvonne Muirhead. "An exploratory analysis of factors affecting homicide investigations: Examining the dynamics of murder clearance rates." *Homicide Studies*. (2009): n. page. Print.

As **management oversight** plays less of a role in homicide investigations, clearance rates actually decrease. The availability and requirement of **formal training** for homicide detectives were found to have a significant positive effect on clearance rates

Keel, Timothy G. "Homicide investigations— Identifying best practices." *The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*. (2008): n. page. Print.

- ▪ Some units use **conviction rate** to measure success

- ▪ Most departments with high clearance rates do not have blanketed rules to discourage **overtime**

- ▪ Department's that typically **involved a prosecutor** in the early stages of an investigation had a higher clearance rate on average

- ▪ Detectives and supervisors noted the greatest barriers to achieving higher clearance rates:

  - • The lack of public / witness **cooperation**

  - • Personnel shortages

  - • Legal / prosecutor issues

Hargrove, Thomas. "Murder mysteries: Many 'best practices' known to improve homicide investigations." *Scripps Howard News Service* 21 May 2010, n. page. Print.

- ▪ Make homicide clearance a **priority**

- ▪ Apply additional resources such as **increased manpower** or **improved training** for investigators to clear backlogs of cold cases

- ▪ Create a **specialized** cold-case **squad** or multi-departmental cold-case **task force**

- ▪ Make effective use of **Computerized Case-Management Systems**

- ▪ Make sure there is **sufficient manpower at the crime scene**

- ▪ Make sure investigators **get the time needed** to solve murders

- Don't be stingy with **overtime**

- Be generous with **training**

- Make sure investigators know the **current best practices** through so-called "in-service" **training**

- Make sure the **first responders** know how to **protect evidence, identify witnesses** and **assist in** neighborhood **canvasses** for witnesses

- Make the best use of information technology

- **Utilize new technology, but do not abandon the basics in conducting an investigation** (knocking door to door looking for witnesses) and **do not rely solely on technology to solve a case**

Wellford, Charles and James Cronin. "Clearing up homicide clearance rates." *National Institute of Justice Journal*. (2000): 2-7. Print.

The probability of clearance increases significantly when the **first officer** on the scene quickly **notifies** the homicide unit, the medical examiner, and attempts to **locate witnesses**, **secures the area**, and **identifies potential witnesses** in the neighborhood. The **length of time** it takes detectives to arrive at the scene also is key.

Appendix D
Sample Major Crimes Investigations Brochure

The Duluth Police Department is committed to providing citizens with the highest level of professional investigative services. The Violent Crimes Division can be reached at 218-730-5050.

The Investigator assigned to your case is:

Investigator: _____

Phone: _____

Supervisor: _____

Phone: _____

It is strongly advised that all information relative to the investigation be forwarded to the investigator assigned to your case.

RESOURCES

Safe Haven Shelter for Battered Women	728-6481
Domestic Abuse Intervention Program(DAIP)	722-2781
Dabinoo 'Igan Shelter (American Indian)	722-2247
Mental Health Crisis Line	723-0099
Bethany Crisis Shelter	626-2726
Essentia Health (SMDC)	726-4000
St. Luke's Hospital	726-5555
Miller Dwan Medical Center	727-8762
St. Louis County Social Services	726-2000
City Attorney Victim-Witness Liaison	730-5277
National Center for Victims of Crime	(800) 394-2255
St. Louis County Attorney	726-2323

"When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure."

~Author Unknown

GRIEF
Support From Others
Author Unknown

Don't tell me that you understand.
Don't tell me that you know.
Don't tell me that I will survive.
How I will surely grow.

Don't come at me with answers that can only come to me.
Don't tell me how my grief will pass, that I will soon be free.

Accept me in my ups and downs.
I need someone to share.
Just hold my hand and let me cry.
And say, "My friend, I care."

Duluth Police Department
Violent Crimes
2030 North Arlington Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811
Phone: (218) 730-5050

DULUTH POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Mission of the Duluth Police Department is to provide the highest level of service through partnerships and problem solving in a professional, ethical, and timely manner.

Gordon Ramsay
Chief of Police

Robin Roeser
Deputy Chief of Police
Investigation Administration

INITIAL RESPONSE

It is important to know that:

- You can expect a 100% effort from all violent crimes investigators and supervisors

- Background information on victims is extremely important to the investigation. To ensure accuracy, we rely on family and friends to assist in providing this information

- We cannot control when information about a case becomes available nor can we predict or guarantee results

However, we will:

- Follow-up on investigative leads as soon as possible

- Make every effort to contact the victim's family within 24 hours

- Make diligent efforts to promptly return victim's personal affects when appropriate and not needed for evidence

- Answer any of your questions regarding the investigation that will not jeopardize the integrity of the investigation or future court case

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

- We focus on conducting a thorough investigation with the goal of successful prosecution

- Many arrests are made during the course of an investigation. You will be notified when we are certain we have identified and arrested the person(s) responsible

- There is no statute of limitations on homicides, which means that a suspect can be arrested and charged at any time in the future

- A case is considered solved when the person or persons responsible have been arrested and brought before the County Attorney for charges

- The St. Louis County Attorney's Office prosecutes the cases. They can be reached at 218-726-2323.

- In some cases, the County Attorney's Office will not charge suspects due to evidentiary issues. We will consider the case solved, but will continue to work with the County Attorney to get charges issued

- After charges are issued, a County Attorney Victim-Witness Advocate will contact you and maintain family contact throughout the court proceedings

- Court proceedings can be long and stressful for family members. Victim-witness advocates can provide support and guidance

- Witness availability, cooperation, and truthfulness are paramount to successful investigations. Your support is needed to accomplish this

MEDIA REPORTS

- All media reports and interviews can impact investigations and prosecutions

- Information shared with the media should focus on what your loved one's loss has meant to you, your family, and/or community, but not on the investigative information

- Police spokespersons provide the media with general information, but we cannot control what the media actually prints or reports regarding homicide investigations

Appendix E
Advisory Group

Captain Robert Alder, Homicide Branch, Metropolitan Police Department, DC

Dr. Alex Alvarez, Northern Arizona University, AZ

Deputy Commissioner William Blackburn, Philadelphia Police Department, PA

Carolyn Rebecca Block, Criminal Justice Information Authority, IL

Dr. Fiona Brookman, Deputy Director of the Centre for Criminology, University of South Wales

Captain Stephen Buras, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, LA

Brenda Eich, Director of Research, Metropolitan Police Department, DC

Sean Goodison, Crime Analyst, Metropolitan Police Department, DC

Mark Hilts, Supervisory Special Agent, Behavioral Analysis Unit, FBI Academy

Dr. John Jarvis, Behavioral Science Unit, FBI Academy

Nola Joyce, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of Strategic Initiatives and Innovations, Philadelphia Police Department, PA

Thomas Martin, Senior Investigator, Crime Scene Reconstruction New York State Police, NY

Commander Terrence McLarney, Baltimore City Police Department, MD

Dr. Edward Maguire, Professor, Department of Justice, Law & Society, American University

Chief Thomas O'Connor, Maryland Heights Police Department, MO

Commander Robert Osborne, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, CA

Chief James Pina, Phoenix Police Department, AZ

Irma Rios, Director, Houston Police Department Crime Laboratory, TX

Chief Raymond Schulz, Albuquerque Police Department, NM

Lieutenant Chrystal Tibbs, IACP Visiting Fellow, Prince Georges County Police Department, MD

Dr. Charles Wellford, Department of Criminology, University of Maryland

Sergeant Craig Wittenberger, Homicide Section, Montgomery County Police Department, MD

Michael Medaris, Senior Policy Advisor, Bureau of Justice Assistance

John Firman, Director of Research, International Association of Chiefs of Police

Dianne Beer-Maxwell, Program Manager, International Association of Chiefs of Police

Appendix F

Agencies Represented at Executive Focus Group

Baltimore City Police Department, MD

Columbia Police Department, SC

Duluth Police Department, MN

Georgia Bureau of Investigation, GA

Louisville Police Department, KY

Milwaukee Police Department, WI

Omaha Police Department, NE

Philadelphia Police Department, PA

Prince George's County Police Department, MD

Prince William County Police, VA

University of Maryland, MD

Agencies Represented at Investigator Focus Group

Baltimore County Police Department, MD

Corpus Christi Police Department, TX

Denver Police Department, CO

Fairfax County Police Department, VA

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, CO

Kansas City Missouri Police Department, MO

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, NV

Lexington Police Department, KY

Metro Nashville Police Department, TN

Philadelphia Police Department, PA

Prince George's Police Department, MD

Prince William County Police, VA

San Jose Police Department, CA

Vermont Department of Public Safety, VT

Site Visit Agencies

Baltimore City Police Department, MD

Philadelphia Police Department, PA

Phoenix Police Department, AZ

DC Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC

International Association of Chiefs of Police
44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 200
Alexandria VA 22314