



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDERS



538.03 DEATH THREATS 09-16-91

PURPOSE

To establish procedures for investigating all reported threats of death to an individual as quickly and thoroughly as circumstances require.

POLICY

To investigate all reported threats of death to an individual as quickly and thoroughly as circumstances require.

PROCEDURE

A. DEFINITION

DEATH THREATS - Those in which an individual has made a threat to kill another person(s) and there is an indication that the threat is credible and may be carried out.

B. COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

1. When a death threat is reported to the Communications Division, the dispatcher shall evaluate the threat as to its validity and seriousness based on the above definition and either dispatch a unit to investigate or refer the caller to the Report Writing Unit.
2. When no report writers are on duty and the threat does not appear to meet the definition, the dispatcher shall refer the caller to the Report Writing Unit during normal business hours.

C. REPORT WRITING UNIT

1. If a death threat complaint is reported to the Report Writing Unit, a Report Writer shall make an I-Report. If immediate action is indicated, the on-duty Watch Commander shall be notified.
2. The Watch Commander shall:
 - a. evaluate the report and determine if immediate action is necessary.
 - b. if necessary, initiate an appropriate response through Communications.
3. All reports shall be forwarded to the Homicide/Assaults Section when completed, with a priority report cover sheet attached.

D. OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS (OOI)

1. During normal business hours, when a death threat report is received by the Homicide/Assaults Section, a Sergeant shall review the report and, if appropriate, assign the report to an investigator.
2. The investigator shall:
 - a. if appropriate, contact the intended victim(s) (i.e., the report is made by a third party) and inform them of the death threat.
 - b. offer the intended victim any reasonable assistance to cope with the threat (i.e., department alarm installation, phone trap, premise history entry, or surveillance in extenuating circumstances).
 - c. attempt to make contact with the person who has made the death threat and advise them a death threat report has been made with the Department and any effort to carry out the threat will result in immediate enforcement action.
3. On weekends, an investigator is normally on duty in the Homicide/Assaults Section between the hours of 0800-1630. Upon receiving a death threat report, the on-duty investigator shall follow the above procedures.
 - a. If no investigator is on duty in the Homicide/Assaults Section on a weekend, the Control Desk personnel shall bring all death threat reports to the attention of the office Sergeant.
 - b. The office Sergeant shall review the report and assign it to an available investigator for immediate follow-up, if appropriate.