

**Montana Department of Justice**

**Sexual Assault Kit Initiative**

**Course "Report Writing"**

## Intro

**Slide 2:** Welcome to the course, Report Writing.

**Slide 3:** Content Warning: We will be talking about sexual violence which may trigger personal feelings. Please remember to take care of yourself and do what you need to help yourself.

**Slide 4:** Disclaimer: This project was supported by Grant No. 2017-AK-BX-0022 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice."

**Slide 5:** In this course, you will learn how to write an offense report about the sexual assault investigation.

**Slide 6:** As the investigation comes to completion, you need to prepare an offense report about the investigation. An offense report on a sexual assault should be written in chronological order. Follow the following format. You may not need to fill in every category but start the report with the initial call you received about the assault and the steps you subsequently took.

## Initial Call

**Slide 7:** Begin with an opening paragraph describing the scope of your duties when you were dispatched to the call. Let's look at an example. "On this date, I, Officer Joe Jackson, of the [Agency Name] was on patrol when I was dispatched to the ACME Medical Facility for a report of a possible sexual assault. Dispatch further advised the following details. [...] I responded immediately."

## Response

**Slide 8:** In the next paragraph, describe your response to the call. Let's take a look.

*"As I responded... [then describe what you did before arriving at the scene, for example, you might have asked for more information, contacted the reporting party if it wasn't the survivor, obtained investigative materials in preparation, etc]."*

## Initial Observations

**Slide 9:** Then, describe the details of your arrival at the scene and your initial observations.

*"I arrived at ACME Medical Facility at 1800 hours and was met by Dr. Jones. I was escorted to room #1 and met with the survivor identified as Jane Doe. I immediately observed injury to the face around the right eye and scratches on her arms. She appeared upset; she was crying and clutching her knees in a seated position..."*

*"With the survivor were two people identified as Mrs. Doe, the survivor's mother, and Ms. Smith, the survivor's friend."*

## Survivor Investigation

**Slide 10:** Include as much information as you can about how you interacted with the survivor and what you did during your interview with the survivor. Let's take a look at a few examples:

1) *"I introduced myself and advised Jane Doe she could call me Joe. I began building rapport by talking about Jane Doe's interests."*

2) *"I asked Jane Doe if she wanted an advocate with her; she declined."*

3) *"I conducted an interview with Jane Doe and learned the following information. . . ."*

4) *"I checked to make sure the suspect was not a threat to Jane Doe."*

5) *"I received consent from Jane Doe about her having a Sexual Assault Kit examination done for her well-being."*

Realize that there may be other reportable actions you did during this phase of the investigation.

## **Witnesses**

**Slide 11:** Provide as much information as you can about any witnesses, their relationship with the survivor or suspect, and what observations the witnesses shared.

*"I spoke to Ms. Smith, Jane Doe's best friend. Ms. Smith indicated she didn't witness the incident firsthand, but Jane Doe reported the sexual assault to her after Jane Doe was able to escape from the suspect's house."*

## **Crime Scene**

**Slide 12:** The report should describe each of the three initial crime scenes: the survivor, the suspect, and the actual location where the alleged assault took place. Describe what steps you took when investigating each crime scene.

*"I applied for and was granted a search warrant on January 3, 2019, for the suspect's vehicle where the incident occurred. The vehicle had been impounded at the Police Impound and had been secured with evidence tape. The seal had not been broken until I opened the door. I used Officers Bee and Cee to assist in the search of the vehicle. During the search I located the following items of evidence[...]."*

## **Evidence Collection**

**Slide 13:** Evidence collection is a crucial component of an offense report. Describe in detail how you collected and stored evidence collection. Let's take a look at a few examples.

1) *"I received written consent from the suspect to obtain a saliva sample for DNA purposes. I used a buccal swab collection kit and followed the directions. Once the swab was dry, I packaged the swab according to department policy and placed the swab into evidence."*

2) *"I learned from Jane Doe that the clothing she was wearing the night of the assault had been placed in a laundry basket at her residence. After Jane Doe had been released from the hospital, I went to her home and she showed me where the clothing was located. I photographed the clothing and, wearing sterile gloves, placed each individual piece of clothing in a paper sack, sealed the sack with evidence tape, initialed the bag, and secured the items in the department's evidence locker."*

## **Suspect Investigation**

**Slide 14:** Describe in as much detail as needed your interaction with the suspect. Here are a few ways.

1) *"Prior to contacting Mr. Suspect, I was told by Jane Doe that she was willing to conduct a pretext phone call with Mr. Suspect. I applied for and received a search warrant to conduct a pretext phone call. I prepared a script for Jane Doe. On January 8, 2019, at about 1900 hours and using Jane Doe's phone, she contacted Mr. Suspect and during a lengthy conversation got Mr. Suspect to admit that Jane Doe had repeatedly told Mr. Suspect that she did not want to have sex with him. Mr. Suspect began crying and said he was sorry for doing what he had done. Mr. Suspect begged Jane Doe not to go to the police. The phone call was concluded. I seized the recording as evidence."*

2) *"I contacted Mr. Suspect on January 10, 2019, around 1900 hours by calling his cell phone. Mr. Suspect answered. I identified myself to Mr. Suspect and asked him to come to the Law and Justice Center to talk to me about the incident. Mr. Suspect asked what it was about. I let Mr. Suspect know it had to do with a situation with a woman the other night. Mr. Suspect said it was a consensual encounter but was willing to come in and talk to me."*

3) *"When Mr. Suspect arrived at the law and justice center on January 11, 2019, at 0800 hours, I immediately advised Mr. Suspect of his Miranda Warning. Mr. Suspect stated he understood his rights and agreed to speak to me."*

4) *"After hearing Mr. Suspect's initial account of the incident, there were many discrepancies from the video I found on his Facebook feed. I pressed Mr. Suspect about the discrepancies, and he broke down crying and said he ignored the survivor's pleas to stop and forcibly had sexual intercourse with her."*

5) *"I provided Mr. Suspect with a copy of the search warrant after showing him the original that ordered me to take photographs of injuries the survivor reported would be on his body."*

6) *"After completing my interview with Mr. Suspect, I advised Mr. Suspect that I had a valid arrest warrant, and he was under arrest for the offense of sexual intercourse without consent."*

## **Photography**

**Slide 15:** Report on any photographs you took during the investigation.

*"On January 3, 2019, at police impound, I photographed the suspect's blue 2000 Dodge pickup, bearing MT plate 91-0001. I started by photographing indications that the vehicle had not been entered. I photographed the entire vehicle prior to entering. After entering the vehicle, I photographed all items of evidence. I made a photolog which is attached to this report. I placed the photos onto a CD and placed the CD into evidence."*

If you obtained photos from an outside source, report on them as well.

*"During Ms. Smith's interview, she indicated she had taken a photo of the suspect's vehicle. Ms. Smith indicated she would e-mail the photograph to me. Ms. Smith e-mailed the photograph to my department e-mail where I copied the photo to a CD and placed the CD into evidence."*

## **Video**

**Slide 16:** If you used any type of video recording device to record any part of the investigation, describe that process.

1) *"In speaking to the witnesses in this case, I recorded those interviews on my WatchGuard Body Camera, #1, which I placed in a docking station, then downloaded and stored the video in the department's secure evidence location. The video was noted on the evidence form."*

2) *"I recorded Mr. Suspect's interview from PD Interview Room #1. I burned the interview to CD and placed the CD into evidence."*

Likewise, if you obtained video from an outside source during the investigation, describe that as well.

*"I learned from Mr. Laarsen, owner of The Far Side Lounge, that he had surveillance video of the area where the alleged incident took place. Mr. Laarsen reviewed his video and found the survivor and suspect in the location described by the survivor. Mr. Laarsen provided me a thumb drive with the video. I looked at the video for evidence purposes and found it to corroborate what the survivor indicated had happened. The thumb drive has been placed in secure evidence."*

## **Supporting Documentation**

**Slide 17:** If you obtained any type of supporting documentation, report on that documentation, such as:

Written Statements: *"I obtained a written statement from Ms. Smith on January 9, 2019. I have attached the statement to this initial report."*

Logs: *"I completed a photolog of the photos taken at Mr. Suspect's residence. See attached photo log."*

Sketches: *"Officer Bee provided a rough sketch of the parking lot of The Far Side Lounge where the incident occurred. The sketch is not to scale. It is attached to this report."*

Notes: *"I have kept my field notes and placed them in an evidence envelope. The notes were placed into evidence."*

Evidence Lists: *"A copy of a list of all evidence has been attached to this report."*

Search Warrant: *"I have attached signed copies of the search warrant application, search warrant, search warrant return, search warrant receipt, and custody order to this report. The originals have been returned to the court."*

Victim's Rights: *"I advised Jane Doe of her victim's rights as afforded to her by state statute. A copy of the PD victim's rights form was given directly to Jane Doe, the original is attached to this report, and a copy was provided to the victim's advocate."*

## **Lab Submission**

**Slide 18:** Report any evidence, particularly the Sexual Assault Kit, submitted to the crime lab.

*"On January 9, 2019, I took the Sexual Assault Kit of Jane Doe and packaged it according to crime lab standards. I placed the packaged kit in a FedEx box, filled out the delivery label, and contacted FedEx to pick up the package. FedEx arrived and took the package for delivery. See the copy of the FedEx label, attached to this report. I logged onto the DOJ/SAK Kit Tracking System and indicated that the kit had been shipped. On February 10, 2019, I received confirmation from the crime lab the kit had been received."*

Also, place into the report any other pertinent evidence sent to the crime lab for analysis.

*“On January 10, 2019, I took the clothing of Jane Doe taken as evidence and sent it via US Postal Service Certified Return Receipt Requested to the crime lab. The clothing was properly packaged according to crime lab standards prior to shipping.”*

## **Follow-Up**

**Slide 19:** Before you complete the initial offense report, consider whether you need to do any follow-up, including what may be required by a specialized division. -- Include in the report things such as:

Specialized Investigations: If your investigation and report will be forwarded to a specialized detective, include this in the report.

*“I have completed my initial investigation and report which will be forwarded to Detective Dee for any further follow-up. Jane Doe was advised of Detective Dee’s desk phone and that she should call on January 20, 2019, to give Detective Dee time to review the case. I advised Jane Doe that she could call me with any questions or if she couldn’t get in touch with Detective Dee.”*

**Slide 20:** Interviews: You may have supplemental interviews to conduct and should note them in your report.

*“I have completed my initial investigation into the matter and will need to conduct follow-up interviews with Jane Doe and Ms. Smith about the night of the incident. I also learned during Mr. Suspect’s interview that an interview may need to be conducted with Mr. Suspect’s ex-wife. I will attempt to complete those interviews in a timely fashion.”*

**Slide 21:** Social Media: You may need to follow-up on social media aspects of the case. Be sure to document what that follow-up will be.

- 1) *“I will be following up with a subpoena to Instagram for connection information for Mr. Suspect’s Instagram account.”*
- 2) *“I will be following up with Facebook by making a preservation request for Mr. Suspect’s account.”*
- 3) *“I will be applying for a search warrant for Mr. Suspect’s Google e-mail account for videos made by Mr. Suspect and submitted to an amateur revenge pornography site.”*

**Slide 22:** Technology: You may have to conduct follow-up on any technology taken during the investigation.

- 1) *“I will be following up by conducting a Cellebrite extraction on Jane Doe’s iPhone 8 which was provided by consent.”*
- 2) *“I will be following up by applying for a search warrant for Mr. Suspect’s Samsung Galaxy smart phone, which is currently in evidence. The Smartphone will be sent to the computer crime lab for analysis.”*

**Slide 23:** Undercover Operations: Document any further undercover operations conducted after the initial investigation.

*“Jane Doe contacted me during the investigation and said Mr. Suspect had been using Facebook to message her about the incident. Jane Doe indicated Mr. Suspect made threats of bodily harm if she didn’t respond to his messages. I asked Jane Doe if she would consent to allowing me access to her Facebook account so I could converse with Mr. Suspect because it appeared Mr. Suspect was involved in*

*committing another offense. Jane Doe agreed to allow me access and filled out the online identity assumption consent form. I will be conducting undercover operations in a timely manner.”*

**Slide 24:** Lab Results: In the follow-up portion of the initial offense report, you should document any lab reports that will be coming in.

*“I am waiting for the results of the analysis of the Sexual Assault Kit to see if Mr. Suspect’s DNA was found on swabs in Jane Doe’s Sexual Assault Kit. Mr. Suspect denied having any sexual contact with Jane Doe, but during the sexual assault examination the examiner used an alternative light source and informed me that it indicated that seminal fluid was present around the groin area of Jane Doe.”*

**Slide 25:** And finally, let’s look an example report. Can you identify the different sections we’ve talked about in this course?

**Slide 26:** In this course, you have learned how to write a full report.

**Slide 27:** Thank you for completing this course. Select “Close” to exit.