

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS

OPERATIONS ORDER NO. 8

May 9, 2018

SUBJECT: STUART HOUSE INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES – REVISED

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Order is to clarify the investigative criteria and procedures for juvenile sexual assault cases, which now include 77th Street and Southwest Areas, in addition to Operations-West Bureau. This Order supersedes Office of Operations Order No. 1, *Stuart House Investigative Procedures – Revised*, dated October 23, 2009.

BACKGROUND: The Los Angeles Police Department has had investigators assigned to Stuart House since its inception in 1988. At that time, the jurisdiction of Stuart House only covered Operations-West Bureau sexual assault cases that met the Abused Child Section (ACS), Juvenile Division (JD), criteria where the suspect of the child abuse was a parent, step-parent, legal guardian, live-in boyfriend/girlfriend of the parent or guardian, or anyone who had assumed the role of parent or legal guardian.

The Department has recently expanded the Stuart House Unit to include ALL sexual assault cases where the victim is a minor, and the crime occurred in the 77th Street or Southwest Areas, regardless of the relationship between the victim and the suspect.

Investigations involving sexually abused children are among the most sensitive criminal investigations undertaken by law enforcement. The interview of a sexually abused child can be traumatic for the victim. In addition, when a child is subjected to multiple interviews, every subsequent interview may cause further trauma.

One of the primary goals of Stuart House is to minimize the number of interviews a child must endure. The program concept is to make available, at one location, a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) of personnel from law enforcement, the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, the City Attorney's Office, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, and medical and psychological services. The goal is for the interview of the victim to be conducted by a Certified Forensic Interviewer, while all other members of the MDT observe the interview from an adjoining room, separated by a two-way mirror.

PROCEDURE: The following criteria shall be used to determine whether a case is referred to Stuart House for investigation:

- It reasonably appears that the child is the victim of a sexual assault (Rape, Oral Copulation, Sodomy, Digital Penetration/Penetration with a Foreign Object, Child Annoying, Unlawful Sex and Sexual Battery);
- The victim is under the age of 18 and the suspect is an adult (18 and older); and,
- The incident occurred within the boundaries of West Los Angeles, Pacific (excluding LAX), Hollywood, Wilshire, Olympic, 77th Street, or Southwest Areas.

For incidents occurring in the West Los Angeles, Pacific, Hollywood, Wilshire, or Olympic Areas:

- Stuart House shall only assume investigative responsibility for cases where the suspect is a parent, step-parent, legal guardian, live-in boyfriend/girlfriend of the parent or guardian, or anyone who has assumed the role of parent or legal guardian; or,
- Sexual Assault Detail, Operations-West Bureau (OWB), shall assume responsibility for all sexual abuse cases, regardless of the victim's age when the suspect has been identified as anyone other than a parent, step-parent, legal guardian, live-in boyfriend/girlfriend of the parent or guardian, or any other person who has assumed the role of parent or legal guardian.

For incidents occurring in 77th Street or Southwest Areas:

- Stuart House shall assume investigative responsibility for ALL juvenile sexual abuse cases regardless of the relationship that the adult suspect might have to the victim, if any.

Note: Regardless of the location of occurrence, Stuart House will not investigate non-crime incidents, such as Injury Reports, Child on Child Sex Incidents, Undetermined Sexual Assaults (non-crime), or any cases in which the suspect(s) is a minor (17 and under) or the victim is an adult at the time of disclosing the sexual abuse (i.e., delayed reporting).

I. PATROL OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES. This Order does not change patrol officer's responsibilities to adhere to established policy and procedures, ensuring children are protected and the appropriate reports are completed. Refer to Section V of this Order for Medical Evaluation Information. When responding to a child sexual abuse call, officers shall:

- Conduct the preliminary interview to establish what crime, if any, has occurred;
- If the investigation meets the Stuart House criteria, contact Stuart House detectives for advisement during normal business hours, Monday-Friday, at (424) 259-7100. During non-business hours and weekends, contact the Department Operations Center (DOC); who will contact the on-call supervisor from the Abused Child Unit, JD, to advise on all child abuse cases; and,
- Once the preliminary investigation has been completed, it is imperative that every effort is made to provide the Stuart House with a copy of the report as soon as practical. Crime reports, 300 Welfare and Institution Code Protective Custodies, and in-custody arrest reports that meet the Stuart House criteria, shall be scanned and emailed to the assigned Stuart House ACS Supervisor or mailed via Interdepartmental Mail; addressed to JD, Stuart House, Stop 400, or placed in the Stuart House inbox located within JD.

Note: Officers may also contact the following entities for advice and guidance: Area Juvenile Coordinator, JD, and for crimes occurring in OWB Areas, the Sexual Assault Detail, OWB.

II. STUART HOUSE INVESTIGATOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES. When a case meets the Stuart House investigative guidelines, the assigned investigating officer shall:

- As soon as possible, arrange a date and time with the Stuart House scheduler at (424) 259-7107, to conduct a comprehensive forensic interview and/or medical examination with the child;

Note: The assigned Stuart House investigator **should** ensure that the initial interview conducted with the victim and/or witness is done at the Stuart House and is conducted by a Certified Forensic Interviewer. This interview will be conducted in the presence of the investigating officer and other designated personnel of the MDT who will monitor this interview from an adjacent room separated by a two-way mirror.

- Ensure the child has adequate transportation to and from Stuart House;
- After the interview, consult with the Stuart House MDT to discuss the interview results, merits of the case, and to develop a plan for follow-up;
- Present the case to the appropriate prosecutor from the District Attorney's or City Attorney's Office; and,
- Participate in the weekly Stuart House team meetings and be prepared to discuss all incoming cases from the week prior.

III. DETECTIVE SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES. The concerned detective supervisor shall:

- Review all child abuse reports to ensure they meet the Stuart House investigative guidelines, and that they are handled according to the procedures established by this Order;
- Review all Follow-Up Investigation Reports, Form 03.14.00, documenting a child abuse investigation, to ensure they meet the Stuart House's investigative guidelines, and were handled according to the procedures established by this Order; and,
- Collect and maintain all COMPSTAT data, which will include the cases assigned, cases filed, cases cleared, arrests made, search warrants and backlog. Stuart House will record and take statistical credit for ALL cases assigned to Stuart House investigators.

JUVENILE DIVISION COMMANDING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES. The Commanding Officer, Juvenile Division, shall:

- Conduct periodic evaluations to determine if Department personnel are adhering to the procedures established by this Order; and,
- Serve on the Stuart House Interagency Management Committee and attend quarterly meetings.

IV. MEDICAL EVALUATION INFORMATION. The medical examination of a suspected child abuse victim is an important component of these investigations. Special attention should be given to the necessity of a medical examination. Officers shall have the child examined under the following conditions:

- The sexual assault or sexual abuse occurred within the last 120 hours;
- The suspect has had access to the minor within the last 120 hours;
- There is reason to believe evidence of injury is still present on the minor's body even though more than 120 hours have passed since the sexual assault; or,
- There is a need to protect the immediate health and safety of the child.

Officers shall have the child examined at a hospital that has been certified to conduct pediatric sexual assault/abuse "acute" examinations. A Sexual Assault Evidence Kit will be completed and collected, at which time the evidence will be released to the officer so it can be properly booked as evidence.

For all Stuart House cases, the evidentiary examination should be conducted at the Santa Monica Rape Treatment Center (RTC) Medical/Forensic Facility, which is a certified facility and available 24 hours a day.

When transporting a minor for a medical examination, the officers shall contact the RTC counselor at (424) 259-7208, and the Stuart House Supervisor at (424) 259-7100, during regular business hours to advise the RTC staff they are enroute. For non-business hours and weekends, contact the Department Operations Center to be connected to the Juvenile Division "On-Call" ACS Supervisor for advisement.

If a child discloses abuse that occurred beyond the 120 hours, an exam can still be offered. The Stuart House offers scheduled, non-acute, expert child sexual assault/abuse examinations. These examinations shall be authorized by law enforcement and the investigating officer shall schedule examination appointments in advance by contacting the Stuart House scheduler at (424) 259-7107. These examinations normally are conducted during regular business hours.

AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY: The Commanding Officer, Audit Division, shall review this directive and determine whether an audit or inspection shall be conducted in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

Any questions regarding this Order should be directed to the Abused Child Section – Stuart House, Juvenile Division, at (424) 259-7100.



**MICHEL R. MOORE, First Assistant Chief
Director, Office of Operations**

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