

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS

ORDER NO. 20

December 1, 1989

TO: All Concerned Personnel, Office of Operations

FROM: Director, Office of Operations

SUBJECT: FINGERPRINT INVESTIGATIONS - SUPPLEMENTAL PROCEDURES

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

PURPOSE

The results of a recent audit of fingerprint investigations disclosed that only 41 percent of the residential and business burglaries in the City are investigated for latent prints. In order to increase the quality and quantity of fingerprint investigations, nine new forensic print experts have been added to Scientific Investigation Division (SID).

This Order is intended to augment Office of Operations (O.O.) Orders No. 30, 1986, and No. 1, 1988, Fingerprint Investigations. Additionally, the Order directs Area commanding officers to ensure that all residential and business burglaries are investigated for latent prints or reviewed by the detective division Burglary Coordinator.

INFORMATION

Members of the community expect the Department to conduct thorough and complete preliminary investigations of crimes. At times, the value of fingerprints as evidence is underestimated by officers. In addition, this powerful class of evidence is seldom discovered and preserved.

It is imperative that the Department recognize latent prints as a tremendous crime fighting tool and take steps to ensure that this valuable evidence is not overlooked at crime scenes. This can be effectively accomplished by requiring Area commanding officers to ensure that all residential and business burglary crime scenes are scheduled for on-scene print investigations, or that the burglary reports are reviewed by the detective division Burglary Coordinator for the possibility of obtaining latent prints. If a fingerprint investigation is not conducted by patrol officers during the preliminary investigation, and there is a possibility of obtaining prints, then the Area Latent Print Officer (ALPO) or a forensic print expert from SID shall be requested to conduct the fingerprint investigation.

PROCEDURE

Area Commanding Officers' Responsibilities

Area commanding officers shall ensure that:

- * Controls are established to ensure that all residential and business burglaries in the Area are investigated for latent prints, or that the burglary reports are reviewed by the detective division Burglary Coordinator for the possibility of obtaining latent prints.
- * Officers do not complete a short form Preliminary Investigation Report (PIR), Form 3.01, solely for the purpose of circumventing a proper fingerprint investigation.
- * The duties of the Area Latent Print Coordinator are assigned to the detective division Burglary Coordinator.
- * Officers, who conduct any preliminary investigation where there is a possibility that latent prints will enhance the criminal investigation, conduct a fingerprint investigation or make the appropriate request for prints.
- * Officers are familiar with and adhere to O.O. Orders No. 30, 1986, and No. 1, 1988, Fingerprint Investigations.

Detective Division Burglary Coordinators' Responsibilities

Detective Division Burglary Coordinators shall:

- * Assume the duties of Area Latent Print Coordinator (Refer to O.O. Order No. 30, 1986, Fingerprint Investigations).
- * Review each burglary report for the possibility of obtaining latent prints. If based on the burglary coordinator's review a fingerprint investigation is needed, then schedule an appointment with Latent Print Section, SID or the ALPO. In addition, ensure that each print request is completed with minimal delay.
- * Maintain liaison with the Latent Print Section, SID, to ensure that all fingerprint investigations that cannot be handled by ALPO's or qualified patrol officers are assigned to SID.
- * Determine if a log should be maintained at the patrol division watch commander's desk to record fingerprint requests during off-hours, so that fingerprint investigations that are not conducted by ALPO's or patrol officers are assigned by the Burglary Coordinator.

Note: SID has increased its deployment and more forensic print experts are now available to respond to crime scenes. Officers should be encouraged to use the services of SID if no ALPO's are available.

- * When SID has been requested to conduct a fingerprint investigation, ensure that the concerned detective contacts SID to determine if identifiable lifts were obtained.
- * Ensure that ALPO's and patrol officers do not conduct fingerprint investigations at major crime scenes such as rapes, homicides, kidnappings or other crimes which are the responsibility of SID, per LAPD Manual section 2/670.31.

Officers' Responsibilities

Officers shall ensure that:

- * A thorough, professional and vigorous examination has been made to locate all pieces of physical evidence, including latent prints.
- * Excuses such as "contamination", "dirty surfaces", or "short form PIR", are not used as means to circumvent a proper fingerprint investigation.
- * If a fingerprint investigation is not conducted at the time a residential or business burglary report is taken, the ALPO shall be notified to respond to the scene and conduct an examination for latent prints.
- * If an ALPO is not available for immediate response, the officer conducting the preliminary investigation may record the necessary information on a fingerprint investigation request log that may be kept at the watch commander's desk. This will alert the Detective Burglary Coordinator that an on-scene fingerprint investigation needs to be completed by the ALPO or SID.
- * If a fingerprint investigation will be conducted by the ALPO or an SID forensic print expert at a later time, all printable items are placed in an area where they will not be contaminated. If this is not practicable, then advise the victim not to clean-up the printable surfaces until the ALPO or the forensic print expert has completed his/her work.
- * SID is notified to respond to the crime scene as soon as practicable if printable surfaces cannot be isolated or secured.
- * If a fingerprint investigation is referred to SID instead of the ALPO, the name and serial number of the SID employee who received the officer's request shall be listed in the "notification" box on the PIR.



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Director
Office of Operations