

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

May 27, 2015
14.2

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT AUDIT (AD NO. 14-078)

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. The Board of Police Commissioners REVIEW and APPROVE the attached Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) Audit.
2. The Board of Police Commissioners REVIEW and APPROVE the attached Executive Summary thereto.

DISCUSSION

Audit Division conducted the SCAR Audit to evaluate adherence with related Department policies and procedures.

If additional information regarding this audit is required, please contact Arif Alikhan, Director, Office of Constitutional Policing and Policy, at (213) 486-8730.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Charlie Beck', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police

Attachment

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT AUDIT
(AD No. 14-078)



Conducted by
AUDIT DIVISION

CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police

May 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT AUDIT

	PAGE No.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
PURPOSE	1
BACKGROUND	1
PRIOR AUDITS	1
METHODOLOGY	1
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	2
DETAILED FINDINGS	2
OBJECTIVE NO. 1 EVALUATION OF SCAR PROTOCOL	2
OBJECTIVE NO. 1(A) IMMEDIATE DISPATCH OR DELAYED HANDLING	2
OBJECTIVE NO. 1(B) COMPLETION AND EVALUATION OF SCAR PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION	3
OBJECTIVE NO. 1(C) THOROUGHNESS OF INVESTIGATION	4
OBJECTIVE NO. 2 EVALUATION OF FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION	4
OBJECTIVE NO. 2(A) COMPLETION AND THOROUGHNESS OF FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION	5
OBJECTIVE NO. 2(B) FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION EVALUATED FOR PROPER DISPOSITION	5
ACTIONS TAKEN/MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE	6

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT AUDIT**

**Conducted by
Audits Division
First Quarter, Fiscal Year 2014/15**

PURPOSE

In accordance with the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) Annual Audit and Inspection Plan for fiscal year 2014/15, Audit Division conducted the Suspected Child Abuse Report audit (SCAR). The SCAR audit is performed to determine if the internal controls within each Area are effective to ensure they are operating within Department policies and procedures, as well as other established criteria set forth by State and federal guidelines.

BACKGROUND

This was the first SCAR audit conducted. The audit was conducted in an effort to provide timely information to Department management pertaining to SCARs. The audit included an evaluation of the Department's Electronic-Suspected Child Abuse Reports and SCARs, Investigative Report, Form 03.01.00, Follow-Up Investigations, Form 03.14.00, and Injury Reports, Form 03.15.00, associated with SCARs.

SUMMARY OF AUDIT FINDINGS

The audit evaluated five areas. The Department had 100 percent compliance in three of the five areas; Evaluation of SCAR Investigations, Thoroughness of Follow-Up Investigation, and Follow-Up Investigations evaluated for Proper Disposition.

The Department had 99 percent compliance in the remaining two objectives. The objectives are listed below:

- Immediate Response Required for SCAR; and,
- Thoroughness of the Investigation based on the Injury

CONCLUSION

A review of the findings from the audit revealed that the Department is in compliance with significant policies and procedures when investigating SCARs. Having internal controls helps to safeguard the Department from risk management issues.

ACTIONS TAKEN/MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE

Audit Division presented the audit report and findings to the Director, Office of Operations, Chief of Detectives, and Commanding Officer, Juvenile Division, whom were all in general agreement with the findings.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT AUDIT

Conducted by

Audit Division

First Quarter, Fiscal Year 2014/15

PURPOSE

In accordance with the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) Annual Audit and Inspection Plan for fiscal year 2014/15, Audit Division (AD) conducted the Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) audit. The SCAR audit is performed to determine if the internal controls within each Area are effective to ensure they are operating within Department policies and procedures, as well as other established criteria set forth by State and federal guidelines.

Audits Division conducted this performance audit under the guidance of generally accepted government auditing standards, specifically pertaining to performing the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. Audit Division has determined that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives.

BACKGROUND

Audit Division developed the SCAR audit to address risk management issues, assess operations, and provide timely information to Department management pertaining SCAR investigative procedures.

PRIOR AUDITS

This is the first SCAR audit conducted by AD.

METHODOLOGY

Scope

The audit included an evaluation of the Department's Electronic-Suspected Child Abuse Reports (E-SCARS) and SCARs, Investigative Reports (IRs), Form 03.01.00, Follow-Up Investigations, Form 03.14.00, and Injury Investigations, Form 03.15.00 associated with SCARs.¹

The period reviewed was June 1, 2014, to June 30, 2014. The audit steps employed are further delineated under each audit objective.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork was performed between August 11, 2014, and September 5, 2014.

¹Electronic-Suspected Child Abuse Reports are generated reports from the Department of Children and Family Services, as well as the Department. A SCAR is a hand written report usually generated at a school and then entered into the database.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**Table No. 1 – Summary of the Audit Findings**

Objective No.	Description of Audit Objectives	2014/15 Department Totals
1	Evaluation of SCAR Protocol	
1(a)	Immediate Dispatch or Delayed Handling	152/153 (99%)
1(b)	Completion and Evaluation of SCAR Preliminary Investigation	153/153 (100%)
1(c)	Thoroughness of the Investigation	152/153 (99%)
2	Evaluation of Follow-Up Investigation	
2(a)	Completion and Thoroughness of Follow-Up Investigation	51/51 (100%)
2(b)	Follow-Up Investigation Evaluated for Proper Disposition	51/51 (100%)

DETAILED FINDINGS**Objective No. 1 – Evaluation of SCAR Protocol**

This objective included the review of E-SCARs and SCARs. Each SCAR was evaluated to determine whether the protocol for an Immediate Response was followed. The SCARs were evaluated as to whether the incident was properly classified as a crime, requiring an IR or Injury Investigation, and to ensure that each allegation was thoroughly investigated and documented on the proper report.

Audit Division identified 153 E-SCARs. Auditors obtained copies of the SCARs from Juvenile Division, as well as directly from the respective Area's Records Units.

Objective No. 1(a) – Immediate Dispatch or Delayed Handling**Criteria**

Department Manual Section 4/218.53, Reporting SCAR Investigations, states, "*Immediate Dispatch. A patrol unit shall be immediately dispatched when any of the following are involved:*

- *An allegation of sexual abuse; or,*
- *Physical abuse with visible injury; or,*
- *"Severe neglect requiring medical treatment; or,*
- *Hospitalization for internal injuries of a suspicious nature."*

“Exceptions to Immediate Dispatch – Delayed Handling. *The dispatch of a unit to investigate a SCAR may be delayed or handled in an alternate manner, if any of the following apply:*

- *The SCAR does not meet the criteria for immediate dispatch; or,*
- *The SCAR meets the criteria for immediate dispatch, but a supervisor from the handling Department entity approves delayed handling (A period not to exceed 24 hours in furtherance of the investigation, after giving due consideration to the risk factors involving the child and any siblings); or,”*
- *“Alleged sexual abuse that occurred more than 72 hours earlier and the perpetrator has no direct or likely access to the child; or,*
- *When an injury or crime report has already been taken for the incident reported in the SCAR.”*

Audit Procedures

Audit Division reviewed 153 SCARs to determine whether each report was properly assigned for immediate dispatch or delayed handling. Reports that were properly assigned, according to the aforementioned criteria, met the standards for this objective.

Findings

One hundred fifty-two (99%) of the 153 SCARs met the standard for this objective. The report that did not meet the standards is detailed below:

Southeast Area

- Divisional Record No. 14-18-14349 – The reporting person observed a small bruise on the victim’s face. Due to the visible injury on the victim, the allegation required an immediate response; however, a patrol unit was not immediately dispatched to investigate the allegation. Although the child abuse allegation was reported on 06/23/14, the investigation was not conducted until 07/16/14.

Objective No. 1(b) – Completion and Evaluation of SCAR Preliminary Investigation

Criteria

Department Manual Section 4/218.52, states, *“Cases of juveniles as victims of possible sexual molestation, or physical or mental abuse, shall be reported on an Injury Report, Form 03.15.00, where the circumstances do not appear to warrant completion of a crime report. Officers shall follow the procedures outlined in Manual Section 4/218.51 in completing the report.”*

Audit Procedures

Suspected Child Abuse Reports were reviewed to determine whether each instance of suspected child abuse was investigated and if a corresponding IR or Injury Investigation was completed. Suspected Child Abuse Reports with a corresponding IR or Injury Investigation that documented the results of each allegation of child abuse met the standards for this objective.

Findings

Each (100%) of the 153 SCARs and related reports met the standards for this objective.

Objective No. 1(c) – Thoroughness of the Investigation

Criteria

Department Manual Section 4/218.51, states, “*Cases of juveniles as victims of possible child abuse including sexual molestation and physical or mental abuse must be reported by the officer first coming in contact with the suspected victim. Officers within the City of Los Angeles must:*

- *Ensure that the circumstances surrounding any injuries sustained by the child are investigated and that appropriate crime, arrest and/or injury reports are completed.”*

Audit Procedures

This objective included the review of the SCARs, as well as the IRs and Injury Investigation associated with the SCARs. Each IR and Injury Investigation was reviewed to determine if all allegations noted in the SCARs were addressed and investigated.

Findings

One hundred fifty-two (99%) of the 153 IRs and Injury Investigations met the standards for this objective. The report that did not meet the standard is detailed below:

Devonshire Area

- Divisional Record No. 14-17-11032 – The SCAR contained two allegations of physical abuse. The allegation of physical abuse against the victim’s sibling was investigated; however, there was no evidence that the allegation of physical abuse against the parent of the victim was documented as a crime or an injury.

Objective No. 2 – Evaluation of Follow-Up Investigation

Of the 153 SCARs, 51 reports required a Follow-Up Investigation to be completed. This objective included the review of the 51 IRs associated with SCARs that were completed by all personnel assigned to investigate child abuse allegations. The relevant IRs were reviewed to

determine if the criteria for Follow-Up Investigation was conducted, and documented, on a Follow-Up Investigation.

Audit Division reviewed 51 IRs and related Follow-Up Investigations that were associated with a SCAR.

Objective No. 2(a) – Completion and Thoroughness of Follow-Up Investigation

Criteria

Detective Operations Manual volume I/100.01, states, *“Purpose of form, The Follow-up Investigation, Form 3.14, is the Department’s primary form used to record additional information and results of investigation after completion of the original crime or incident report. It is an integral part of the Department’s reporting system and may be the basis for criminal or civil litigation.”*

Audit Procedures

Each IR was reviewed to determine whether a Follow-Up Investigation was completed. Investigative Reports which had a related, pertinent, or corresponding Follow-Up Investigation met the standards.

Findings

Each (100%) of the 51 applicable reports met the standards for this objective.

Objective No. 2(b) – Follow-Up Investigation Evaluated for Proper Disposition

Criteria

Detective Operations Manual volume I/152.01, states, *“When a crime report is “Cleared by Arrest” or “Cleared Other,” it means that the detective has solved the crime and has taken all possible, appropriate action against at least one suspect. It also means that no further action or investigation is expected to take place regarding the suspect unless it is required for furtherance of the prosecution or unless additional information is brought to the detective’s attention.”*

Detective Operations Manual volume I/152.30, states, *“Report Unfounded”*: shall be indicated when:

- *The crime or incident alleged in the original report did not occur, or did not occur (e.g., victim recants) in the City of Los Angeles.*
- *The same crime or incident has been reported more than once. (The most accurate and thorough crime report shall be retained. Any additional report should be unfounded).*

Detective Operations Manual volume I/152.40, states, *“Investigation Continued”* shall be indicated when:

- *The case has not been cleared or unfounded, and the investigation is continuing.*
- *The case has not been cleared or unfounded and no other case status applies.*
- *A non-crime report does not share a DR number with a crime report, and the non-crime report is not unfounded.*

Audit Procedures

Follow-Up Investigations that detailed investigative efforts and appropriate disposition met the standards.

Findings

Each (100%) of the 51 Follow-Up Investigations met the standards for this objective.

ACTIONS TAKEN/MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE

Audit Division presented the audit report and findings to the Director, Office of Operations, Chief of Detectives, and Commanding Officer, Juvenile Division, whom were all in general agreement with the findings.