INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

February 26, 2021
14.2

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ONLINE REPORTING SERVICE AUDIT (AD NO. 20-011)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Board of Police Commissioners REVIEW and APPROVE the attached Community Online Reporting Service Audit.

DISCUSSION

Audit Division conducted the Community Online Reporting Service Audit in accordance with the 2020 Annual Audit Plan to assess internal controls relative to established Department policies, procedures, and guidelines.

If additional information regarding this audit is required, please contact Trina Unzicker, Commanding Officer, Audit Division, at (213) 486-8480.

Respectfully,

MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

Attachment

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

Community Online Reporting Service AUDIT

(AD No. 20-011)

Conducted by
AUDIT DIVISION

MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

February 2021

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AD No. 20-011

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Conducted by
Audit Division
2020

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OVERVIEW

In accordance with the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) 2020 Annual Audit Plan,[1] Audit Division (AD) reviewed the Community Online Reporting Service (CORS) which is a program that allows online access for community members (CM) to generate police reports. The audit evaluated the program's internal controls relative to established policies, procedures, and guidelines. This is the first CORS audit conducted by AD.[2]

The audit period was January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020, and auditors determined the following:

- Reports were approved within required timeframes 93 percent of the time *(Objective No. 1[a])*;

- Reports were rejected as required 100 percent of the time *(Objective No. 1[b])*; and,

- Filing criteria was met 100 percent of the time *(Objective No. 2)*.

BACKGROUND

The Department entered into an agreement with LexisNexis in 2015 to automate, maintain electronically, and disseminate law enforcement incident reports. In 2016, the Department launched CORS which provides CMs with a secure and effective method to report minor incidents through the LexisNexis website.[3] A CM can file reports through the CORS internet connection and Department personnel review and approve or reject the reports through this system. This process takes place within a third-party environment and LAPD has limited access to review and process the records within the system. In order to file an online report, the crime(s) must occur within the Los Angeles city limits and cannot involve any injuries, firearms, or a known suspect.[4] The crime also cannot occur on a State highway.

The CORS is a Departmental collaboration among the Office of Operations (OO), Department Operations Center (DOC), and Application Development and Support Division (ADSD). The OO handles the policy components of the program, the DOC is responsible for processing the online service reports, and ADSD handles the technical aspects of the service.

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[1] This audit was originally titled "Online Reporting Service Audit" in the 2020 Annual Audit Plan.
[2] This audit was conducted in accordance with the U.S. Government Accountability Office *Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards,* July 2018 Revision.
[3] See *Department Manual* Volume 4, Section 274.25 "Community Online Reporting System."
[4] See Page 5 for the types of reports that can be filed online.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Auditors obtained a Department-wide population of 16,947 reports filed through CORS from January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020.[5] Auditors then selected a statistically valid and stratified random sample of 138 reports (69 approved reports and 69 rejected reports) representing each of the 17 crime codes documented within CORS. This sample was evaluated by comparing internal controls and filing criteria compliance with existing policies, procedures, and program guidelines.[6]

The following table summarizes the findings for the two objectives and sub-objectives:

Table No. 1 – Summary of Findings

Objective No.	Description of Audit Objectives	Number Meeting Standards / Evaluated	Percent Meeting Standards
1	Evaluation of Program Internal Controls		
1(a)	Approved Reports	64/69	93%
1(b)	Rejected Reports	69/69	100%
2	Evaluation of Report Filing Criteria	69/69	100%

DETAILED FINDINGS

Objective No. 1 - Evaluation of Program Internal Controls

This Objective was divided into two sub-objectives to better evaluate the adequacy of internal controls over program operations. Report submissions, review and approval processes, rejected reports, area assignments, follow-ups, and report closeout procedures were also evaluated. Auditors reviewed internal controls determining whether the reports were properly approved and rejected and whether follow-ups were conducted pursuant to the criteria outlined in the CORS User Handbook.

Objective No. 1(a) – Approved Reports

Criteria

The CORS User Handbook requires DOC personnel to approve or reject all reports submitted through the CORS within 24 hours excluding holidays and weekends. The CM who files the report receives a temporary report tracking number and, when appropriate, a follow-up link with a pre-populated response message.[7] Area Records is required to assign a Division of Records (DR) number within five days.

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[5] The population was obtained from ADSD via LexisNexis.
[6] The sample size was calculated by using a one-tailed test with a 95 percent confidence level and five percent error rate for both approved and rejected reports that were stratified by crime codes.
[7] See CORS User Handbook, Version 1.0, June 2016.

There are three levels of review after an online report is received: 1) Police Officer/Reviewer; 2) Watch Commander or Designee; and, 3) Area Records personnel.[8] The review responsibilities for each of the three levels are as follows:

1. **Police Officer/Reviewer:** Reviewers are officers designated by the geographic Area to provide first-level review of reports made by CMs to verify that reports meet the following reporting criteria:

   o Incident occurred within the Los Angeles city limits;
   o The victim is an adult;
   o The incident is not a hate crime;
   o No weapons were used and no one was injured;
   o There was no violence or threat of violence;
   o There is no information about who is responsible;
   o There are no photos or video of the incident;
   o Any damage is less than $400; and,
   o Total property loss is less than $5,000.

Reviewers shall check CORS at least once during their shift for new reports.

2. **Watch Commander or Designee:** Watch Commanders or Designees are supervisors designated by the geographic Area to approve reports forwarded by the Reviewers.[9]

Supervisors shall check CORS at least once during their shift.

3. **Area Records:** Area Records personnel shall check CORS at least once during their shift for any reports approved by a supervisor.

Audit Procedures

Auditors reviewed 69 approved reports to determine whether the incidents were reviewed within 24 hours of being submitted and if the CM was notified with a temporary report tracking number. Auditors also determined whether the CM was provided with a link if follow-up information was needed and whether the reports were approved by designated staff pursuant to the CORS User Handbook. Finally, AD determined whether reports were routed to Area Records and assigned a DR number within five days.[10] Auditors verified that these approvals were completed by a supervisor by cross-referencing serial numbers to the employee roster. If all these steps were followed, then the standards for this Objective were met.

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[8] See CORS User Handbook, Version 1.0, June 2016, Introduction, Page 1.
[9] According to the DOC, Senior PSRs are considered Department supervisors who can review reports for the online categories. Senior PSRs are trained and authorized to approve or reject reports.
[10] The Online Reporting Service database tracks incidents by all levels of approvals with a serial number, time, location and status.

Findings

Sixty-four of the 69 reports (93%) reviewed met the standards for this Objective. The five reports that did not meet the standards are detailed in Table No. 2:

Table No. 2 – Detailed Findings for Objective No. 1(a)

Crime Code	DR No.	File Date and Time	Resubmit Date and Time	Approval Date and Time	Amount of Time Exceeding Limit (Hours/Mins)
Objective 1 (a) Approved Reports					
330	201708269	4/11/2020 15:55	4/11/2020 17:41	4/17/2020 6:37	12:56
330	201710608	6/18/2020 20:18	6/18/2020 20:40	7/1/2020 3:40	175:00
354	200609593	4/22/2020 14:24	N/A	4/28/2020 2:42	12:18
354	201211717	4/21/2020 21:40	4/22/2020 2:05	4/28/2020 8:05	30:00
480	200808971	4/27/2020 13:35	N/A	5/2/2020 15:50	2:15

N/A - Report was not resubmitted.

Objective No. 1(b) – Rejected Reports

Criteria

The CORS User Handbook requires personnel to reject reports submitted through CORS if the incident does not meet the report criteria. When an online report is rejected, the reviewer ensures that the appropriate rejection reason is recorded and that the pre-populated response message is emailed to the CM and entered into the report. The reviewer rejects reports if a radio call is generated to handle the reported incident. Area Records personnel can reject reports and return them to the WC if information needed to obtain a DR number is missing.

Audit Procedures

Auditors reviewed 69 rejected reports to determine whether an attempt to resolve the issue was made by sending a rejection notification to the CM with a hyperlink notice to edit and resubmit the report. Auditors also evaluated whether a telephonic response or radio call was initiated if deemed necessary and whether the online report was subsequently rejected. Lastly, auditors verified if a notification message with a rejection reason was sent to the WC or if Area Records rejected a report when appropriate. If all these steps were followed, then the standards for this Objective were met.

Findings

Each of the 69 reports (100%) met the standards for this Objective.

Objective No. 2 – Evaluation of Report Filing Criteria

Criteria

The CORS website details criteria to file specific types of online reports. According to the CORS website, only the types of reports listed below can be accepted for online report reviewers to approve or reject based on the criteria:

- Harassing Phone Calls;
- Lost Property;
- Vandalism;
- Theft;
- Theft from Vehicle; and,
- Hit and Run.

The incident must meet the following criteria:

- The incident is not an emergency;
- The incident occurred within the City of Los Angeles;
- The victim must be at least 18 years old;
- No injuries occurred;
- There are no known suspects;
- The incident did not occur on the State highway;
- No firearms involved; and,
- Internet access and email address required.

Audit Procedures

Auditors reviewed 69 approved reports from CORS and evaluated filing criteria compliance with the above-listed criteria.[11] If a report contained the necessary information to establish the purpose of the report and was approved accordingly, the standards for this Objective were met.

Findings

Each of the 69 reports (100%) met the standards for this Objective. During this review, auditors noticed that while CORS allows 17 categories of crime codes to be filed online, the CORS website lists only six crime codes, and the CORS User Handbook lists four. Therefore, AD recommends that the Department update the CORS User Handbook and CORS website for consistency (see Recommendation).

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[11] For this Objective, only approved reports were reviewed.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Office of Operations, Department Operations Center, and Application Development and Support Division, update the Community Online Reporting Service (CORS) User Handbook and CORS website for consistency and include applicable minor incident crime codes for online reporting to reduce the load on patrol operations and radio calls.

ACTIONS TAKEN/MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Auditors presented these findings to the Information Technology Bureau Commanding Officer and the DOC Commanding Officer who were both in general agreement with these findings and provided a detailed response. See attached.
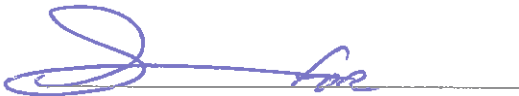
APPENDIX I

Audit Division Contact: Police Performance Auditor Dalia Tajirian, (213) 486-8381 or N6025@LAPD.Online

DALIA TAJIRIAN
Police Performance Auditor, Project Manager
Audit Division

WENDY GAMBLE
Officer-In-Charge, Section-A
Audit Division

TRINA UNZICKER, Police Administrator
Commanding Officer
Audit Division

OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW

INITIATED BY: (Name, Bureau or Division, etc.) Commander Michael P. Rimkunas Assistant to the Director, Office of Operations	DATE December 28, 2020

STAFF OFFICER ASSIGNED: (Name, Bureau or Division, Phone Extension, etc.)
Sergeant Richard Estevez, Serial No. 35053, Office of Operations, (213) 486-0110

SUBJECT:
COMMUNITY ONLINE REPORTING SERVICE (CORS) AUDIT RESPONSE

ATTN	REVIEWED BY:	ATTN	REVIEWED BY:
1	Assistant to the Director, Office of Operations		
2	Commanding Officer, Application Development and Support Division		

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By

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

December 28, 2020
11.2

TO: Commanding Officer, Application Development and Support Division

FROM: Assistant to the Director, Office of Operations

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ONLINE REPORTING SERVICE (CORS) AUDIT RESPONSE

The Office of Operations (OO) received the findings from Audit Division regarding the recently completed Community Online Reporting Service (CORS) Audit, including the five (5) reports that were not approved within the recommended five day (120 hours).

While OO is pleased that over 13,000 reports from community members have been approved this year as of this date of this note, as the Business Owner and entity most impacted by late report submissions, we want to strive for all reports being reviewed and approved in a timely manner.

An examination of the five (5) reports identified showed they were largely "near misses" (occurring in the 6th day for four (4) of the instances). While all were approved by our partners reviewing the reports (Department Operations Center) in a timely manner, the final approval and Division of Records (DR) number issuance was delayed. Although a clear cause for this is not clear, the Office of Operations notes that civilian staffing was impacted during this time, due to Mayoral directives allowing remote-work and modified responsibilities.

Nonetheless, the Office of Operations is currently working to significantly increase the use of CORS for most community members' reports that are eligible. As part of that reporting realignment, Operations personnel will either supplement or assume responsibility for conducting report reviews and will obtain increased oversight for reports pending DR issuance (in the near term). In the long term, the workflow will be modified to eliminate the need for DR issuance when integration and crime reporting through Niche RMS goes live.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions in the interim.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL P. RIMKUNAS, Commander
Assistant to the Director, Office of Operations