



GENERAL ORDER



SERIES
304

NUMBER
2

EFFECTIVE DATE
December 1, 1971

SUBJECT

Processing Questioned Documents

DISTRIBUTION

A

ORIGINATING UNIT

CID

The purpose of this order is to establish the policy and procedures for handling questioned documents that come into possession of members of this department for investigation or as evidence. This order consists of the following parts:

- PART I Responsibilities and Procedures for Members of the Department
- PART II Responsibilities and Procedures for Special Assignment Personnel

PART I

A. Cases to be Processed Through the Check Section.

1. No member of the force shall investigate any blackmail, bribery, bad check, embezzlement, false pretense, forgery or confidence scheme without first checking with the Check and Fraud Section, Criminal Investigations Division.

2. When arrests are made for forgery, false pretense, bad check violation, or other offenses in which handwriting is an element, the arresting officer shall transport the prisoners directly to the Check and Fraud Section, where members of that section shall assist with the necessary paperwork for presentation of the case in court and obtaining handwriting exemplars from the prisoner. Between 2200 and 0730 hours Monday, through Saturday, and 1600 hours Sunday and 0730 hours Monday, officers shall be assisted with obtaining handwriting exemplars in the office of the desk lieutenant.

3. When the case is presented in court for papering by the arresting officer and it is determined that a handwriting order is needed, the arresting officer shall, upon issuance of the order, notify the Check and Fraud Section of the date the defendant has been ordered to appear and of the questioned material to be sampled. It is, moreover, the responsibility of the arresting officer to be present in the Check and Fraud Section office at the time indicated on the handwriting order to witness the handwriting.

B. Documents.

1. It shall be the responsibility of each member of this department who comes into possession of any of the following documents in a criminal case to submit them in person to the Check and Fraud Section to be recorded in their files and for any other action which is deemed appropriate:

- a. Checks.
- b. Sales slips.
- c. Money orders.
- d. Contracts.
- e. Deeds.
- f. Trust notes.
- g. Receipts.
- h. Suspected stolen mail.
- i. Suspicious identification cards.
- j. Suspicious drivers' licenses.
- k. Blackmail or extortion notes.
- l. Flimflam instructions.
- m. Other documentary evidence that may relate to false pretense, embezzlement, fraud, etc.

2. Members of the force shall refer all matters involving questioned credit cards to the Check and Fraud Section for investigation and in addition shall:

- a. Insure the timely submission of all questioned credit cards to the Check and Fraud Section.
- b. Insure the timely reporting of all offenses involving the theft or fraudulent use of stolen or lost credit cards to the Check and Fraud Section.
- c. Telephone the Check and Fraud Section for verification in cases of of questionable ownership.
- d. When coming into possession of a questioned credit card, contact the Check and Fraud Section by landline and request that a member of that section contact one of the information centers that furnish information on the

ownership of credit cards to law enforcement agencies. If contact cannot be made with a member of the Check Section, the desk lieutenant on duty in the Criminal Investigations Division shall be contacted by landline and the desk lieutenant shall make the inquiry.

C. Cases To Be Processed Through the Narcotic Branch.

1. It shall be the responsibility of every member of the department who receives any of the following documents, from whatever source, whether to be used as evidence or for investigation, to have it cleared through the Narcotic Branch, Morals Division, to be recorded in their file and for any other action they may deem appropriate.

- a. Forged or false narcotic or dangerous drug prescriptions.
- b. Narcotic or dangerous drug control records.
- c. Any document or record used in the unlawful obtaining or transfer of said drugs.

2. This procedure shall be followed in all cases whether open or closed and regardless of the receipt of the narcotic or dangerous drug by the individual.

D. Cases To Be Submitted Directly to the Questioned Document Examination Section.

All documents not described under part I, paragraphs B and C, which come into the possession of any member of this department shall be submitted in person to the Questioned Document Examination Section, Identification and Records Division. It shall be the responsibility of this section to assist members of the department in the proper procedure to be followed in the collection, preservation, and development of all types of document evidence. Examples of these types of documents are:

1. Pawn slips.
2. Holdup notes.
3. Kidnap or ransom notes.
4. Obscene or threatening letters or notes.
5. Crime instructions or lists.
6. All other miscellaneous evidential documents.

E. Submission of Documents.

It is necessary to submit all documents in open or closed cases as soon as possible to facilitate certain internal procedures of the Check Section, the Questioned Document Examination Section, and the Narcotic Branch.

2. It is also important in cases where an arrest is made after a document has been previously submitted to resubmit the material to permit necessary follow-up actions to be taken by the Check Section, the Questioned Document Examination Section, and the Narcotic Branch.

3. When no arrest has been effected, the documents, including questioned credit cards, which are to be submitted to the Check Section, must be hand-carried to that section between 0730 and 1600 hours, Monday through Saturday. Documents shall be hand-delivered within 24 hours or on the first business day after they come into the police officer's possession. The member submitting the document shall be assisted in completing a PD Form 797 (Request for Examination for Questioned Document) at the time of submission. The examiner shall make photocopies of the document if required. (See part I, paragraph A, for procedures involving an arrest.)

4. The documents which are to be submitted to the Narcotic Branch must be hand-carried to that branch between 0730 and 1600 hours, Monday through Friday. Documents shall be hand-delivered within 24 hours or on the first business day after they come into the police officer's possession. The member submitting the document will be assisted in completing PD Form 797 at the time of submission. The examiner will make photocopies of the document if required.

5. If the document can be immediately classified as evidence or suspected proceeds of crime, an entry for the document shall be made in the property book of the organizational element to which the officer responsible for presenting the case in court is assigned before the document is submitted for examination. After the examination, the document shall then be processed as specified in General Order No. 601.1. Documents may be retained in an organizational element indefinitely after being put on a property book by following the procedures in General Order No. 601.1, which states that authorization for this retention must be obtained from the property clerk or his agent.

6. If it is decided that the organizational element to which the document has been submitted is to retain the document, the submitting officer shall be given PD Form 82-A (Property Receipt) for the document stating this fact and the receipt shall be affixed to the property book. This receipt shall relieve the submitting officer

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of any further responsibility for the document except for testifying in court. The member of the organizational element retaining the document shall then be responsible for processing the document as specified in this order.

F. Procedures for Handling Counterfeit Food Coupon Complaints.

1. Cases Involving an Arrest:

- a. Members called to the scene of a counterfeit food coupon complaint, for which the subject who passed the alleged counterfeit coupon is still on hand, and upon their being satisfied that the coupon is counterfeit, shall arrest the subject and charge him with "Possession" of a Counterfeit Obligation of the United States Government," U.S. Code 18-472. Members are advised that the Department of Agriculture issues bulletins which aid participating merchants in the detection of counterfeit coupons. If there are questions about the counterfeit, members should contact the Check and Fraud Section, or, in the absence of a member from that element, the desk lieutenant for assistance.
- b. The prisoner shall be transported to the Check and Fraud Section, Criminal Investigations Division, along with the counterfeit coupon.
- c. The United States Secret Service shall be notified on 634-5100 by the arresting officer. This agency has the investigative responsibility for counterfeit food coupons.
- d. The arresting officer will prepare PD Forms 251, 255, and 163. A member of the Check and Fraud Section will assist the arresting officer in the preparation of the forms and in presentation in court.
- e. Counterfeit coupons taken as evidence will be processed as set forth in part I, paragraph E.

2. Cases Involving No Arrest.

- a. Members responding to calls where a merchant has received a counterfeit coupon, and the individual who passed the coupon is no longer on the scene, will advise the merchant to notify the United States Secret Service who will advise the merchant how to proceed and will conduct the entire investigation.

- b. Members shall not make a police report or take possession of the counterfeit coupon.

G. Procedures for Handling Forged Government Checks.

The procedures for handling forged United States government checks by members shall be identical to those for handling counterfeit food coupon complaints, as outlined above; except that members called to the scene where a subject has uttered or attempted to utter a forged government check shall arrest the subject and charge him with "Forgery," under D.C. Code 22-1401.

PART II

A. Check and Fraud Section.

In addition to its other responsibilities, the Check and Fraud Section, Criminal Investigations Division, shall:

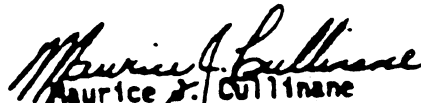
- a. Establish liaison with and maintain a current listing of all major companies, associations, and other organizations that issued credit cards and maintain a file consisting of names of individuals and telephone numbers to contact relative to investigations of credit card thefts or alleged thefts.
- b. Investigate all suspected unlawful use of questionable ownership of credit cards.
- c. Finalize for court presentations all valid cases of violations involving the misuse of credit cards.
- d. Upon receiving reports concerning the recovery of lost or stolen credit cards, delete all information on such cards from WALES.

B. Station Clerks.

Station clerks shall enter into WALES the following lost or stolen credit card information as contained on PD Form 251 and 252 prepared within their organizational element:

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- a. Report Number.
- b. Report Date.
- c. Article Type (i.e., credit card).
- d. Credit Card Serial Number.
- e. Credit Card Brand (i.e., Exxon, Shell, Master Charge, Central Charge, etc., abbreviated in accordance with instructions contained in the WALES Handbook).


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Chief of Police

MJC:RJB:tsj

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