

GENERAL ORDER 42.3.7

Telephone Harassment Investigations

GENERAL ORDER CROSS-REFERENCE: None.

SUMMARY

Describes the Department's procedure for the investigation of harassing telephone calls or text messages.

DISCUSSION

Information concerning the location of the origin of harassing calls is critical to successful investigation of telephone harassment. Technological capabilities in the telephone communications industry has enabled citizens in many instances to determine the source of incoming telephone calls. In some instances this may be immediately available and in others, the telephone company may be the source of this information. The telephone company will release this information to law enforcement, however generally does not to private citizens.

POLICY

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When the victim/complainant has positive information that could be offered as evidence of identification of the caller in a court of law, a police report and investigation shall be initiated. This may include an admission by the suspect to the victim/complainant or other available witness of making the call, recognition of the caller's voice by the victim/complainant or that a successful trace was made by the telephone company.

When the victim/complainant has received this information and continues to receive harassing telephone calls, a police report and investigation shall be initiated. A copy of any documentation from the telecommunication company shall accompany the police report.

In most instances, repeated calls are necessary to adequately demonstrate to the satisfaction of the prosecutor that the elements of telephone harassment are fulfilled. There are some situations that a single call is sufficient to clearly demonstrate that the caller had no communicative purpose and the need for notifying the caller to cease is unnecessary. The circumstances of each reported incident should be evaluated on its merit and consultation with a supervisor should occur in those instances that are unclear.

Richard L. Lewis
Chief of Police