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HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE OPERATIONS POLICY

Operational Orders & After-Action Reports

Distribution:	All Personnel	Policy Number:	OPS 0730
Responsible Unit:	Investigative Services Bureau	Rescinds:	
Original Issued Date:	12/29/21	Revision #:	1
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1. Purpose

To provide deputies with guidelines to be used in the creation of Operational Orders & After-Action Reports.

2. Policy

Deputies must create Operational Orders & After-Action Reports as needed for pre-planned operations, events, details, or investigations that require the use of personnel and equipment over and above the normal daily activities of any unit.

3. Definitions

AFTER-ACTION REPORT (AAR): prepared at the conclusion of an operation and records the results of the event for which an Operational Order was issued. After a disaster or other emergency, stakeholders should gather together in a structured but open environment for a debriefing session with the purpose of identifying improvements in policies, procedures, and actions. During this after-action review, the team will discuss all event-related activity in order to improve planning, mitigation, response, and recovery measures based on lessons learned from the event. The debriefing session will allow all stakeholders to identify strengths and areas for improvement through a review of the effectiveness of preparedness and planning efforts for such an event. Corrective actions and lessons learned will be identified to create opportunities for improvement.

AFTER-ACTION REPORT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN (AAR/IP): The main product of the Evaluation and Improvement Planning process. The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) has two components: an After-Action Report (AAR), which captures observations of an exercise, incident, or event, and makes recommendations for post-exercise improvements; and an Improvement Plan (IP), which identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties, and establishes targets for their completion.

INCIDENT ACTION PLAN: (IAP) The IAP provides essential information regarding incident organization, work assignments, resources, and safety—all of which are driven by the incident objectives. Incident objectives drive response and recovery activities and answer the question of what must be accomplished.

OPERATIONAL ORDER (Ops Order): prepared when a special event, detail, operation, or investigation requires the use of personnel and equipment over and above the normal daily activities of the unit.

4. References

[OPS 1503 Search and Seizure Warrants](#)
[OPS 0731 All Hazards](#)

5. Procedures

A. General Information for Operational Orders and After-Action Reports

1. An IAP should be completed when there are multiple units, divisions, or agencies involved in the planning of the event or incident in lieu of an Ops Order.
2. An AAR is completed each time an Ops Order is completed, after complex incidents, or as directed.
3. The case investigator, Incident Commander or designee, is responsible to ensure Ops Orders and AARs are completed.
4. There is no standard format utilized for Ops Orders. The unit completing them will tailor it to fit the needs of the unit and the operation being completed. The general guidelines listed in this policy will be utilized.
5. AAR's will be submitted in the Records Management System (RMS).

B. General Guidelines for Information to be Contained in an IAP or Operational Order (Not All May Apply)

1. Provide the incident number.
2. Identify the type of operation/event.
3. Provide the date of operation, brief time of operation, and location of operation.
4. Identify the personnel involved, overall commander of the operation/event, talk group for the operation, command post location, and identify any roads that need to be closed for an inner perimeter.
5. Objectives (Specific Measurable Action oriented Realistic Time frame SMART).
6. Communications Plan.
7. Projections or modeling.
8. Weather.
9. Personal Observations.
10. Prior shift/ event/ past history if any.
11. Org. Chart with an IC at minimum.

12. Identify potential hazards and risk mitigation.
13. Provide relevant maps or photographs.
14. Provide any other agencies assisting in the operation.
15. Provide any intelligence information relevant to the operation.
16. Provide any equipment assigned or equipment needed for the operation.
17. If the Ops Order is for a search and seizure warrant:
 - a. Identify if the warrant is for a premise, vehicle, or person;
 - b. Identify if the warrant is a no-knock or knock and announce warrant;
 - c. Date and person(s) the warrant was reviewed including the judge's name and state's attorney;
 - d. If a Risk Assessment for Critical Incidents and Warrant Services ([SO-147](#)) was completed;
 - e. The lead investigator must ensure deconfliction has been completed. Provide any deconfliction notes (e.g., Case Explorer number, fax confirmation including date and time, who the search warrant was sent to including date and time, etc.);
 - f. Provide a general case summary of the criminal investigation to include:
 - i. The objectives of the search warrant;
 - ii. Photographs of target(s);
 - iii. Personal demographics of target(s);
 - iv. Criminal history of target(s);
 - g. List any hazards or special circumstances to be aware of at the target location (e.g., children, elderly, handicapped individuals, animals, camera surveillance at location, etc.);
 - h. Provide any known recent call for service history at the location;
 - i. Provide the roles of all members in the operation and any additional duties;
 - j. Discuss the staging area, travel route for the convoy, and parking location;
 - k. Discuss the order of entry, locations of security, primary/secondary entry points, breaching protocols, and obstacles;
 - l. Discuss how to handle any of the hazards or special circumstances listed;

- m. Identify a medic, staging area for the medic, and any evacuation/travel route to a hospital, medical facility or landing zone;
- n. Identify any team members with medical training or medical bags if needed; and
- o. Identify actions to be taken should the primary target(s) leave the location prior to the search warrant being executed.

C. General Guidelines for Information to be Contained in an After-Action Report (Not All May Apply)

- 1. Completed after the operation/event to record the results.
- 2. If the AR is for a search and seizure warrant service:
 - a. List who completed the OnCall Records Miscellaneous Service Entry and include the Miscellaneous Service Number(s) provided by the records management system (refer to [OPS 1503](#) Search & Seizure Warrants);
 - b. Identify the supervisor that was in charge of the overall operation;
 - c. Identify who served the warrant, including if the Special Response Team (SRT) was utilized;
 - d. Explain any exigency that occurred during the service of the warrant;
 - e. Identify if forced entry was used;
 - f. Identify any property damage including the use of photographs;
 - g. Identify all occupants (including gender and age) and include photographs;
 - h. Identify any weapon(s) used during the service of the warrant;
 - i. Identify any use of less lethal force;
 - j. Identify any person(s) or animal(s) injured or killed during service;
 - k. Identify the number of arrests and charges; and
 - l. Identify all property/evidence seized;
- 3. Share any appropriate information/intelligence gathered from the operation/event.
- 4. Summarize the operation/event.

D. Dissemination and Retainment

- 1. AARs will be disseminated **through the RMS** for review. Division Commanders will notify their Bureau Chief of any information contained in the AR they deem appropriate.

2. **IAPs** and Ops Orders will be maintained per the Division Commander (e.g., stored indefinitely on the unit's shared drive, etc.) and retained for a length of time they specify.

6. Summary of Changes

A. Section 3 Definitions: Added descriptions of the following areas:


1. Purpose of After-Action Reviews;
2. After-Action Reports (AARs);
3. After-Action Report / Improvement Plan (AAR/IP); and
4. Incident Action Plan (IAP).

B. Section 4 References: Added reference to operations policy: OPS 0731 All Hazards.

C. Section 5. Procedures: Made the following revisions to A. General Information for Operational Orders and After-Action Reports:

1. An IAP should be completed when there is multiple units, divisions, or agencies involved in the planning of the event or incident in lieu of an Ops Order;
2. Added the following text: "after complex incidents, or as directed;"
3. Added reference to include the Incident Commander; and
4. AARs will be submitted in the RMS.

D. Section 5. Procedures, B. -- Added items #5 through #12.

Approved

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SHERIFF
DATE 9.25.24