



DEATH INVESTIGATION

The following Rule is issued to establish procedures for Department personnel responding to and/or investigating all reports of the death of a person. The Suffolk County District Attorney, by statute ([M.G.L. c. 38, § 4](#)), is in charge of all death investigations conducted in the County of Suffolk. This Rule also includes the investigation of certain other types of incidents that may or may not result in a death.

Sec. 1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to standardize procedures and ensure that each investigation is conducted in a fixed, orderly manner, the following procedures shall serve as a guide to the responding officer and investigator to be followed in all cases. These guidelines are to be construed in a general sense and in no way relieve an investigator from completing any other steps that may be required by a particular case. These procedures should be considered the basic, essential steps for a **preliminary** investigation. The investigator is encouraged to use judgment and initiative in determining what each case demands in the way of additional or **follow-up** investigations. Where there is a doubt or question as to how to proceed in the investigation, the investigator is to consult his/her supervisor.

Beginning with the police call taker who initially takes the call and obtains a crucial piece of information - to the first responding officer - to the investigator - a complete, detailed, practical and thorough investigation is based on team work, cooperation, documentation and compliance with basic crime scene and investigative procedures. The first fifteen (15) to twenty (20) minutes at any incident is decisive in controlling and managing the crime scene.

Sec. 2 DEFINITIONS

Next of Kin: A relative of a victim who will be recognized in order of priority as follows: 1) spouse, 2) son or daughter, 3) father or mother, 4) legal guardian, 5) grandson or granddaughter, 6) brother or sister, 7) aunt or uncle.

Personal Property: May include, but is not limited to: currency, jewelry, bankbooks, wills, negotiable bonds and securities, firearms, et cetera.

Sudden Death: The death of a person due to natural causes involving neither violence nor suspicion of violence, but without a physician in attendance (unattended natural death).

Sec. 3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PERSON RECEIVING NOTIFICATION

The **person receiving notification** shall make every effort to obtain and record the following information:

- Exact time the notification was received
- Exact location of the incident;
- Condition of the victim(s);
- Whether suspect(s), or suspect(s)'s vehicle(s) is known
- Locations and descriptions of suspect(s) or suspect(s) vehicle
- Means and direction of flight of suspect(s) or suspect(s)'s vehicle(s);
- Location of the person who first notified the police, if the person will remain there, or the location where the person can be met; and
- Name, address and phone number of the person who first notified the police.

Sec. 4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POLICE DISPATCHER

The **police dispatcher** shall:

- Dispatch sufficient personnel and equipment to handle the situation based on available information,
- Dispatch a District Patrol Supervisor,
- Dispatch a District Detective,
- Dispatch medical and other assistance; and
- Notify the Operations Duty Supervisor.

Sec. 5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIRST OFFICER ON THE SCENE

The **first officer(s)** on the scene, regardless of rank, has three (3) main objectives which are listed below in order of priority, as applicable:

- Determine whether the victim is alive or dead and initiate the necessary response;
- Determine if a crime has been committed, apprehend the perpetrator if still present, or give the appropriate descriptions to the dispatcher; and
- Secure and protect the crime scene and identify any witnesses, suspects and other persons present.

Sec. 6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIRST RESPONDING OFFICER

The **first responding officer(s)** assigned to the call or incident shall be responsible for performing the following duties, as applicable:

- Request a **Patrol Supervisor** and other assistance as necessary;
- Take accurate, detailed, and complete notes;
- Address and determine the entire area of the crime scene including paths of entry and exit and any areas that may include evidence;
- Isolate the area and refrain from entering the crime scene and/or disturbing, touching, or using any item found therein. **If an object must be moved**, note its exact location, position, and consider the possibility that the object may contain fingerprints. Outside crime scenes require specific steps to protect the scene. At an outside crime scene, a police line shall be established fifty (50) feet in all directions where appropriate or at such distances as required to freeze the crime scene;

- Prohibit all unauthorized persons from entering the crime scene, including police personnel;
- Restrict police vehicles so they are parked away from the crime scene until the boundaries of the crime scene can be definitively established;
- Instruct medical personnel as to how to enter the crime scene so as to disturb the crime scene as little as possible. The officer should observe the medical personnel and note what objects they move and/or touch;
- Initiate a chronological log (in/out) containing names, titles, and identification numbers of any police, medical, and/or technical personnel entering and leaving the crime scene. **(The log sheet shall be turned over to the investigator-in-charge after the crime scene is vacated and shall be kept in the case file.);**
- Prohibit anyone from smoking at or on the crime scene;
- Prohibit anyone from using any telephone(s) located at or on the crime scene;
- Locate and identify the person who first notified police;
- Separate the witnesses while obtaining preliminary statements;
- Brief the **Patrol Supervisor** and the **investigator-in-charge** of the investigation;
- Complete incident reports and other reports, as applicable;
- All officers responding to a death investigation shall submit a separate written report (BPD Form 26). District Commanders shall ensure that the original of all such reports is forwarded to the Homicide Unit within twenty-four (24) hours; and
- Vacate the crime scene only at the direction of the **investigator-in-charge** as relayed through the **Operations Duty Supervisor**.

Sec. 7 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PATROL SUPERVISOR

The Patrol Supervisor on arrival at the crime scene shall be responsible for performing the following duties, as applicable:

- Take charge of the crime scene and assign personnel as deemed appropriate;
- Assign an officer to accompany the victim(s) to the hospital;
- Assign an officer to accompany any vehicle(s) which are being towed and held for evidence or for later processing;
- Debrief the first responding officer so as to ascertain the facts surrounding the incident;
- Ensure that the duties of the first responding officer are being performed satisfactorily with particular attention to: initiating and keeping up to date a chronological log; isolating and protecting the crime scene; and identifying and separating any witnesses;
- Establish a Command Post **outside** of the inner perimeter of the crime scene, if applicable;
- Establish an outer perimeter;
- Brief the **investigator-in-charge**;
- Assist the **investigator-in-charge** with crime scene management during the **preliminary** investigation, utilizing whatever personnel are deemed necessary;
- Update the **Operations Duty Supervisor**;
- Ensure that all incident reports and other reports are completed and typed;

- Ensure that separate reports (Form 26) are submitted and signed by each member of the unit in which both the first officer on the scene and the first responding officer are assigned; and
- Ensure that the crime scene is vacated only at the direction of the **investigator-in-charge** as relayed through the **Operations Duty Supervisor**.

Sec. 8 RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN OFFICER ASSIGNED TO ACCOMPANY VICTIM TO HOSPITAL

If victim is moved to the hospital, the victim should be accompanied by a police officer. The officer accompanying a victim to the hospital is responsible for attempting to ascertain the condition of the victim; for attempting to identify possible witnesses and family members of the victim; and, for the handling and custody of the victim's clothing and other evidence on the victim's person. Such clothing and other evidence should not be mixed together, but should be separated and held as evidence pending the arrival of **homicide investigators, District investigators or Patrol Supervisors**, depending upon which unit is appropriate. Officers are responsible for obtaining the name of the attending physician and, if applicable, the time the victim(s) is pronounced dead.

Sec. 9 ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF PATROL SUPERVISOR IF DEATH IS SUSPECTED TO BE A SUDDEN DEATH

Only the **Medical Examiner** may rule that the death of a person is a **Sudden Death**, decline jurisdiction, and order the release of the body. In any case where a **Patrol Supervisor**, after assisting the **investigator-in-charge** at any preliminary investigation, suspects that the death may be ruled a **Sudden Death**, the following responsibilities, considerations, and duties shall be in addition to those listed in the previous section.

The **Patrol Supervisor** shall:

- Contact the **Medical Examiner** with all pertinent information gathered in the preliminary investigation;
- Ensure that the Department of Health and Hospitals Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) are summoned to the scene of each reported death where there is no physician in attendance. If the EMTs make a determination that the victim has no vital signs in accordance with guidelines issued to them, they shall indicate this information on a report form and a copy of their report is to be given to the **investigator-in-charge**;
- Ensure that the reporting officer includes the names and Unit designation of the responding EMTs on the incident report;
- Ensure that if the **Medical Examiner** accepts jurisdiction of the body, the body not be removed, except at the direction of the **Medical Examiner**;
- Ensure that the scene remains protected until the investigation at the scene is completed; and
- Ensure that if the decedent was under the care of a physician, that an attempt was made to contact the physician to find out the nature of the illness, and whether the physician will sign the death certificate.

Sec. 10 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OPERATIONS DUTY SUPERVISOR

The Operations Duty Supervisor shall be responsible to notify the following:

- District Duty Supervisor;
- Homicide Unit (**from on call list**);
- District Attorney's Office (**from on call list**);
- Medical Examiner's Office;
- Identification and Photography Unit; District Commander;
- Crime Lab (**if requested by the investigator-in-charge**);
- Ballistics Unit (**if requested by the investigator-in-charge**); and
- Any other Department resources as necessary (**as requested by the investigator-in-charge**).

Sec. 11 ASSIGNMENT OF INVESTIGATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The assignment of investigative responsibilities detailed below applies only to those homicides and sudden deaths occurring within the City of Boston where the Suffolk County District Attorney has designated the Boston Police Department Homicide Unit as the "law enforcement representative". The assignment of investigative responsibilities detailed below specifically does not apply to homicides or sudden deaths which occur in areas or locales wherein the Suffolk County District Attorney has designated the State Police, or any other agency, to be the "law enforcement representative."

a) A Homicide Unit Investigative Team Supervisor shall be designated as the **investigator-in-charge** and has the responsibility for the investigation of all incidents involving any:

- Homicide;
- Violent, suspicious or sudden death when the cause is unknown;
- Any suicide that occurred in a police facility, or by a person in police custody, or in a Suffolk County correctional facility (M.G.L. c. 40, § 36A and Rule 318);
- Unidentified dead bodies, irrespective of the cause of death;
- Aggravated battery where the victim is in critical condition and there is a likelihood that the victim will die; and
- Incident at the direction of the **District Attorney** or the **Medical Examiner** (e.g., physician-assisted suicides, etc.).

The **Homicide Unit Investigative Team** is responsible for the collection, processing and custody procedures for any evidence gathered. In those investigations conducted by the **Homicide Unit Investigative Team**, the Homicide Unit Commander is responsible for overseeing the follow-up investigation. In all homicide cases, the Area Detective Commander is responsible for the assignment of a District Detective to assist the **Homicide Unit Investigative Team** that will coordinate the investigative effort within their District.

b) The District Detective investigator-in-charge as designated by the **Area Detective Commander** shall be responsible for investigations on their District involving:

- Accidental deaths, sudden deaths and suicides, except for those which are listed above and are assigned to the Homicide Unit; and

- Other investigations, distinct from those ruled homicides, as directed by the **District Attorney or the Medical Examiner.**

The **District Detective** is responsible for the collection, processing and custody procedures for any evidence gathered. In those death investigations conducted by **District Detectives, the Area Detective Commander** is responsible for overseeing the follow-up investigation.

Sec. 12 RESPONSIBILITIES OF INVESTIGATOR-IN-CHARGE

The investigator-in-charge shall ensure that the following steps are taken, **as applicable:**

- Record date, time, and by whom assigned to case;
- Confirm with the **Operations Division Duty Supervisor** that proper notifications are being made;
- Record arrival on crime scene and make note of those present;
- Evaluate the adequacy of the inner and outer perimeters and ensure the crime scene is protected;
- Ensure witnesses have been located and identified;
- Debrief the **Patrol Supervisor, the first officer(s) on the scene** and the **first responding officer(s);**
- Record condition of crime scene in notes;
- Obtain name of next of kin and ensure that they are notified in-person, if possible. For out of state or out of jurisdiction notifications, arrange for the local police department to make an in-person notification;
- Arrange for identification of body;
- Interview witnesses and suspect(s) and obtain statements;
- Supply the **Medical Examiner** with any additional information that may have been obtained as a result of interviews;
- Search the crime scene (with warrant, if necessary);
- Photograph the crime scene. Use photographs and/or videotapes (eliminate any unnecessary background noise);
- Sketch the crime scene;
- Record the processing of the crime scene while collecting and preserving evidence;
- Collect relative hand-written documents, such as suicide notes, as evidence with the original to remain a part of the case file and copies to be provided to the **District Attorney and Medical Examiner.** Copies of suicide notes may be provided to family members or a relative after the investigation is completed and there has been a finding that the death is a suicide;
- Examine scene for any medication and forward to **Medical Examiner** (obtain signed receipt for medication forwarded);
- Interview next of kin and/or close friends and obtain past medical history, name of doctor, and note any recent illness and/or hospitalization;
- Obtain a copy of the responding EMT's report;
- Compile a history of victim's mental health and physical condition for the **Medical Examiner** and include in the case report;

- Record condition and position of body, clothing worn, condition of hands, etc.;
- Record any trauma, rigor mortis, lividity, body temperature (by touch) and any other observable conditions of the body;
- Arrange for removal of body when processing is complete at the direction of the **Medical Examiner**;
- Consult with the **District Attorney** or their designee to determine when the crime scene may be vacated;
- Notify the **Operations Duty Supervisor** with instructions to vacate the crime scene;
- Prepare investigative reports;
- Review all other reports, statements and forms for completeness and accuracy;
- Conduct re-enactment, if deemed appropriate;
- Conduct line-ups or photo arrays when necessary, in cases which require victim or witness identification of a suspect;
- Review case with **District Attorney** or their designee; and
- Arrange for arrest warrant and/or search warrants and the formal charging of the suspect(s) with the approval of the Homicide Unit Commander (BPD), and the Chief of the Homicide Division of the District Attorney's Office, unless impractical.

Sec. 13 REMOVAL OF DEAD BODIES

A dead body shall only be moved at the direction of the **Medical Examiner** or the **District Attorney** or their designee (M.G.L. c. 38, § 4). The **Medical Examiner** must be notified of the known facts concerning the time, place, manner, circumstances, and suspected cause concerning any person who has died. The **Medical Examiner** has the lawful right to take charge of the body (M.G.L. c. 38, § 4).

Once the **District Attorney** or their designee arrive at the scene or is notified of the discovery of the dead body, the **District Attorney** shall have authority to direct and control the criminal investigation of the death and removal of the body and coordinate the investigation with the police (M.G.L. c. 38, § 4).

Transportation of bodies of persons who have died from any disease dangerous to public health must be in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department of Public Health (M.G.L. c. I 11, § 107).

If a body is found in water, it may be moved to the nearest shelter. Prior to moving the body, the location and position shall be carefully recorded and if possible, marked and photographed.

If a body in a public place is moved, it should be placed on a stretcher in the exact position it is found. The area should be marked, the body outlined on the ground, and the location photographed. Particular attention must be given to the body's position and to blood or fluid secretions.

If the **Medical Examiner** declines jurisdiction but there is no known next of kin or relative of the deceased to make funeral arrangements, personnel from the **Medical Examiner's** office shall remove the body to the Office of the Chief **Medical Examiner**.

If the Medical Examiner declines jurisdiction and there are next of kin or relatives to make funeral arrangements, the District detectives SHALL be required to do the following:

- A. If the next of kin CAN be notified prior to the completion of the original 1. 1 incident report, the name of the deceased shall be recorded in Box #11, and the name of the next of kin will be recorded in the narrative section of the 1. 1 incident report.
- B. If the name of a next of kin can be determined, but CANNOT be notified before the original 1. 1 report is completed the deceased name shall not be recorded in box 411. The District detectives shall conduct a follow-up investigation and submit a supplementary report, recording the name of the deceased in Block 411, and the name of the next of kin in the narrative section of the report.

In **all** cases, officers shall remain on scene until such time as the body is removed, either by personnel from the **Medical Examiner's** office or by an undertaker.

Sec. 14 BODIES REMOVED FROM FIRE SCENES

The EMTs are responsible for examining the victim and making on-scene pronouncements. The **Medical Examiner's** office will be notified immediately and requested to respond.

Fire Department personnel will handle the removal of the victim(s) and placement into the Police Department wagon and from the wagon to the Office of the Chief **Medical Examiner**. All equipment necessary for the removal will be provided by Health and Hospitals or the Fire Department. **Police Department wagons will be used only to transport the victim to the mortuary and police personnel shall not handle the victim(s).**

Sec. 15 VEHICLES REMOVED FROM CRIME SCENES

Whenever possible all vehicles will be processed at the crime scene. If it becomes necessary to remove a vehicle prior to processing, evidence shall only be removed after being photographed and latent print processing has been completed.

Vehicles held as evidence or for processing **shall only be towed on a flatbed tow truck** and shall be towed for safekeeping to the station house of the District of occurrence or to a secured location at the direction of the Homicide Unit Investigative Team Supervisor or, where appropriate, the District **investigator-in-charge**. The reporting officer ordering the tow is responsible for completing the tow slip receipt, the MN inventory (BPD Form 2012) and recording the tow on the original incident report. Such incident report shall include the name of any officer assigned to accompany a vehicle towed for evidence or for later processing.

The vehicle should be clearly marked as evidence and the District **Duty Supervisor** shall be notified as to the vehicle's whereabouts. **In order to maintain the chain of custody, officers assigned to accompany such vehicles shall stay with the vehicle until relieved.**

Sec. 16 CRIME SCENE SEARCH GUIDELINES

Officers should be alert to important details or evidence which are transient in nature and which may be subject to chemical changes or which may be moved. The officer must be crime scene conscious and attempt to assess and determine the entire area of the crime scene. **Crime scene processing must continue until complete.** It should be kept in mind that once a crime scene is abandoned, if only for a short period of time, it is often impossible to legally gain possession of the premises again.

a) Except for consent searches which have received the **prior** approval of both the Commander of the Homicide Unit and the Chief of the Homicide Division of the District Attorney's Office, a search warrant shall be obtained prior to searching a crime scene **in any case where individual property rights guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment to -the U.S. Constitution and/or Article 14 of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights could be violated or infringed upon.**

b) The **Homicide Unit Investigative Team Supervisor** shall review the affidavit and submit the affidavit to an Assistant District Attorney from the Homicide Division of the District Attorney's office for approval.

c) **The Homicide Unit Investigative Team Supervisor** shall directly supervise the service and return of the warrant.

Sec. 17 NON-CRIMINAL DEATH SCENE SEARCH GUIDELINES

The primary role of any officer involved in a Death Investigation on scenes of accidental, suicide and sudden deaths is to establish the circumstances surrounding the death and to determine whether criminal misconduct took place.

If a preliminary investigation reveals with reasonable certainty that no criminal misconduct took place, it is only necessary to search those areas that directly relate to the circumstances and cause of death.

There will be no independent cursory searches of the decedent's property outside of what is discovered in plain view on or near the body of the decedent, unless the **Medical Examiner** orders a search. **This search shall be the responsibility of the Patrol Supervisor.** The search shall be conducted in the presence of a police officer who shall record all items impounded.

Sec. 18 IMPOUNDING PROPERTY PROCEDURES

All bulk property shall be secured, locked and sealed with the crime scene.

Keys to premises occupied by the deceased shall be delivered to the **Medical Examiner** unless he authorizes them to be retained by the police. No police officer shall admit any person into premises of the deceased or surrender keys to such premises without the authorization of the **Medical Examiner** or his representative.

In all cases in which the **Medical Examiner** accepts jurisdiction of a dead body, the **Medical Examiner** is responsible for the property of the deceased person. The **Medical Examiner** shall, **unless such money or property is required as evidence**, deliver it to the person entitled to its custody or possession or, if not claimed within sixty (60) days, to a public administrator (M.G.L. c. 38, § 18).

In all cases in which the **Medical Examiner** declines jurisdiction of an unattended natural death, all personal property discovered on or near the body of the deceased shall be taken to the station house of the District of occurrence, inventoried and turned over to the Duty Supervisor. Upon receiving a receipt for such property from the next of kin, the Duty Supervisor shall release such property.

In either case, no property shall be released until it is inventoried, itemized, and recorded on a property receipt. The property receipt must be signed by the person accepting the property before the property may be released. This release shall be recorded on a supplementary incident report, including the identification of the person accepting the property.

A copy of the property receipt shall be attached to the original incident report and also to the District copy. The original property receipt shall be attached to the District Property Receipt Book. A copy shall also be delivered to the **Medical Examiner**.

Sec. 19 ALL DEATH INVESTIGATION REPORTS

Police officers are required to write reports for all deaths that occur in their jurisdiction **without a physician in attendance**. However, the **District Attorney** or the **Medical Examiner** may direct that a report be written and an investigation be conducted in cases involving a suspected physician-assisted suicide. The basic report requirements are the same for any such death, regardless of the age of the deceased (including infants and apparent still-borns), the apparent health or mental condition of the deceased prior to death and/or the possible cause of death. **ALL DEATH REPORTS SHALL BE TYPED.**

The incident report also must indicate whether or not the **Medical Examiner** accepted jurisdiction of the body. When the name of the undertaker is available, it should also be recorded on the incident report.

Police officers shall not take it upon themselves to determine the cause of death, nor shall they put any such assumptions in their reports. The **Duty Supervisor** shall classify all

such deaths as "death investigations" and shall ensure that those words are typed in the block on the incident report (1. 1) labeled "Type of Incident." Upon an investigation being classified or re-classified by the **Medical Examiner** as a homicide, or otherwise, the **investigator-in-charge** shall be responsible for submitting a supplementary incident report (1. 1) which shall include the **Medical Examiner's** finding.

Original incident reports shall include only the following information, with all other pertinent information included only on the Form 26 report:

- Describe the exact address and floor where the body was found;
- List the name and area of assignment of the officer who found the body;
- List the names and unit numbers of ALL persons responding to the crime scene, including, but not limited to: Police, Fire, Health and Hospitals, Medical Examiner's Office and the District Attorney's Office;
- List the time the EMTs determined the deceased person could not be resuscitated;
- In the event the victim is transported to a hospital, list the name of the attending physician and the time the victim was pronounced; and
- Include whether or not the **Medical Examiner** accepted jurisdiction of the body, where the body was taken and who removed it.

Sec. 20 INFORMATION NECESSARY FOR FORM 26 REPORTS

Form 26 reports shall be typed and shall be as detailed and complete as possible.

They shall include the following information, as applicable:

- Include the name of the victim, if known;
- Describe the exact place where the body was found (this should be specific as possible, giving, if necessary, both the address and the location within that address, such as: bathroom in Apt. 3 on the second floor, 123 Main Street);
- Describe the position of the body;
- Describe the clothing or any other covering on the body;
- Describe any visible injuries or discolorations on the body;
- List the names of all other persons present, and/or those who may have knowledge of the incident;
- List the name and area of assignment of the officer who found the body;
- List the names of the responding EMTs and their unit number;
- List the time of the EMT's determination that the deceased person could not be resuscitated;
- List the name of any physician who was recently caring for the deceased;
- List any known illnesses or diseases of the deceased;
- List any prescription medications found in the name of the deceased or known to be currently used by the deceased;
- List the name of the next of kin, include addresses, telephone numbers, etc.;
- Include the time of notification of family or friends of the death, or what efforts were made, or are being made, to make such notification;
- Include the identity of any member of the Clergy who was called; and
- Include where the body was taken and who removed it.

Sec. 21 INVESTIGATOR-IN-CHARGE REPORTS IN DEATH INVESTIGATIONS

Investigator-in-charge Investigative Reports (Form 26) in Death Investigations will describe the investigation in the following sequence and format, as applicable:

- Give a narrative summary;
- Describe in detail, who, what, where, when, why and how;
- When witnesses are interviewed or statements taken, they shall be listed numerically, (i.e. 1,2,3.). Include a short paragraph summarizing the statement given. Statements of witnesses and subjects must contain sufficient personal history and data so that they may be located in the future;
- If an area canvass is conducted, all persons interviewed and/or addresses visited must be listed. State time, identifying persons name, address, telephone number, and what information was obtained. If no one was at home at address, state no contact was made and give time. All reports must be signed by officer preparing report;
- Briefly describe the scene of the crime and body position, condition, clothing, trauma, disposition of body, etc.;
- List personal data on the victim/subject of the investigation;
- List any medical history of the victim/subject;
- List any past history of the victim/subject;
- List the name(s) of the next of kin, include addresses, telephone numbers, etc.;
- List all property secured and its location;
- List any vehicle(s) and location, including tow receipt numbers, if applicable; and
- List any additional information.

Sec. 22 FILING FOR INQUEST AND/OR CRIMINAL CHARGES

The Homicide Unit Investigative Team Supervisor shall consult with an Assistant District Attorney from the Homicide Division of the District Attorney's Office outlining all evidence and probable cause to support charges prior to the filing of any criminal charges. If a suspect has been arrested on any criminal charge, criminal charges are considered filed when the application for complaint has been properly completed and filed with the court. The **District Attorney** or their designee shall determine the cases in which a direct indictment will be sought.

The **Homicide Unit Investigative Team Supervisor** investigating an unidentified dead body is responsible for ensuring that all pertinent information is completely and accurately entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Unidentified Person File in a timely manner.

Any warrants for the arrest of a suspect will be sought from a Judge, Grand Jury or Clerk Magistrate subsequent to the review and approval of the **District Attorney** or their designee. Upon issuance of an arrest warrant or indictment warrant, the **Homicide Unit Investigative Team Supervisor** assigned to investigate the case is responsible for ensuring that all computer entries are complete and accurately entered. Discrepancies noted in any of the information entered into the Warrant Management System shall

immediately be brought to the attention of the Clerk of Court for the court of issue so they may be corrected.

If there is reason to believe a suspect has fled from the jurisdiction, an Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution (UFAP) federal warrant will only be sought if deemed appropriate by the **District Attorney** or their designee.

The **District Attorney** will determine when it is appropriate to institute procedures for an inquest before a justice of the court of jurisdiction ([M.G.L. c. 38, § 8](#)).

Paul F. Evans
Police Commissioner