



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 402 – Differential Police Response

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.01 INTRODUCTION

This procedure establishes a set of alternative methods to the traditional field response to non-emergency requests for police services to include the N-CODE Reporting Program, the Service Expediter System, and the SAPD Website Self Reporting Program.

.02 N-CODE REPORTING PROGRAM

- A. The N-Code Reporting Program is a process designed to relieve an officer of the responsibility for submitting a written incident report on assigned calls when certain criteria or conditions exist. However, this program does not relieve officers of their responsibility to take and keep notes of any police action in which they are involved (refer to Rules and Regulations, Section 4.11).
- B. The N-Code Reporting Program consists of a series of N-Code numbers and statements outlining the specific criteria or conditions for the use of each N-Code number.
- C. N-Code Number and Statement
 1. N-Code 1: Arrived in area – Found no such address or location – Effort was made to locate complainant – Call back by dispatcher unsuccessful.
 2. N-Code 2: Arrived at location – Occupant stated he did not call – Ascertained no problem or incident occurred – Call back by dispatcher unsuccessful.
 3. N-Code 3: Arrived at location – Unable to locate a complainant – No evidence present which indicates an incident had taken place – Call back by dispatcher unsuccessful.
 4. N-Code 4: False alarm – burglary, robbery, etc. – Building/habitation physically secure, no apparent evidence of criminal activity for alarm notification.
 - a. When this N-Code is used, the reporting officer notifies the dispatcher of the type of alarm and the precise address of the alarm site.
 - b. This N-Code may be used even through the officer is physically unable to check the building/habitation because of an obstacle (i.e., fence, locked gate, dogs, etc.), but there does not appear to be any evidence of criminal activity.
 - c. Should the officer make contact with the complainant or alarm company agent and be informed the location is secure; the call is N-Coded.
 5. N-Code 5: Return call – Added return call information to previously written report. Note: Only the officer who handled the original call can use this N-Code number.
 6. N-Code 6: Outside case jurisdiction – No action taken – Proper jurisdiction notified or advised complainant to notify proper jurisdiction. Note: A report is written whenever any action is taken, such as complainant/witness interviewed, evidence handled, etc.



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7. N-Code 7: Canceled by the dispatcher. This N-Code number is used solely by the dispatcher when the call is canceled by the complainant or when an officer receives an internal assignment such as transporting witnesses or prisoners, making notifications for the Investigations Division, or a special assignment or traffic assignment.
8. N-Code 8: Patrol-by given to officer by dispatcher.
9. N-Code 9: False burglary, robbery, or other type of alarm when caused by severe weather conditions. No further information is required.
10. N-Code 10: Found missing person recovered stolen vehicle, recovered property, or any other miscellaneous call where the incident has been previously handled under an original SAPD case number. Note: The officer assigned the call must write a supplemental report under the original SAPD case number.
11. N-Code 11: Call canceled by a Communications Unit supervisor. This N-Code is used solely by the dispatcher.
12. N-Code 12: Call canceled by a field supervisor. This N-Code is used only at the discretion of a field supervisor based on sufficient information about the call in question (e.g. chronic caller).
13. N-Code 13: Civil disturbance - Contacted the parties and determined it is a civil matter (No legal jurisdiction in civil matters) – There was no breach of the peace or any criminal incident – No police action was taken beyond referral to civil resources like an attorney or small claims court (e.g. peaceful picking up of belongings).
14. N-Code 14: No show – Complainant was not given child (ren) back because the other party did not show up as agreed – (visitation violation).
15. N-Code 15: Stand by – For an uneventful exchange of children.
16. N-Code 16: Assist the public. The officer provided some kind of minor assistance to the complainant for a non-criminal matter (e.g. changing a tire, giving directions, educating the public, etc.).
17. N-Code 17: Miscellaneous animal calls where no police action has to be taken (e.g. loose pets, grass snake in the yard, etc.). NOTE: This is not utilized for Noise Complaints (e.g. barking dogs, roosters crowing, etc.). Refer to GM Procedure 605, *Miscellaneous Offenses and Complaint Calls* for the handling of Noise Complaints.
18. N-Code 18: Repeated call where no further information is given and it has been verified the call is already assigned to another officer – either the dispatcher or the officer who is aware of this situation may N-Code the repeated call.

Note: N-Codes 19 – 29 are used for incidents involving uninsured drivers failing to provide “Proof of Financial Responsibility.” This is in conformance with GM Procedure 607, Impounding Vehicles.
19. N-Code 19: Decision Not to Tow based on condition of driver (elderly, sick, etc.).
20. N-Code 20: Decision Not to Tow based on weather conditions.
21. N-Code 21: Decision Not to Tow based on call load.
22. N-Code 22: Decision Not to Tow based on the driver is from out of state.
23. N-Code 23: Decision Not to Tow based on small children in the vehicle and/or the number of children.
24. N-Code 24: Decision Not to Tow based on if the driver or other occupants are disabled.
25. N-Code 25: Decision Not to Tow based on the fact ~~that~~ there are animals in vehicle.



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26. N-Code 26: Decision Not to Tow based on the nature and quantity of contents in the vehicle (potential financial loss, perishable items, etc.).
27. N-Code 27: Decision Not to Tow based on exigent circumstances (health-care crisis, etc.).
28. N-Code 28: Decision Not to Tow based on time of day.
29. N-Code 29: Decision Not to Tow based on location (desolate areas, open fields/safety issues, etc.).
30. N-Code 30: Crashes not required to be reported under GM Procedure 707, *Crash Investigation*. Should the driver(s) desire documentation of the crash, a computer generated report may be obtained from the Records Office.
 - a. Officers must keep a record of the driver's names and driver's license numbers of all individuals involved and the vehicle license number of all vehicles involved.
 - b. This information will be kept in the officer's notes in accordance with Section 4.11 of the Rules and Regulations.
31. N-Code 31: (Green Sticker) Vehicle abandoned on any public street or any dedicated street on city property. (The original N-Code case number is used for the incident report if the vehicle is impounded.)
32. N-Code 99: Supervisor handling a complaint administratively. This N-Code is used only by a supervisor when a case number has been generated for a complaint which is going to be handled administratively in accordance with GM Procedure 303, *Disciplinary Procedures*.

.03 N-CODE REPORTING PROCEDURE FOR FIELD OFFICER

- A. On any call which would require an officer with report responsibility to submit an incident report, the officer is relieved of the responsibility for submitting an incident report if the actions taken by the officer consist entirely of one of the N-Code number statements. If the situation or condition is not entirely covered by an N-Code number statement, the officer must submit a written report covering the incident.
- B. If the incident is one covered by an N-Code number statement, the officer with report responsibility shall either assign the appropriate N-Code using the MDC/Laptop, or may opt to write a report covering the incident.
- C. In situations covered by N-Codes 1, 2, or 3, the officer, prior to N-Coding the call, will:
 1. Request the information channel dispatcher to call back the telephone number listed for the complainant; and
 2. Write a report if a complainant is located or if there is any indication or evidence an incident has taken place and the situation is not covered by another appropriate N-Code (i.e. N-Code 13, 16, etc.).
- D. In situations covered by N-Code 10, the officer will obtain the original SAPD case number for the previously handled call and write a supplemental report.
- E. The N-Code number is the officer's official report of an incident. All departmental rules, regulations, and procedures concerning reports are applicable to the N-Code Reporting Program. The officer shall provide the case number when requested and advise the complainant a brief computer-generated report will be available at the Records Office.
- F. N-Codes 13, 16 and 17 require a brief justification be entered either by the officer or by the dispatcher to differentiate the calls. The justification cannot exceed 134 characters (letters, numbers, and spaces only – no punctuation allowed).



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1. The following is an example of an MDC/Laptop entry for an N-Code 13: 24.13.called for defective cell phone between Jack Smith 03 22 1979 and Sprint Mgr Jesse Jones explained this is a civil matter <press CODES key>
 2. The following is an example of an MDC/Laptop entry for a N-Code 16 (assist the public): 24.16.changed flat tire <press CODES key>
 3. The following is an example of an MDC/Laptop entry for an N-Code 17: 24.17.chased one red cow back into fenced area <press CODES key>
- G. N-Codes 5, 10 and 18 require the case number under which the incident was originally handled be entered.
1. The following is an example of an MDC/Laptop entry for a N-Code 18 where a second officer was dispatched to an accident already being handled: 24.18.03123456 <press CODES key>
- H. N-Code 31 requires the license plate or VIN of the abandoned vehicle be entered. Other notes about the vehicle may also be entered, but they cannot exceed 134 characters.
1. The following are examples of MDC/Laptop entries for an N-Code 31: 24.31.abc123 <press CODES key> or 24.31.abc123 red Chevy truck with 2 flat tires and expired inspection facing oncoming traffic <press CODES key>
- I. If an officer spends more than one (1) hour on a call, the call may not be N-Coded, and the officer must write a report covering the incident. The one (1) hour time-period starts from the time dispatched and ends when the officer returns to service from the call.

.04 N-CODE REPORTING PROCEDURE FOR DISPATCHER

- A. Dispatchers will update the status of a call with a N-Code number when requested by a field officer only under the following conditions:
1. The appropriate N-Code number is one the dispatcher is authorized to use.
 2. The MDI/Laptop system or the officer's MDC/Laptop is not operational; or
 2. The computer system is down and manual keycards are being used by the dispatcher.

.05 DIFFERENTIAL POLICE RESPONSE (DPR)

- A. This section provides all members with an overview of the handling of non-emergency calls for services received by the San Antonio Police Department. DPR specifically details which calls are to be expedited or self-reported, and which calls the Department will not respond to. Additionally, DPR outlines the holding of certain calls during patrol shifts changes. Applicable reports will be taken in accordance with this procedure.
- B. DPR is a set of alternative methods to the traditional field response to non-emergency requests for police services designed to:
1. Reduce response time;
 2. Increase volume of expedited calls;
 3. Increase officer safety and patrol availability; and
 4. Reduce cost.



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- C. DPR Criteria – In order to determine the appropriate police response relative to calls for service received, Communications Unit personnel have been trained to use the following five criteria in assigning call priority:
1. Urgent – The call will be dispatched as soon as possible and officers will arrive as soon as they safely can.
 2. Standard – The call will be handled by the next available officer, who should arrive within fourteen (14) minutes.
 3. Delayed – The officer working the area should be contacting the caller within one hour or if the caller prefers, the caller can be immediately transferred to an expediter.
 4. Expediter – Calls handled by phone. The following types of calls may be expedited.
 - a. Burglary of Coin-Operated or Coin Collection Machines;
 - b. Criminal Mischief;
 - c. Graffiti;
 - d. Information/Additional Information;
 - e. Lost property;
 - f. Obscene, harassing or threatening phone calls;
 - g. Thefts/Gas drive offs;
 - h. Theft of Service;
 - i. Threats, unless direct imminent danger; and
 - j. Burglary of Vehicle.
 5. Self Reported - Calls which may be self reported by filling out the appropriate forms via SAPD Website or going to nearest substation to fill out the appropriate forms.
- D. Cold Case Calls to be Expedited
1. Cold Cases are defined as cases where there is no potential risk of personal injury or property damage and ~~that~~ have been reported by the complainant as having occurred over 30 minutes in the past. Calls determined to be cold cases shall not be considered “in progress” and shall not require an officer at the scene.
 2. Information received by call-takers which is determined to be relevant will be forwarded to affected patrol sections (stolen vehicle, suspect descriptions, etc.), in the form of a BOLO.
 3. Expedited calls requiring evidence collection/processing will have an applicable officer/detective assigned to retrieve/process item(s) under the expediter’s case number.
 4. If, while expediting a call for service, it is determined it cannot be properly handled via telephone, the call will be updated and sent to dispatch for assignment to a field officer.
- E. Cold Case Calls to be expedited by field officers
1. Calls designated as a cold case call by the call-taker which cannot be expedited due to call volume, should be sent to the appropriate dispatch channel for assignment to a field officer.



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2. The field officer has the option of handling the call in two ways:
 - a. Make the location and handle the report; or
 - b. Expedite the call from the field.
 - (1) Using a personal cell phone.
 - (i) Use of personal cell phones is strictly voluntary.
 - (ii) There will be no reimbursement for use of personal cell phones.
 - (iii) Use of call block (*67 on most cell phones) is highly encouraged.
 - (2) Using a landline phone.
3. If the field officer chooses to expedite the call, the officer will initiate the following:
 - a. Inform the dispatcher they will expedite the call.
 - b. Inform the dispatcher of the location (by address) where they will expedite the call from and dispatch will flag the call appropriately.
 - (1) From a cell phone from their patrol vehicle.
 - (2) A landline phone, if using this method, officers will identify the actual address they are making the call from, to the dispatcher.
4. The dispatcher will flag the call to reflect the officer is expediting the call from the field and will log the location where the call will be made from:
 - a. Patrol car (if a cell phone is used).
 - b. A landline phone. If using this method, officers will identify the actual address they are making the call from, to the dispatcher.
5. The field officer shall not expedite any call which has not been first designated a cold case call by a call-taker.
6. In the event a field officer expedites a cold case call and the officer determines the call is in progress or has information the suspects are still in the area:
 - a. The field officer will immediately notify the dispatcher the call cannot be expedited and proceed to the location of the call and handle it in accordance with the applicable GM procedure.
 - b. The dispatcher will promptly change the status of unit log of the officer reflecting the officer will make the location of the call and remove the call flag.
7. Field officers will also utilize other guidelines in Subsections .05D2 and 3 of this procedure as applicable.

.06 SELF REPORTING SYSTEM REPORTS

- A. Under DPR, several different types of calls can be self-reported.



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- B. Complainants will be able to make these reports by going to the San Antonio Police Department Web Page at www.sanantonio.gov/SAPD or going to any substation to fill out the appropriate forms. The following types of calls may be self-reported:
1. Burglary of coin operated machines without identifiable suspect information (i.e. name, address, license plate, TDL, SSN);
 2. Criminal Mischief up to \$500.00 in damages or Class B misdemeanor without identifiable suspect information;
 3. Graffiti up to \$500.00 in damages or Class B misdemeanor without identifiable suspect information;
 4. Lost Property (except firearms);
 5. Thefts/Gas drive off up to \$500.00 in loss (except firearms) without identifiable suspect information;
 6. Theft of Service up to \$500.00 in loss without identifiable suspect information; and
 7. Burglary of Vehicle (except when a firearm is stolen). without identifiable suspect information (i.e. name, address, license plate, TDL, SSN).

.07 NON-DISPATCHED CALLS

- A. Under DPR, the following types of calls normally will not be dispatched or responded to. Currently, these calls could either be better remedied by another agency or certain criteria or conditions do not exist for a police response (i.e. no breach of peace or criminal intent is present).
1. Animal calls which do not pose an imminent threat to public safety (some barking dog calls may be dispatched due to the noise nuisance);
 2. Calls to apartment complexes for the purpose of enforcing house rules (i.e. people in the pool after hours, parking in the wrong slot, etc.);
 3. Code compliance calls. These are calls where the City codes have been violated on private property (i.e. neglected lawns, abandoned vehicles on private property, etc.);
 4. Calls for misbehaving children, to include children refusing to go to school;
 5. Civil matters where there is no breach of the peace;
 6. Private property crashes (non-intoxicated related) without injury.
- B. Although the calls listed above normally will not be dispatched, officers shall make all calls assigned by the dispatcher and they shall not dispute these calls or argue with the dispatcher. If an officer feels the call should not have been dispatched, it can be brought to the attention of a supervisor after the call has been made.

.08 CALL HOLDING AT SHIFT CHANGES

- A. Dispatchers will hold certain calls during the following shift change hours: 0550-0630, 1350-1430, and 2150-2230.
- B. During the above call hold periods, for non-emergency calls, callers will be given the option of calling back during any of the following time periods: 0800-1200, 1600-2000, and 0100-0500.
- C. Non-emergency calls and crimes which are not in progress should be held at shift change.
- D. DPR eliminates a great number of late calls by providing for call expediting and the holding of calls for the oncoming shift. Officers shall no longer request late calls from dispatchers.