SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURE

DATE: MARCH 14, 2019

NUMBER: 2.15 – COMMUNICATIONS

SUBJECT: SPECIAL SITUATION FILE ENTRIES

RELATED POLICY: 2.06

ORIGINATING DIVISION: SUPPORT OPERATIONS
COMMAND: COMMUNICATIONS

NEW PROCEDURE: ☐
PROCEDURAL CHANGE: ■   MINOR CHANGE
SUPERSEDES: DP 2.15 – 06/04/2018

I.   PURPOSE

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for the preparation, submission, retrieval, and retention of Special Situation (SS) files in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.

II.   SCOPE

This procedure applies to all members of the Department.

III.   DEFINITION

Special Situation (SS) file - a computerized text file stored in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and linked to a specific geographical address.

NEW

SS File Coordinator - This is a collateral duty of Lead Dispatchers. The current SS File Coordinator can be contacted by calling the Lead Desk in Communications Division.

IV.   **BACKGROUND**

An SS file entry would be appropriate for a variety of officer safety issues including, but not limited to, threats against police, uncooperative subjects, violent criminal history, mentally unstable individuals, threats of suicide, and weapons at a location. The SS file also applies to significant service delivery issues, such as gate access codes, private property authorization letters, Community Assisted Party Program (CAPP) houses, and Tarasoff warnings.

The SS file is a communications tool whereby personnel responding to an event at an address can place information in the CAD system to be automatically provided to those who respond to the same location any time in the future. The "Remarks" portion of the file is limited to 2000 characters. Entries should be detailed but concise. Common abbreviations can be used if they are not likely to be misunderstood. No approval is needed to place an SS file in the CAD system.

The CAD system is a component of the Department's computer and communications systems. As such, all entries are stored indefinitely on the CAD system and there should be no expectation of privacy. The SS file entries may be read by Department management and system administrators and could be subject to subpoena. Members shall only submit SS file entries that are appropriate, professional, accurate, and will not discredit the Department.

The SS files shall not be used to deny service to any person or location when a call for service is received. However, upon verification and based on past information contained in an SS file, a field supervisor or Communications Lead or Supervisor may determine that a different response is required than would normally be indicated. The SS file information and the supervisor approving the modified response shall be added to the event history in the form of Remarks on the event.

Members should refer to Department Procedure 1.46, Use of City/Department Computer Systems, for additional information regarding the storage and transmission of information on Department computer systems.

V.   **PROCEDURE**

A.   When the need for an SS file is identified, it can be submitted in the following manner:

1.   Direct Entry using the Remarks section of an event

a. The member will note the SS file information on the event. ONCE THE INFORMATION HAS BEEN NOTED ON THE EVENT, THAT INFORMATION BECOMES A PERMANENT RECORD. MEMBERS SHALL KEEP REMARKS PROFESSIONAL, BRIEF, AND PERTINENT TO THE EVENT. The SS file remarks should start with three asterisks followed by "START SS", then three more asterisks. The SS file information can then be entered and concluded with three asterisks, "END SS", then three more asterisks. The following is an example:

START SS A SHORT NARRATIVE OF THE SUBJECT ***END SS***

b. The event or a message stating that an SS file was added to an event should be routed to the Lead Dispatcher position (LD01). This message should include how long the SS file shall remain active in CAD.

c. The Lead Dispatcher will print out the event and forward it to the SS File Coordinator.

B. The SS File Coordinator will proofread the content of the SS file entry for appropriateness and clarity. Any issues arising from the screening process will be routed back to the originating member or his or her supervisor. The SS File Coordinator will enter the SS file into the CAD system. The originating member should then ensure that the SS file has been entered by performing a Special Situation Search.

Select personnel at area commands who handle Letters of Authorization, CAPP files, or other SS files will maintain divisional trespass letter books. A copy of any SS will be sent via email to the Communications Division SS File Coordinator via email at Communications@pd.sandiego.gov.

C. SS File Retrieval

1. When units are assigned to an event at a location where an SS file exists, the CAD system will automatically send the SS file information through the MPS application to all units assigned to that event and to the CAD terminal of the radio dispatcher assigned to that dispatch group.

2.   Members shall keep in mind that the SS file contains information regarding a past event at the location and is not necessarily a predictor of future events or behavior. Responders should include the SS file information in their decision-making process and plan their response appropriately. Members shall guard against escalating a situation based solely upon SS file information.

3.   In the event SS file information is no longer valid or has changed, that information will be transmitted to the SS File Coordinator via the Lead Dispatcher so that the SS file can be edited or deleted.

4.   When not assigned to an event, members can query locations for existing SS files. The Location Verify query in CAD will automatically indicate there is an SS file if there is an active SS file at that location. Officers should then access the SS file by utilizing the LOI Search button via the MPS application.

VI.   SPECIAL SITUATION FILE RETENTION

There is no minimum or maximum number of days that an SS file will be available for retrieval in the CAD system. The length of validity of the SS file will be determined by the SS File Coordinator or by the Officer or Supervisor who submits the information. After the SS file expires, it can be renewed by the SS File Coordinator if determined necessary.

Expired SS files are retained in the CAD system until deleted by Information Services staff and/or the SS File Coordinator.