



COTTAGE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

SUBJECT: **FIELD INTERVIEWS**

NEW REVISED RESCINDS

APPROVED: *GM*
GEORGIA MILTENBERGER
ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE

Effective Date 8/22/2018

I. POLICY

Officers must understand the legal basis and authority for conducting field interviews. Officers are encouraged to use this investigative tool consistent with Constitutional requirements and Department policy. Field interviews when documented properly, can contribute greatly to crime analysis and serve as a source of information as well as a means of developing suspects and witnesses.

II. FACTORS / CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Reasonable suspicion is the key element on which an officer should base his/her action when deciding whether a field interview is appropriate. The following factors should also be considered:
1. Is it a public place or a place the officer has a right to be?
 2. Does it appear that the person may commit, is committing, or has committed a crime?
 3. Is the person reasonably suspected of carrying a concealed weapon and with it intends to do bodily harm?
- B. Field interviews do not have to meet the aforementioned criteria in order for an officer to conduct such an interview, but officers should be aware that:

1. Some citizens are sensitive to any interaction with police and an over- aggressive approach by the officer may result in a lack of important support from the person to be interviewed.
 2. The person to be interviewed is under no obligation to answer questions and may remain silent.
 3. Unusual or suspicious actions may trigger a field interview because felony arrests are made consistently by officers who are quick to recognize something suspicious in the actions or the appearance of a person or vehicle.
 4. A person not fitting the place or time should be questioned.
- C. As many field interviews result in an arrest, the field interview location must be selected with care. Officers should give consideration to lighting, officer and bystander safety, and possible escape routes.
1. When an officer first approaches a person to be interviewed, he/she must provide the greatest possible element of surprise either by vehicle or by foot.
 2. Officers should have, prior to approaching a person for the purpose of conducting an interview, a "decided-upon plan-of-action" in the event violence erupts.

III. DOCUMENTATION

Officers will document field interviews by completing an Incident Report form and inserting all required information and placing a narrative on the space provided.

- A. Completed field interviews will be placed in the Report review box for supervisory approval prior to the end of the officer's shift for that day.