



COTTAGE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

SUBJECT: **SUICIDE NOTES**

NEW REVISED RESCINDS

APPROVED: *GM*
GEORGIA MILTENBERGER
ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE

Effective Date 8/22/2018

I. POLICY

- A. Officers attempting to protect and preserve a crime scene will be alert for documents or anything else that would indicate that the scene is actually that of a suicide.
- B. Officers will also be on the lookout for such documents or indications that may have been "planted" in order to make a crime scene look like a suicide.
- C. The Department will not release the contents of a suicide note to members of the media on or off-the-record.

II. PROCEDURES

- A. If a suicide note is found, whether or not the suicide was successful, it will be seized by the officer as evidence.
- B. The seizing officer should attempt to look at other writings of the victim and compare them with the note.
- C. If the victim is transported to the hospital, the officer will show the note to the treating physician but will maintain custody of the original.
- D. Once the State has no further need to retain the original, a copy of it will be attached to the station files copy of the report and the original will be returned to the victim/victim's family.

- E. If the suicide is successful; the original will be turned over to the PGPD investigator assigned to the case for placement in the case file in the Homicide/Sex Section of the PGPD Criminal Investigation Division.
- F. If the family of the deceased requests the note be returned to them, a copy of the note will be inserted into the case file and the original will be returned to the family, providing the State has no further need to keep the note.
- G. If an officer returns the note, he/she will ensure that a photocopy of it has been made for the station records file, and will indicate in the Event Report or Supplement Report:
 - 1. To whom the note was given,
 - 2. The date and time it was relinquished,
 - 3. The relationship of the person to the victim.