



# TUCSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

*Ready to Protect,  
Proud to Serve*

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## CENTRAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

## CASE ASSIGNMENT CRITERIA

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*TUCSON POLICE DEPARTMENT*  
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## INTRODUCTION

Unit supervisors are responsible for review and assignment of cases. This document provides guidelines for case assignment. Nothing in these guidelines is meant to preclude assignment of cases based upon the good judgement of the reviewer. These criteria shall be reviewed and updated at least annually.

### CENTRAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

#### VIOLENT CRIMES SECTION (VCS)

##### **HOMICIDE**

The Homicide Unit investigates all homicides and suspicious death cases, except juvenile deaths that occur in-home. An in-home death is defined as a death occurring while the child is in the care of a parent, guardian, babysitter or child care facility. Those cases would be referred to the Dependent Child Unit for investigation. The Homicide Unit also investigates all shootings where an officer fired his weapon at another person and cases involving missing adults when foul play is suspected. In marginal life-threatening cases where death appears likely, the Homicide Detail may respond with the detail that would normally handle the case if death did not occur.

Assignment Criteria:

- All homicide cases, to include domestic violence.
- All suspicious death cases.
- All missing person cases when foul play is suspected.
- All officer-involved shooting cases.
- All cases involving life-threatening injuries where death appears likely.
- Other miscellaneous cases when related to a homicide investigation.

##### **AGGRAVATED ASSAULT**

The Aggravated Assault Unit investigates all assaults where circumstances are “aggravated” to the point of making them serious enough to warrant prison sentences upon conviction of the

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offender. Aggravated circumstances include the use of a deadly weapon, assaults resulting in serious injury, assaults on medical and public safety personnel, and assaults on minors by adults. According to UCR guidelines, aggravated assaults are divided into four categories; assaults to police officers resulting in serious injury, assaults to police officers resulting in non-serious injury, all others, and domestic violence. Child abuse, gang-related assaults and domestic violence are handled by other details specializing in the investigation of those crimes.

Assignment Criteria:

- Victim will assist in prosecution.
- A viable suspect is identified or there exists information that could be developed into suspect identification.
- All felony assault arrests that are in custody cases.
- Assaults resulting in life threatening injuries.
- Assaults on police officers.
- Case details reveal a specific pattern or repeat offender
- Any other circumstances that the supervisor decides warrant assignment of the case.

**ROBBERY**

The Robbery Detail is responsible for the investigating all robberies, carjackings and kidnappings of adult victims unless the crime has an established narcotic nexus.

Assignment Criteria:

- The level of violence dictates further investigation.
- A suspect is named by first or last name, or by alias
- A weapon is used or possessed during the incident
- The identity of the suspect is made known through forensic evidence or photos. The case shows a pattern or trend
- The case shows known or potential serial offender involvement through motive, pattern, description or trend.

Regarding highway robberies they are not assigned automatically, the case has to have significant evidence or the victim knows identification of the suspect(s).

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## FAMILY AND SEX CRIMES SECTION (FSCS)

### ADULT SEXUAL ASSAULT (ASA)

The Adult Sexual Assault Unit investigates sexual offenses where the victim is 18 years of age or older; to include: sexual assault and attempted sexual assault, sexual molestation, indecent exposure, public sexual indecency, prowling and “peeping tom” cases, and obscene phone calls. ASAD also handles home invasions and burglaries where sexual motivation is apparent, and any other cases where an underlying sexual offense may be the motivating factor in the commission of the crime.

#### Assignment Criteria:

Sexual assault, attempted sexual assault, sexual molestation cases and other felony cases are assigned when:

- The victim wishes to fully cooperate in the investigation and prosecution of the case and the incident occurred within the relative recent past.
- The suspect is a SORT offender or believed to have committed previous sexual or subsequent offenses, regardless of the victim’s desire to cooperate.

Indecent exposure, public sexual indecency, prowlers, peeping tom, other sexually related offenses:

- Suspect is named or otherwise identified
- Biological evidence, video surveillance or other identifying evidence available
- License plate, address, or other leads provided
- Pattern of similar crimes is committed or leads otherwise developed

Non-assigned reports, both criminal and non-criminal (suspicious activity cases, *etc.*) are distributed to the respective detective based on geographic location. While these cases are not formally assigned, detectives often contact the reportee in an effort to enhance public/police relations and obtain addition information when appropriate.

#### Sexual Offenses not handled by ASAD:

Sexual Offenses involving prostitution, lewd/lascivious consensual acts in the parks, public restrooms, adult bookstores, *etc.* are forwarded to SID.

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### **CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT (CSA)**

The Child Sexual Assault Unit investigates sex offenses involving victims who are under the age of eighteen. Detectives follow-up on reports of indecent exposure and public sexual indecency (other than incidental exposures), sexual abuse, sexual conduct with a minor, sexual or attempted sexual assault, and sexual molestation of a child.

Assignment criteria:

Sexual abuse, sexual molestation of a child, sexual conduct with a minor and sexual assault cases are usually assigned when:

- The victim is known and available.
- The victim has disclosed the inappropriate behavior or there is evidence that some form of inappropriate sexual contact has been enacted upon the child.
- The suspect is a SORT offender or has been accused of committing sex offenses with minors.
- The incident occurred within the past six months.

The unit investigates most cases involving consensual sex with a minor. However, consensual sex cases may **not** be assigned for further investigation when:

- The victim is 15 to 17 years of age, and
- The sex was consensual, and
- There is no history of sex offenses involving the suspect, and
- The suspect is no older than 22 years of age.

### **DEPENDENT CHILD UNIT (DCU)**

The Dependent Child Unit investigates all cases of physical abuse of children. These investigations include a wide range of criminal violations inflicted upon children ranging from neglect to homicide.

The specific cases investigated by this unit are:

- Any custodial physical abuse of children under 15 years of age, unless a clear pattern and history of physical abuse can be established. The Domestic Violence Unit will

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work cases involving the custodial physical abuse of children over the age of 15, unless a clear pattern of physical abuse can be established.

- Non-custodial assaults of children under 8 years of age.
- Homicide of children.
- Any death of any minor child.
- Drowning that results in death or injury.
- Accidents where the child is severely injured or dies.
- Child Neglect (Malnutrition, dirty houses where the welfare of child is severely compromised).
- Custodial interference cases on a case by case, unless the child is in danger.

Assignment Criteria:

Because of the large range of responsibilities investigated by this unit, some cases, though with valid criminal issues and with investigative leads, may not be assigned. The criteria used in case assignment is:

- The severity of the injury to the child.
- The age (also considering mental age) of the child, and the child’s ability to help themselves in seeking relief from the abusive environment.
- Circumstances of the offense.
- Consideration of past abuse (this is accomplished with a criminal records check and coordination with CPS).

Based upon these factors, most cases of child custodial interference are not investigated. This includes those cases where the whereabouts of the child is known, the child is with a family member, and the child is not in danger. This may include those instances when the child is taken out of state. However, if the custodial parent reports three separate violations within a three month period and requests follow-up a detective will be assigned per the agreement with the City Prosecutors Office.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT (DV)**

The Domestic Violence Unit investigates all cases, **felony and misdemeanor**, involving domestic violence offenses as defined in ARS 13-3601. These investigations encompass a wide range of criminal violations from disorderly conduct to aggravated assault. The Homicide Unit investigates homicides involving a domestic violence relationship. This includes all cases in which the victim and defendant reside or have previously resided

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together (except group living situations), without regard to sexual orientation or involvement in an intimate relationship. The unit also investigates violations of Orders of Protection cases.

Assignment Criteria:

- All in custody felony arrest cases.
- Cooperation from the victim in the investigation and prosecution of the case except when involving serious injury.
- Probable cause, evidence and/or witnesses exist to substantiate the victim's allegation.
- Consideration of past or continued domestic violence offenses involving the victim and defendant.

Assignment criteria for Order of Protection case:

- A valid order exists
- The order has been served or the defendant has knowledge of the order
- Cooperation from the victim in the investigation and prosecution of the case
- Probable cause, evidence and/or witnesses exist to substantiate the victim's allegation

The Dependent Child Unit reviews domestic violence offenses involving the custodial physical abuse of children under the age of 15.

**SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION TRACKING UNIT (SORT)**

This unit is comprised of three (3) smaller units: Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC), Missing Juveniles, and Sex Offender Registration Tracking (SORT).

**INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN (ICAC)**

The Internet Crimes Against Children Unit works cases involving the sexual exploitation of juveniles.

Assignment criteria:

- Victim is 15 years of age or younger and the suspect knows or has reason to believe the victim is 15 years or younger.

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- There is a path back to the predator such as:
  - The internet provider is known or can be identified.
  - The screen name of the victim and/or suspect is known or can be identified.
  - The chat room name of the e-mail provider is known or can be identified.
  - The predator has provided a name, phone numbers, location or other information.
- There is a known location of pornography; hard copy, film, disk, camera or an electronic device.
  - The person responsible for pornography is known or there is information that may lead to that person or source.
  - The subject matter must be beyond doubt child porn in the eyes of a reasonable person, i.e., the image must be of a person less than 18 years of age and the focus of attention must be in furtherance of prurient sexual interest.
  - There is an image is of a sexual act in which at least one person is readily identifiable as a juvenile.

#### MISSING JUVENILES

The Missing Juvenile Unit is responsible for runaway juveniles and abducted or missing children under the age of 18 years. See Dependent Child Unit for custodial issues.

#### Assignment Criteria:

- When there is no reasonable explanation for the disappearance of the juvenile, i.e., runaway.
- The juvenile has a mental disability and may not be able to function on his/her own.
- The juvenile has a physical disability or health issue which may place them in danger.
- The juvenile is less than 12 years old.
- The juvenile is suicidal and there is enough information to believe this to be the reason for the current disappearance.

#### SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION AND TRACKING (SORT)

The SORT Unit is responsible for tracking registered sex offenders.

#### Assignment criteria:

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- A sex offender has been identified who is not in compliance with registration requirements. This applies to current Arizona residents and those that are from another state. Violations include:
  - A sex offender who is currently registered within Pima County has 72 hours after moving, excluding weekends and legal holidays, to register a change of address with the Pima County Sheriff's Office.
  - A sex offender who is new to Pima County has 10 business days to register with the Pima County Sheriff's Office.
  - A sex offender shall obtain and have in their possession a valid state ID or driver's license issued by MVD.

## PROPERTY CRIMES DIVISION

### BURGLARY

The Burglary Unit investigates all residential and business burglaries, and all thefts from fenced commercial yards. The Burglary Unit does not investigate thefts from motor vehicles.

Assignment Criteria:

- All cases where suspects are arrested by patrol officers or detectives for burglary.
- Cases with a significant M.O.
- All fingerprint hits.
- Cases in which a serial suspect is named.
- Located pawned property that has been identified as stolen.
- Cases with exceptionally high loss (greater than \$20,000.00).
- Cases involving strong leads (i.e. suspect vehicle place obtained).

### AUTO THEFT

The Auto theft Unit investigates all thefts of automobiles as defined by N.C.I.C. rules. Those include cars, trucks, motorcycles, heavy equipment, boats, watercraft, and aircraft. The unit also conducts pro-active and follow-up investigations into "chop shops" and stolen auto parts cases. We are responsible for identifying vehicles through vehicle identification number searches as well as conducting inspections of vehicles to verify stolen status and true ownership.

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Assignment Criteria:

- All cases where adult and juvenile auto theft suspects are arrested by patrol officers or detectives for criminal offenses related to auto thefts
- Cases with strong suspect information when prosecution is likely based on past criminal history
- Major cases where more than 1 vehicle is stolen from the same location such as automobile dealerships
- 2 or more AZAFIS hits on the same suspect, or any AZAFIS hit on a repeat auto theft offender
- Rare or exotic vehicles with high dollar values, where the possibility of recovery is high
- Interpleader cases where more than 2 people claim ownership of a vehicle and the title or ownership documents are in question
- Cases that require an inspection for a hidden identification number

**FRAUD**

The Fraud Unit investigates cases of forged or counterfeit checks, fraudulent use of credit cards, fraud schemes, identity theft, and illegal use of computers. Investigations are coordinated with other agencies (PCSO, DPS, FBI, Secret Service, Postal Inspectors, INS, Border Patrol, *etc.*) to ensure successful prosecution on all levels.

Assignment Criteria:

- Cases involving a dollar amount of \$10,000.00 or greater for fraud and embezzlement cases. The Pima County Attorney criteria for issuing felony charges requires a value of \$2,000 or greater. Current staffing of the unit does not allow for the assigning of lesser dollar felony cases. It should be noted that all misdemeanor cases, absent extraordinary circumstances, are not assigned.
- Cases involving a dollar amount of \$10,000 or greater are reviewed by the unit supervisor and may not be assigned, unless:
  - A suspect has been identified and linked to the criminal activity.
  - Documents and proof of the crime are readily obtainable.
- Cases involving in-custody felony arrests (per PCAO guidelines) by patrol officers are automatically assigned.
- In-custody cases under the threshold of the PCAO for felony prosecution are assigned at the discretion of the unit supervisor. In most instances the suspect should be cited and released by the officer.

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- Cases involving mail theft where checks have been stolen, washed and forged resulting in \$2,000 or greater loss.
- Cases that can be linked to known offenders listed as suspects in multiple otherwise unassigned cases.
- Cases that become “high profile” due to the number or the nature of the victims, subject to review by the unit supervisor or Section commander.
- Prescription frauds where a suspect has been identified and multiple offenses have occurred are generally cited as misdemeanor (13-3406, “Obtaining Prescription by Fraud” C1M), and copies are sent to Street Level Narcotics.

### **ELDER ABUSE**

The Elder Abuse Task Force investigates a variety of crimes against the elderly and/or vulnerable adults. The cases vary from financial exploitation cases to assault and death unknown.

#### Assignment Criteria:

##### Financial Exploitation Cases:

- Suspect is known or potential to identify suspect exists due to evidence (video, thumb print, actual listed address and/or phone number).
- A priority is given in cases where the suspect is a ‘caregiver’.

##### Physical Abuse/ Assault Cases:

- Suspect is identified.
- The assault occurs in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or the suspect is a paid caregiver.

Any death unknown with suspicious/questionable circumstances is assigned. These cases are normally forwarded to the unit by State licensing agencies, Adult Protective Services, and Homicide Details from participating agencies.

A number of other types of cases are directed to the unit and are assigned by the potential to identify the suspect. In cases in large facilities with multiple potential suspects; caregivers, nurses, janitors *etc.*, assignment is dependent on the significance of the loss and ability to identify the item (theft cases).

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Neglect cases are only assigned if no corrective action is taken and/or the victim is seriously injured or requires hospitalization.

In the case of homicide and sexual assault, the unit will work with the lead detail and provide a detective for an additional resource and to investigate potential elder issues surrounding the crime.