

	HARRISONBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT General Orders	Policy Number: 514
	Chapter: Investigation Operations	Total Pages: 3
	Section: Brady Information	Issue Date: 02/02/2021
	Issued By: Kelley Warner, Chief of Police	Effective Date: 02/02/2021
	Replaces: All General Orders Previously Issued Relative to Subject	
VALEAC Standards:		

A. POLICY AND PURPOSE

This policy establishes guidelines for identifying and releasing potentially exculpatory or impeachment information (so-called “*Brady* information”) to a prosecuting attorney.

B. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this policy. Responsibility rests with the supervisor to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated. This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

C. DEFINITIONS

Brady information - Information known or possessed by the Harrisonburg Police Department that is both favorable and material to the current prosecution or defense of a criminal defendant.

D. DISCLOSURE OF INVESTIGATIVE INFORMATION

Officers must include in their investigative reports adequate investigative information and reference to all material evidence and facts that are reasonably believed to be either incriminating or exculpatory to any individual in the case. If an officer learns of potentially incriminating or exculpatory information any time after submission of a case, the officer or the handling investigator must prepare and submit a supplemental report documenting such information as soon as practicable. Supplemental reports shall be promptly processed and transmitted to the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney.

If information is believed to be privileged or confidential (e.g., informant or protected personnel files), the officer should discuss the matter with a supervisor and/or Commonwealth Attorney to determine the appropriate manner in which to proceed.

Evidence or facts are considered material if there is a reasonable probability that they would affect the outcome of a criminal proceeding or trial. Determining whether evidence or facts are material often requires legal or even judicial review. If an officer is unsure, the officer should address the issue with a supervisor.

Supervisors who are uncertain about whether evidence or facts are material should address the issue in a written memo to an appropriate prosecutor. A copy of the memo should be retained in the department case file.

E. BRADY PROCESS

The Professional Standards Supervisor will coordinate requests for *Brady* information. This person shall be directly responsible to the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

The responsibilities of the coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- a. Working with the appropriate prosecutors' offices and the City Attorney's office to establish systems and processes to determine what constitutes *Brady* information and the method for notification and disclosure.

a. RECORDS RELATED TO PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS

The member selected by the Chief of Police to coordinate requests for *Brady* information is also responsible for establishing a system to comply with the requirements of [VA Code § 19.2-201](#) regarding personnel complaints against an officer who is a witness in a criminal matter or under criminal investigation related to the performance of that officer's duties ([VA Code § 19.2-201](#)).

Any dissemination of records related to personnel complaints shall be in compliance with state and federal law, as well as this policy and the Personnel Records and Personnel Complaints policies. Protective orders and/or redactions should be sought as appropriate.

F. DISCLOSURE OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

If *Brady* information is located, the following procedure shall apply:

- a. In the event that a motion has not already been filed by the criminal defendant or other party, the Commonwealth's attorney and the department member whose file is related to the motion shall be notified of the potential presence of *Brady* information.
- b. The Commonwealth's attorney should be requested to file a motion in order to initiate an in-camera review by the court.

1. If no motion is filed, the Professional Standards supervisor should work with the Commonwealth's attorney to determine whether the records should be disclosed to the prosecutor.
- c. The Professional Standards supervisor shall accompany all relevant personnel files during any in-camera inspection and address any issues or questions raised by the court in determining whether any information contained in the files is both material and favorable to the criminal defendant.
- d. If the court determines that there is relevant *Brady* information contained in the files, only that information ordered released will be copied and released to the parties filing the motion. If, after the disposition of the motion, and before or during trial, an officer discovers additional material that is subject to discovery or inspection, he/she shall notify the Commonwealth's attorney.
- e. Prior to the release of any information pursuant to this process, a protective order should be requested from the court limiting the use of such information to the involved case and requiring the return of all copies upon completion of the case.
- f. If a court has determined that relevant *Brady* information is contained in a member's file in any case, the Commonwealth's attorney should be notified of that fact in all future cases involving that member.

G. INVESTIGATING BRADY ISSUES

If the Department receives information from any source that a member may have issues of credibility or dishonesty or has been engaged in an act of moral turpitude or criminal conduct, the information shall be investigated and processed in accordance with the Professional Standards Policy.

H. SUBPOENA PROCESSING

The individual processing subpoenas (or the supervisor of the subpoenaed member) shall check the subpoenaed member's name against the current list of those who are known to have *Brady* information in their files or background and shall alert the coordinator if a person on the list is subpoenaed.

I. TRAINING

Department personnel should receive periodic training on the requirements of this policy.