

# Georgia State Patrol Policy Manual

<b>SUBJECT</b> <b>RECORDS, FORMS, AND REPORTS</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> <b>13.02</b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b> <b>ALL EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>DATE</b> <b>1/1/2003</b>

## 13.02.1 Purpose

To establish procedures for the development of Department forms, and the completion of records and reports related to its operations. To provide guidance to affected employees regarding the proper completion, submission, and retention of those records and reports.

## 13.02.2 Policy

It shall be the policy of the Georgia State Patrol to maintain complete and accurate records of its operations in accordance with established regulations, and state and federal law. Further, the Georgia State Patrol will provide all employees with the necessary tools and instruction to gather and compile data necessary to prepare all reports.

## 13.02.3 Definitions

- A. Forms – Paper or computer-based means to collect and record data.
- B. Records – Documents or computer files used to maintain statistical or historical information related to Department operations.
- C. Reports – Documents or computer data transmissions that inform affected personnel of the operations of the Department. Reports become records when approved by a supervisor and properly filed.
- D. Records Management Officer – The member responsible for coordinating the forms development and record keeping functions of the Department.

## 13.02.4 Forms Development

- A. Development or modification of forms may originate with any unit or individual that identifies an appropriate need.
  - 1. Members may request the creation of a new form by submitting a memorandum through the chain of command specifying why the form is needed.
    - a. The Records Management Officer shall coordinate with Computer Services, or other personnel as deemed appropriate, for assistance in creating the form.

- b. A sample of the form shall be submitted to affected units for feedback prior to final adoption.
  2. A member who originates or modifies a form shall submit the form and a memorandum to the Records Management Officer through the chain of command.
    - a. The memorandum shall explain why the form or modification is needed.
    - b. Each supervisor in the chain of command shall approve or disapprove the submission.
    - c. If the submission is disapproved, the form or modification shall be returned to the originating member with the reason for the disapproval.
    - d. Submissions may be drawn on paper, prepared on computer media in an approved software application, or both.
  3. The Records Management Officer shall provide information to the appropriate supervisor when a submitted form duplicates or conflicts with an existing form. The supervisor having authority over units that use the form shall determine which form shall be used.
  4. Forms prepared for use restricted to the Post/Unit or Troop/Section shall require only the approval of the Post Commander/Unit Supervisor or Troop Commander/Section Supervisor respectively.
  5. New forms submitted for statewide use shall be accompanied by instructions for completing the form, including the definition and source of all required data.
- B. When a new form is approved, the Records Management Officer shall assign a number to the form.
  1. Department forms shall use the prefix "DPS" and a number assigned by the Records Management Officer.
  2. The Records Management Officer shall add the form to the Master Forms List maintained by their office.
- C. The Records Management Officer may request assistance from Computer Services or the originating member if changes to the form are needed.
- D. The Records Management Officer shall facilitate the printing of the form, if necessary, and its distribution to affected units. The facilitation process includes, but is not limited to:
  1. All printing, regardless of dollar value, shall receive prior budgetary approval. This applies to both state and private vendors.
  2. A Field Purchase Order (FPO) must be obtained from the DPS Printing Coordinator before printing is processed.
  3. Whenever practical, forms shall be developed as computer-based templates in approved software applications, distributed electronically, filled out on the computer, and printed or electronically submitted, as appropriate.

4. When a request is made for printing of a form in lieu of developing a computer-based form, a written explanation shall be submitted describing why a printed form is required. Normally, only multi-part forms shall be submitted for printing.
  5. The Records Management Officer may request assistance from the Public Information Office in laying out the form for printing.
  6. The Records Management Officer shall coordinate with Computer Services in creating and maintaining a central clearinghouse, accessible by all members of the Department, for forms designed for use on the computer.
- E. The Records Management Officer shall consult with affected units and the Legal Services Division to determine the retention period for all new forms.
- F. Effective with the distribution of this policy, all new forms that require the approval of a supervisor shall include an area for each required approval and date of approval.

### **13.02.5 Reports**

- A. Members shall accurately and legibly complete all required reports and submit them through proper channels in accordance with established procedures.
1. The proper submission requirements for each report shall be included on the form used or in its instructions. These requirements shall include:
    - a. The individuals or units which shall receive and/or approve the report, and
    - b. The appropriate time period for completion and submission of the report.
  2. Corrections or additions to reports shall be submitted through the same channels as the original and as soon as possible upon determining the need for the change.
- B. Reports submitted by members shall be truthful and complete, and no member shall knowingly enter or cause to be entered any inaccurate, false, or improper information.
- C. Members shall not falsify, destroy, alter, or remove any report or record of this Department. Any member having knowledge of such actions shall report it to their supervisor.
- D. Intentional alteration, destruction, unauthorized removal, or falsification of a record or report or any information contained therein, or failure to report such actions, shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, and may be grounds for criminal prosecution.
- E. A report shall be prepared for each of the following:
1. Citizen reports of crimes;
  2. Citizen complaints;
  3. Incidents involving a member being dispatched or assigned;

4. Criminal and non-criminal cases initiated by a member, and
5. Incidents involving arrests, citations, or summonses.

F. Unusual Incidents/Morning Report

1. Each Post shall submit a report to the Troop Headquarters, prior to 0800 hours daily, describing any unusual incidents that have occurred during the previous 24-hour period, or indicating that no such incidents have occurred.
2. Submission of the Morning Report shall not relieve members of the responsibility to immediately notify a supervisor of an incident when appropriate.
3. The report may be faxed, e-mailed, or submitted via Administrative Message from the GCIC/NCIC Terminal, as directed by the Troop Commander.
4. Troop Headquarters shall compile all the reports received and forward them to the appropriate adjutant no later than 0900 hours each regular business day.
5. Reports submitted on weekends and holidays shall be included in the report to the adjutant on the next regular business day.
6. The following are required to be submitted on the Morning Report:
  - a. Any serious criminal activity investigated by a member or for which the member renders assistance to another agency.
  - b. Any incident which may attract the attention of the news media and may result in news media inquiries to any commissioned officer or other command level personnel.
  - c. Any incident that may be of interest to the Governor or the Command Staff.
  - d. Activities that may require the assistance of the department (e.g. labor difficulties or civil disorders).
  - e. Significant road closures and hazardous roadway conditions, particularly on Interstate Highways and major state routes.
  - f. An incident involving hazardous materials.
  - g. Exceptional pursuits (e.g. involving injuries, damage to department vehicles, or extended duration).
  - h. Crashes involving multiple fatalities.

G. Field Reporting

1. The Georgia State Patrol shall establish and maintain a Field Reporting Manual for use by members assigned to the Field Operations Division.
2. The Field Reporting Manual shall include:
  - a. A sample of all forms to be completed by the members;

- b. Instructions for completing the forms, to include the source and a description of the required data, the distribution of the completed form, and when the form must be completed.
  - c. An example of all computer generated field reports, as well as the instructions for completing the report.
- 3. Instruction on field reporting shall be included in each Georgia State Patrol Trooper School to insure that all Troopers can complete the required reports.
- H. All reports shall be reviewed and approved by the Post Commander/Unit Supervisor, or their designee, prior to submission.

### **13.02.6 Records**

- A. Department records consist of all information related to the operation of the Department and maintained in the files of any unit.
- B. Release or display of records, as well as forms and reports, to persons other than Department members shall be in accordance with the Open Records Policy #13.01.
- C. Case Files
  - 1. The Georgia State Patrol shall utilize a Case File system to maintain records related to enforcement activities.
  - 2. A Case File shall be prepared for:
    - a. Any enforcement activity involving a custodial arrest;
    - b. Any seizure of money or other property;
    - c. Felony seizures of illegal drugs;
    - d. Recovery of stolen property;
    - e. Apprehension of wanted persons, and
    - f. Any other activities when directed by a supervisor.
  - 3. Case Numbers shall be assigned sequentially and numbers shall not be omitted or duplicated.
  - 4. Forms and reports included in the Case File may be numbered individually, but all such numbers must be cross-referenced with the Case File Number.
  - 5. All forms and reports, including photocopies of Uniform Traffic Citations, related to a single enforcement activity or incident shall be filed together in the Case File.
  - 6. Post Commanders/Unit Supervisors shall monitor incomplete Case Files and review each Case File at least once per week to determine the status of the case. An appropriate notation shall be made on the inside front of the Case File folder indicating the status of the Case File at each review. The reviewing supervisor shall initial each entry. A Case File shall be considered complete

when all required reports are finished and included in the folder.

7. Case Files involving juveniles shall be filed separately from other Case Files.
8. Completed Case Files shall be reviewed by the Post Commander/Unit Supervisor, or their designee, to insure the accuracy, completeness, and proper organization of the file.
9. Copies of Case Files shall be provided to prosecutors upon completion, but the original shall remain in the Post at all times.
10. Case Files shall be maintained in the Post for seven years and then may be destroyed.

D. Each Post shall maintain a Master Name Index

1. The Master Name Index shall include the names of each person identified in a field report, including persons involved in crashes, persons cited for traffic or other violations, victims, complainants, or witnesses.
2. The Master Name Index shall be a Microsoft Access database residing on a computer in the Post Radio Room, unless a CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system is in use that provides the capability to maintain the index as part of its design.

E. Uniform Traffic Citations (DPS-32).

1. Sworn members shall use numbered uniform citations approved by the Commissioner.
2. New Citation Books shall be stored in a secure location and shall only be issued by an NCO.
3. NCO's shall monitor the inventory of citation books on hand and requisition new books from DPS Supply at least 90 days before the Post supply is exhausted.
4. NCO's shall issue citation books to Troopers under their command, as well as any Troopers working out of their Post.
5. Issuing Citation Books
  - a. Citation Books shall be issued on a Citation Log (DPS-470) showing the following:
    - 1) Book Number;
    - 2) Citation Numbers (used and unused);
    - 3) Name of person issuing the book;
    - 4) Name of person receiving the book.
  - b. At the time the book is returned, whether completed or not, another entry shall be made on the Citation Log on the same line as before, showing the following:

- 1) Date of return;
  - 2) Citation Numbers (used and unused);
  - 3) Name of Person Returning the Book;
  - 4) Name of Person Receiving the Book;
- c. If a returned book is not complete, it shall be re-issued under the same guidelines as stated above.
6. When members complete their book or leave their assigned Posts, their citation books shall be returned to the issuing Post Commander.
7. If all citations are used, the Post Commander shall insure that all 25 tickets are accounted for.
- a. If any citations in the book have not been issued, the book shall be returned to the member to issue the remaining citations.
  - b. If all citations have been issued and are accounted for, the appropriate entry shall be made on the DPS-470 indicating that the book has been returned and all citations have been issued.
  - c. Troop Officers shall inspect the DPS-470 as part of their regular Line Inspections and shall initial beside each entry for returned citation books.
  - d. When a citation book's entry on the DPS-470 has been initialed by the Troop Officer, the book shall be destroyed.
8. If a citation book is lost or mutilated, a letter shall be sent through the chain of command to the Commanding Officer giving the book number, citation numbers, and an explanation.
9. Voided Citations
- a. A report of voided and altered citations shall be filled out and sent to the Troop Commander monthly.
  - b. A report shall be filled out on each voided citation. In months with no voided citations the Post Commander shall indicate this fact via e-mail, or other means as specified by the Troop Commander.
10. Citation Tracking and Statistical Analysis
- a. A Microsoft Access database shall be maintained in each Post and other units that routinely issue citations. The database shall be designed to include:
    - 1) The citation number;
    - 2) The date and time of issuance;
    - 3) The name and date of birth of the person to whom the citation was issued;

- 4) The description, and license plate number, if available, of the vehicle being driven by the person receiving the citation;
  - 5) The violation (code section) for which the citation was issued;
  - 6) The county in which the citation was issued;
  - 7) The location within the county where the citation was issued;
  - 8) The court to which the citation is sent;
  - 9) The court date, when indicated on the citation, and
  - 10) The name and badge number of the issuing member.
- b. The database shall include the capability to generate the DPS-549 Citation Receipt, as well as statistical and summary reports from the information entered.

F. Administrative Files

1. Each Post/Unit shall maintain a set of files containing records related to the administration of the Post/Unit.
2. These files shall include:
  - a. Correspondence Files;
  - b. Property Files;
  - c. Files related to the maintenance of equipment, including vehicles;
  - d. Purchasing and Expense Reports;
  - e. Personnel Records, including leave, records of duty status, personnel information;
  - f. Daily and Monthly Duty Rosters;
  - g. Inspection Reports;
  - h. Activity Reports, and
  - i. Other non-enforcement records and reports.

G. Filing Procedures

1. All Post Commanders shall use the established Post File guide to organize the non-enforcement reports necessary to the operation of the Post. (See Exhibit #13.02-1)
2. Other units shall utilize established file guides, or arrange with the Records Management Officer to have a file guide established for their operation.
3. The Records Management Officer shall maintain a copy of each file guide used by the various units of the Department and shall furnish a copy to persons with a



legitimate need.

H. Computerized Records

1. Records that are maintained exclusively on computer shall be backed up regularly.
2. Incremental backups shall be performed daily.
3. Full backups shall be performed weekly.
4. A second full backup shall be performed at the end of each month and stored off-site.

I. Retention of Records (See Exhibit #13.02-1)

1. The Records Management Officer shall maintain and distribute a Retention Schedule for all Department reports.
2. Records shall be filed at the appropriate functional level and destroyed as indicated in the Retention Schedule.
3. When records are destroyed, the Post Commander/Unit Supervisor shall submit a memorandum to the Records Management Officer to inform them of which records were destroyed.

J. Records Disaster Plan

1. The following is the official Records Disaster Plan for Patrol Posts:
  - a. Fire: When the Post is evacuated, the Communications Equipment Officer should make sure all file cabinets are closed.
  - b. Flood or Hurricane: The Post Blotters and Communications Logs should be removed when an evacuation occurs. Remove the files from the bottom two file cabinet drawers and store as high as possible.
  - c. All Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) Workbooks are to be removed when a Post is evacuated.
2. Records shall not be stored near electrical panels or appliances.
3. Records stored in boxes on the floor shall be placed on pallets or other suitable platforms.
4. The Records Management Officer shall be notified as soon as possible concerning any loss of records. Reconstruction efforts shall be administered in accordance with the Retention Schedule when the immediate danger is over.