





POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

	VICE, DRUGS, AND ORGANIZED CRIME	
	POLICY NUMBER: 43-1	ISSUING AUTHORITY 
	EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2025	Christine A. Elow Police Commissioner

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Vice, drugs, and organized crime are quality of life issues that can exist in any community where it is possible for a person or group to conduct illegal activities that provide a continuing source of financial profit. Investigations into these complaints can involve significant amounts of time, money, and effort by police to gather information, evaluate its accuracy, determine the scope of the problem, and develop a response. Often, a coordinated effort by various units in the department, as well as outside agencies including state and federal agencies, will be the most effective in achieving positive results.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Cambridge Police Department to:

- A. investigate complaints of vice, drugs, and organized crime as thoroughly as department resources and the usefulness of available intelligence allow;
- B. protect the confidentiality of persons and information to the extent allowable by law;
- C. ensure that investigative efforts do not interfere with the constitutionally guaranteed rights of community members; and
- D. strictly account for all monetary funds associated with these investigations.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Organized Crime*: Two or more persons who, with a continuing purpose, violate criminal laws to seek illegal profits or power by engaging in criminal activities. These activities may include but are not limited to loan sharking, extortion and/or bribery, corruption, illegal gambling, theft/fencing rings, prostitution, illegal sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages, illegal manufacture, sale and distribution of controlled substances, and those designated offenses set forth in M.G.L. c. 272, § 99, whenever an organized crime nexus has been determined.

- B. *Vice Activities*: May include illegal sale, use, and distribution of controlled substances; illegal gambling and related activities; prostitution; and illegal sale and distribution of liquor.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. 43.1.1 (M) Complaint Management

1. Procedures for Receiving and Processing Complaints

- a. Any community member may call the department on the Tip Hotline to leave an anonymous or identified message making a complaint about illegal activity in the City. Personnel assigned to the Criminal Investigations Section retrieve the messages and forward them to the appropriate units in the department for follow up.
 - (1) The information is then assigned to a detective in the unit who may follow up if there is enough to go forward, or if not, the call will be noted and kept in a confidential file.
 - (2) In some cases, when the information provided leaves only limited chances of discovering actionable activity, a detective may still go to a location to investigate. These cases are referred to as starters.
 - (3) The supervisor of the Criminal Investigations Section usually briefs everyone in the unit about calls to the Tip Hotline so that the information is on their radar even if the information is vague.
- b. Complaints can come in through the Emergency Communications Department or through links on the City and police department websites where persons can leave anonymous or identified tips. These phone messages or emails go to a member of the command staff.
 - (1) If the complaint is related to vice, drugs, or organized crime, the tip will be directed to the Criminal Investigations Section for follow up.
 - (2) Tips or complaints regarding other crimes such as homicide, bank robbery, or stolen vehicles, will be directed to the Criminal Investigations Section.
- c. Other means of receiving complaints include a letter in the mail, a confidential informant, or through officers on the street who hear or see something.

2. Maintaining a Record of Complaints Received

- a. Records of complaints are maintained by the supervisor of the Criminal Investigations Section in a confidential file with access limited to authorized personnel only. To protect the confidential nature of these complaints, records are not entered into the Automated Records Management System.

3. Maintaining a Record of Information Conveyed to and Received from Outside Agencies

- a. Intelligence flyers that come from outside sources go directly to the Crime Analysis Unit for review and filing.

- b. Phone calls from other departments usually come from officers who know Cambridge police personnel. The person receiving the information will alert the supervisor of the unit and keep a folder of the investigation to see if there are any developments that need follow up.
 4. Specifying Procedures for Advising the Police Commissioner of Activities
 - a. Supervisors in the Criminal Investigations Section should update members of the command staff on a regular basis. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the most recent activity, the information will be passed up the chain of command and may reach the Police Commissioner when necessary.
 5. All records of vice, drugs, and organized crime activities will be purged from the unit's filing systems when their useful lives have expired. Any record kept longer than five years shall be reviewed for continued usefulness or purged.
- B. 43.1.2 (M) Records, Storage, and Security
1. Records and reports relating to active vice, drugs, and organized crime investigations are securely filed and maintained separately from the central records system.
 - a. All records of the Criminal Investigations Section shall be kept under strict control and shall not be entered into the department Automated Records Management System.
 - b. All files related to vice, drugs, and organized crime are strictly managed and secured with access limited to authorized personnel only.
- C. 43.1.3 (M) Confidential Funds
1. Confidential funds to be used by the Criminal Investigations Section may only be acquired from those funds designated by the District Attorney or federal law enforcement agencies as forfeiture. Initially, the funds are transferred to, kept, and controlled by the City. When the Criminal Investigations Section needs money, the supervisor will request from the City that funds be placed in the department's Confidential Funds Account.
 2. Only the supervisor of the Criminal Investigations Section has access to the Confidential Funds Account; the supervisor is the only person authorized to release these funds for operations.
 3. The supervisor shall be responsible for administering and accounting for the Confidential Funds Account.
- D. 43.1.4 (M) Equipment, Authorization, and Control
1. The City regulates police department deployment of surveillance cameras and auxiliary equipment according to a City of Cambridge Surveillance Ordinance.
 2. Undercover operations officers must request and receive authorization from the supervisor of the Criminal Investigations Section to deploy body wires or other listening devices.
 3. Body wires are strictly controlled and limited to authorized users with approval of the supervisor of the Criminal Investigation Section.

4. Such equipment is maintained within the unit.
- E. 43.1.5 (M) Covert Operations
1. Authorization to Conduct the Activity
 - a. Covert operations, including undercover, decoy, surveillance, and the use of confidential informants, must be approved by the supervisor. There is no obligation for a written operational plan, but there is a requirement to conduct a verbal briefing prior to an operation and a similar verbal debriefing post-operation.
 - b. A written operational plan shall be required when officers are executing a warrant.
 - c. All requests for assistance from outside agencies shall be forwarded to the unit supervisor for authorization prior to any participation in a joint operation. Officers working operations of another department are still obligated to conduct themselves according to department policy.
 2. Supervision
 - a. For every covert operation, regardless of the unit conducting the operation, a supervisor shall be assigned and shall be responsible for its execution.
 3. Safety Procedures
 - a. The use of authorized body armor is only required on high-risk operations such as executing a search warrant or arrest warrant.
 - b. The assignment of sufficient officers to the operation is critical to safety of all involved.
 - c. The department does not belong to a formal deconfliction system; however, detectives do recognize that sometimes a suspect is being investigated by multiple departments. Informal communication between departments provides for reducing the risk to officers of failing to recognize officers from other departments on scene. In these cases, a courtesy call to the department is the usual course of action.
 4. Reporting Requirements Upon Completion of the Operation
 - a. An operational debriefing shall be required after any covert operation.