



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

	INFORMANTS	
	POLICY NUMBER: 42-2	ISSUING AUTHORITY 
	EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2025	Christine A. Elow Police Commissioner

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The department recognizes the importance of confidential sources of information that may lead to the successful resolution of some crimes and may prevent either violence or the disruption of public order.

The courts have long upheld the use of confidential sources as legitimate and necessary tools for police when they are used properly. Each officer should be cognizant of the role of the confidential source and the need to follow strict guidelines.

Police officers should cultivate all legitimate sources of information including witnesses, other police officers, anonymous tips, and persons who may reveal information through casual conversation.

The use of informants, however, requires detailed documentation and administrative control. All actions by the confidential informant must be carefully supervised to maintain investigative integrity.

This policy provides for uniformity, accountability, and protection to officers and the department in official actions with confidential informants and serves to enhance their effective use.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Cambridge Police Department to:

- A. authorize the use of confidential informants to enhance efforts in the detection, investigation, and prosecution of serious criminals;
- B. set in place all necessary precautions to protect the identity of confidential informants and the integrity of the police department; and
- C. guard against any misconduct or misuse of informants and confidential information.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Contact Officer*: A police officer who maintains an ongoing professional relationship with a confidential source.
- B. *Entrapment*: Activity on the part of a police officer and/or informant that induces or lures an otherwise innocent person to commit a crime that they did not contemplate intend to commit. Entrapment is a defense against criminal charges. It is the implanting of criminal intent in the mind of the person. It includes acts of persuasion, coercion, trickery, or fraud carried out by law enforcement officers or their agents to induce a person to commit a crime which they would not otherwise commit.
- C. *Informant*: A confidential source who:
 - 1. provides information in exchange for monetary or other lawful consideration; and
 - 2. by their position or knowledge is solicited by the police department to provide information to which they have access.
- D. *Source of Information*: Any person who provides information about criminal activity to the department. This includes, but is not limited to, witnesses, other police officers, anonymous tips, and persons who may reveal information through casual conversations. These persons are not confidential informants.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. The department shall keep a master file of all informants and related activities used for investigative purposes.
 - 1. The master file shall be under the control of the supervisor of the Criminal Investigations Section. In the event that there is an organizational change within the department that might affect this file, the supervisor shall ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the contents during transfer.
 - 2. All contents of the file shall be on paper to reduce the risk of unauthorized access either intentionally or unintentionally.
- B. The content of each informant file or record shall include biographical and background information, criminal history record, if any, code name and/or number, any former activity as an informant for another agency, and the location of residence and phone number.
 - 1. Each informant record shall include a copy of the registration form.
 - 2. The master file shall be kept locked at all times when unattended; only the supervisor of the Criminal Investigation Unit shall have access.

- a. No information from the file will be converted to an electronic format to ensure that the file cannot be easily corrupted.
3. Other methods to protect the identity of informants include the following.
 - a. Any time a detective needs to meet with the informant, the time and location of the meeting shall be of the informant's choosing.
 - b. Detectives will never refer to the informant by a true identity or approach the informant out in the open without giving prior warning. In public, detectives will give no special consideration or attention in a way that could lead others to suspect a relationship with the police.
 - c. When contacting an informant by phone, detectives will only use a code name if the informant so requests.
 - (1) In some cases, an informant may not want a code name out of fear of forgetting it and becoming confused.
 - (2) If a detective calls an informant on the phone at a time that would create risk, the informant will just say "Sorry, wrong number" and hang up.
4. The criteria for payment are as follows.
 - a. If the informant just wants to help the police to get guns or drugs off the street, there may be a monetary payment of varying amounts depending on the circumstances.
 - (1) Payment shall come out of the confidential funds account; the supervisor of the Criminal Investigations Unit will keep a timely and accurate accounting of these funds.
 - b. In some cases, a detective may offer not to charge a person with a crime in exchange for future cooperation or information.
 - c. If the person is involved in a criminal matter with the courts and is under agreement with the District Attorney, the informant will not receive any monetary consideration from the department.
 - d. When an informant does receive payment, the amount shall be at the discretion of the supervisor depending on the circumstances.
5. Safety of informants.
 - a. The safety of informants is paramount in all cases. Informants are advised not to disclose their identity or activities for the department to any other department or law enforcement agency.
 - b. Informants are provided with information about protecting themselves when they fill out the registration form/agreement. They are also provided with information about the way the department will act. When approaching in public, the department will never be too friendly or familiar, and instead will always act as if it is the first time they are meeting.

- c. Detectives will not disclose the identity of an informant in court unless ordered to do so by the judge.
- 6. Precautions to be taken with informants.
 - a. The safety of all informants comes before any police department objective.
 - b. When dealing with informants of the opposite sex and with informants whose sexual preferences may make an investigation more susceptible to compromise through alleged improprieties, the department will include a detective of the same gender or gender expression as the informant in the investigation.
- 7. Special precautions to be taken with juvenile informants.
 - a. The use of juveniles as informants is strictly prohibited.