



Effective 04/30/2000  
Last Revised: 09/15/2019

**CSU FULLERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDER NUMBER 5-9 [CALEA 1.2.3a]**

**FIELD INTERVIEWS**

**SUBJECT:** Field Interviews of persons by the University Police Department.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this order is to establish policy and procedures for contacting individuals in the field, conducting interviews, and completing a contact/interview card to record the interview.

**POLICY:** It shall be the policy of the University Police Department of California State University, Fullerton to record instances of contacts with individuals when an officer reasonably associates unusual or suspicious activity with the individual.

**PROCEDURE:**

**I. The Field Interview**

**A. The Field Interview provides the Department a source(s) of information to:**

1. Apprehend criminals and to prevent crime increases with the number and frequency of persons interviewed
2. Expand an officer's power of observation to obtain information from persons who work on campus, or, living or working within the area surrounding the campus.

**B. Identifying the Suspect**

1. An on-view arrest is not always based upon the immediate recognition of a wanted criminal. Frequently, it is the outgrowth of the action taken by a Police Officer that stops to question a person who has aroused his/her suspicions.
2. Information obtained during the field contact may also be used at a later date to identify a criminal.
3. This information can be used by:
  - a. Patrol Officers
  - b. Investigators
  - c. Other law enforcement agencies

C. Crime Prevention

1. The assertiveness of the patrol activity may be brought to the attention of the criminal(s) and their associates.
2. The criminal(s) can also observe the activities of the police and conclude that the possibility of escaping detection, apprehension and prosecution is not favorable.

II. Conducting the Field Interview

A. Officers must determine when a field interview is warranted. To do so, the officer must understand that:

1. A fine line exists between a field interview and a lawful detainment.
2. Detentions, as defined within U.S. Supreme Court case Terry v. Ohio, 392 U.S. 1 (1968), and casual encounters, permit officers to contact individuals absent of making an arrest.
3. Officers are to understand that in cases of a field interview, this is neither a custody scenario, nor an interrogation. Therefore, two issues are in effect. They are:
  - a. The individual is free to leave, unless the officer elevates the status of the investigation because of new observations, information, or actions of the individual which indicate criminal activity has or is about to occur.
  - b. A Miranda waiver is NOT required, again because there is NO CUSTODY.

B. Approaching the subject.

1. The purpose of the field interview will determine the method(s) used to contact and converse with the subject.
2. Whenever possible, officers should select a location for a field interview that is well lighted and away from bystanders.
3. Officers must at all times protect themselves and others in the area. Officers are to remain cognizant of the rights of the individual who is being contacted.
4. Officers working in civilian attire have the added responsibility of identifying themselves as Police Officers before stopping a person for a field interview.

- C. Positioning during the contact of an individual.
  - 1. Officers are to maintain a position that is in preparation for any furtive movement a contacted person may make.
  - 2. Officers are to maintain a distance between themselves and the contacted person that allows for response to any furtive movement, and to allow for greater visibility of the individual's person, including hands, waistband, etc.
  - 3. A recommended position during field interviews suggests the officer stands at a 45% angle with his weapon away from the suspect.
  - 4. Assisting officers shall employ appropriate "Contact and Cover" techniques, and maintain complete focus upon the subject and area.

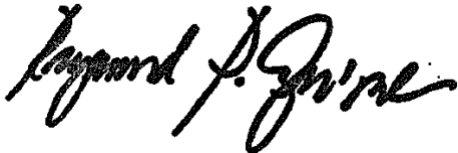
### III. Using the Field Interview Card

- A. A field interview card will be completed for each individual whom an officer stops for a field contact.
- B. A field interview card may be used either in conjunction with, or instead of, a traffic citation, when an officer contacts an individual for a traffic violation. Such a decision will remain at the discretion of the investigating officer.
- C. A field interview card may also be used as an observation-recording device.
  - 1. In these instances, the officer should fill out the card as completely as possible, using prior knowledge of the individual or vehicle and the current observation made.
  - 2. This will supplement the automated recording of these events into the Department's RIMS database.
- D. Field interview cards should be used in these instances:
  - 1. An officer stops an individual for the purpose of conducting an interview, but the individual refuses to give the officer any information and the officer has no reasonable cause to pursue the matter further.
  - 2. An officer wishes to make note of a subject in a specific place at a certain time, and the officer has completed a field interview card on the same subject on another occasion.
  - 3. An officer observes a vehicle which arouses his/her suspicions, but the owner/driver of the vehicle cannot be interviewed (e.g., a "strange" vehicle parked in a parking lot or near a campus facility after normal University hours).

4. An officer observes a known criminal in or at a suspicious place or time, but is not able to stop to talk to that individual.
- E. When completed, the field interview card(s) shall be forwarded to the shift supervisor for review after the officer has entered the information into RIMS.
1. These cards will be entered into the RIMS database; recording names of individuals contacted in the Master Name file and forwarding the cards to the records unit for filing. The hard copies will be retained for 1 year.
  2. The computerized database will be retained indefinitely.

REVIEWED BY:  
J. Bedell

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raymund J. Aguirre". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raymund Aguirre  
Chief of Police