



Response to Questions on the 2016 LOBs

Request By: Supervisor Foust

Relevant LOB(s): LOB #202

Question: Describe the work of the Homicide Squad, including data tracked.

Response:

The Major Crimes Division is composed of ten specialized units. This Division serves as the lead investigative entity within the Criminal Investigations Bureau (CIB) for the investigation of all major crimes. It is one of four investigative entities within the CIB. The Major Crimes Division was created as a centrally located investigative entity and is staffed with highly trained detectives responsible for investigating all major cases that occur across the County, regardless of the geographic area of the County in which they occur. Each unit within the division contains a squad of detectives and a first line supervisor. Squad members receive training that is specific and specialized to their particular unit. These squads include Homicide, Cold Case, Sex Crimes, Robbery, Child Abuse, Computer Forensics, Child Exploitation, Financial Crimes, Auto Theft, and the Fugitive Squad.

The Homicide Squad is one of ten specialized units in the Police Department's Major Crimes Division. The squad is composed of nine detectives and one supervisor (Second Lieutenant), and deals with several challenging types of cases which are highlighted below. The 2015 average caseload per detective was 45 cases. Of the 406 total cases investigated in 2015, 158 resulted in a "call-out." A call-out requires that one or more Homicide Squad detectives are called back into work, regardless of time or day, to assume lead investigative responsibility for one of these types of cases.

It is important to note that the Homicide Squad works a variety of types of cases and their work is not limited to homicide cases. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Medical examiner cases;
- Homicides;
- Suicides/Attempted Suicides;
- Death occurring under suspicious circumstances;
- Natural deaths with no attending doctor;
- Found body bones/parts;
- Fire deaths;
- Construction fatalities or serious injuries;
- Accidental deaths;
- Conspiracy to commit murder cases;



- Life threatening malicious wounding cases (All death cases or life threatening malicious woundings are investigated as homicides until evidence and circumstances justify other findings); and,
- Bombing where injury or death occurs.

Overall, detectives responded to 371 death scenes in 2015, most of which were Dead on Arrival (DOA)/Suspicious Deaths (see following table) in which the death occurred with nobody present or under suspicious circumstances. Cases may change or move from one category to another (such as from DOA/Suspicious Deaths to Suicide) based on additional information becoming available. For example, the return of Toxicology Reports typically takes 4 to 6 months, and once results are known, the category under which a case is listed can change.

The following chart provides summary-level detail on the types of cases investigated by the Homicide Squad.

Cases Investigated by the Homicide Squad

	2013	2014	2015
Death Cases	357	368	371
Dead on Arrival (DOA) / Suspicious Deaths	253	251	283
Suicide	96	107	75
Murder	8	10	13
Malicious Wounding	18	15	20
Other	25	15	15
Total Cases	400	398	406