Auditing and Quality Control of NOPD Police Reports

All possible police reports start with a citizen's call to 9-1-1 for an emergency, or 822-1111 for a non-emergency or an NOPD officer observing an event and beginning the record on his or her initiative.

There are several levels of police reports that allow for documentation of police action.

The highest level is classified as the FBI Uniform Crime Report Part I offenses. These offenses include: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, auto theft and arson (arson reported by NOFD). UCR Part II offenses would be all other crimes a community experiences (drugs, minor persons or property crimes, disorder crimes, etc.). UCR Part I and Part II are known as "event" reports, in that the event, not the individuals (excluding some violent crimes) is counted. Part I and Part II offenses are those reported to or discovered by the police. What is also true about UCR reporting rules is that as an index, any of the eight crimes carry the value of one; but, UCR does separate within the index crimes of violence (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault) and crimes against property (burglary, theft, auto theft and arson), and that the UCR only reports the most serious offense and not additional lesser crimes that occur within a reported event.

Participating in UCR reporting is voluntary.

The FBI UCR Part I crimes have been collected, virtually unchanged, since the 1930s. Universally researchers have noted the inherent lack of concise calculation of crime the UCR Part I provide – but, because of its longitudinal capacity it is still used by about 75% of American police departments that report crime. The remaining 25% is attributed to the National Incident Based Reporting System created in the late 1990s to be "incident" based, or capture the number of incidents and persons, and not "event" based as the UCR Part I system is. Both UCR and NIBRS are voluntary reporting, and many cities, including large cities (i.e., Chicago) from time to time have chosen not to report to either UCR or NIBRS.

It is the UCR Part I Index, often referred to as the "major crimes" of a community that is used nationwide by the Federal, State and Local governments to speak about crime in a community and the nation.

What is also widely known by academics is that many crimes go unreported in America. According to historic Gallup Data, only about 60% of crime that occurs in the U.S. is reported to local police. According to historical data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVRS), the federal government's second attempt to gather crime data (UCR being the first method) by randomly calling households and inquiring if a crime was known to have occurred, also routinely reports that about 50% of crimes against persons and likewise crimes against property are reported to police.

Gallup Poll
SUMMARY: HOUSEHOLD CRIME VICTIMIZATION

Crime Against Household Reported to Police in Past Year (Q 28 A-H)

	Yes	No
2010 Oct 7-10	59	41
2009 Oct 1-4	63	37
2008 Oct 3-5	64	36
2007 Oct 4-7	69	31
2006 Oct 9-12	62	38
2005 Oct 13-16	61	39
2004 Oct 11-14	56	44
2003 Oct 6-8	64	35

Long Term Trend: Crime against Household Reported to Police in the Past Year –
Excluding Internet Crime (Q 28 A-G)

	Crime Reported	Crime Not Reported
	Yes	No
2010 Oct 7-10	65	35
2009 Oct 1-4	68	32
2008 Oct 3-5	67	33
2007 Oct 4-7	74	26
2006 Oct 9-12	66	34
2005 Oct 13-16	67	33
2004 Oct 11-14	62	38
2003 Oct 6-8	68	32
2002 Oct 14-17	71	29
2001 Oct 11-14	67	33
2000 Aug 29-Sep 5	71	29

NOCC Poll
And did you report the crime to the New Orleans Police Department?

				2011
		'10	Feb	Aug
1.	Yes	79%	82%	84%
2.	No	20%	15%	14%
3.	Don't Know/Refused DNR	2%	0%	2%

July 2012

TABLE 7
Violent and property victimizations reported to police, 2010

Type of crime	Percent reported
Violent crime	51.0%
Serious violent crime*	58.0
Rape/sexual assault	50.0
Robbery	57.9
Aggravated assault	60.1
Simple assault	47.0
Property crime	39.3%
Burglary	58.8
Motor vehicle theft	83.4
Theft	31.9

Note: See appendix table 14 for standard errors.
*Includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.
Source: National Crime Victimization Survey, 2010.

In recent years New Orleans has exceeded the national crime-reporting average. An independent poll conducted by the New Orleans Crime Coalition shows that about 80% of our residents who were victims of crime called the NOPD for assistance since 2011. (See chart above.) The NOPD specifically educates the people of NOLA to report any and all crime to the NOPD through public education offered by our Community Coordinating Sergeants delivered in Neighborhood Watch and Community meetings since August of 2010. For example, the CoCo Sergeants have in 2011 and 2012 YTD attended nearly 2,000 community meetings, and when counting persons in attendance, nearly 43,000 have heard the NOPD message on this and other Crime Prevention topics. This is the first rationale that discounts the notion that the NOPD would encourage "under-reporting."

It's impressive that an estimated 80% of crimes that happen in New Orleans are reported. But, that also means that 20% of crimes are not, which automatically puts the NOPD at a disadvantage when tabulating overall crime. In other words, police departments will never be able to report "all" crime that has actually occurred in their community. Police leadership knows this fact very well. Therefore to sacrifice a career by encouraging or allowing "under-reporting", when there is so much error in the system that already exists, simply doesn't make sense.

Academics routinely report that UCR is a snapshot and is a human enterprise. Therefore, relying too much on UCR ignores the reality that a significant portion of crime is un-reported; that facts will change as an investigation proceeds which should cause correction to alter the original classification; and that simply put "people and officers can make mistakes."

The NOPD responds to approximately 480-500,000 "calls for service" yearly. In 2011 the NOPD documented 16,760 UCR Part I crimes with a police report.

<u>Why Downgrading Is A Baseless, Lose-Lose Choice for Officers and Supervisors</u>

A simple and straightforward NOPD policy initiated in the Serpas administration is that the presumptive penalty for purposefully submitting a "false or inaccurate oral or written

report" will result in <u>termination</u>. A police report is the most basic and fundamental written report of the NOPD, and this policy would directly apply. Again, termination is the most severe administrative sanction…to consider sacrificing a career for "one" report or a "conspiracy" of reports is highly unlikely. Given the public nature of American policing, the availability of ease to immediate access to the media or investigating authorities anonymously, the likelihood of any full scale unwritten hidden agenda to purposely alter police reports for an illicit gain is rendered much less likely or even possible. Adding to this point, the audit systems initiated in this administration and noted below send an unrelenting message to NOPD personnel that accurate reporting is a requirement and WILL BE aggressively monitored.

Besides the fact that officers risk losing their jobs if caught downgrading, it's important to point out that many officers would have to make many false reports to even put a dent in UCR numbers.

Consider, in NOLA, for 2011 there were 7,616 reported Thefts or 45% of the total UCR Part I crime reports of 16,760, and the total numbers of property crimes of the Part I crime rate was 83% of the 2011 total Part I crime reports. To change the 2011 Part I crime reports 5% would require that a total of 838 reports be altered.

And we should also point out that the NOPD, using the same systems of reporting and auditing in place here since at least the summer of 2010, reported a 9.99% increase in the Part I crime rate for NOLA in calendar year 2011.

Finally, as with any occupation, there is always the possibility of human error. Police supervisors make judgments based upon what they believe is the most accurate information "at that time." Just as any news story, what starts out as a "tip" at 10 am will sometimes not, after a journalistic investigation, be the same "story" that appears on the 6 pm broadcast or in the paper the next day. Simple truth…plain fact, police reporting is exactly the same. It is ridiculous to think that any original police report is immune from human error – or is immune from new and evolving information documenting that new and different material is discovered and should be reported and the report classification be updated accordingly.

Therefore, it is the "report writing system" and the "following of UCR rules in reporting" crime that we must always monitor and ensure that we have robust and thoughtful internal audits. For surely as we know there is never seems to be a question about the accuracy of crime reporting data when crime is going up, we know that when crime is reported going down, there are routine journalistic inquires about whether there has been "downgrading." This pattern is witnessed around the nation, year in and year out. What remains the same is the reporting system.

<div align="center">What does the NOPD Audit and How</div>

In the Summer of 2010, one of Superintendent Serpas' first actions was to have an "open house" for all local media to spend four hours learning about the report writing system of

<div align="center">July 2012</div>

the NOPD, the reporting rules of the FBI UCR (which often times are very confusing to police and non-police) and the audits the NOPD was putting into place to ensure the accuracy of the systems. This meeting was well attended, and all but one local media outlet (a local alternative newspaper) sent representatives. To our knowledge we have not received a single question or request since then by any local media outlet to revisit this process.

We would also strongly encourage any interested party after learning of our audit steps to determine if other departments have the same systems, or any systems at all, or systems that are superior (because if they find a superior system the NOPD would want to view it).

In tracking the life of a call for service for a UCR Part I crime, there are several audit points in place.

The process to correctly identify and classify the incident being reported by a citizen actually begins when the call is made to our 911 operator. That trained civilian call taker documents what the citizen reports and, based on established police signal codes, assigns what the call taker believes is the most appropriate police signal code (i.e., armed robbery is a signal 64). This attempt to correctly classify citizen complaints takes place even before a police officer is assigned the call for service and certainly before any investigation is conducted or report written. This very first step in call for service classification is very effective. As will be referenced later, on average, in 98% of calls for service received, the signal as "marked up" (NOPD term for disposing of the call for record keeping in the Computer Aided Dispatch System) by the responding / investigating officer is the same classification as initially assigned by the civilian call taker. Those calls for service which result in a signal change at time of mark-up are changed as a result of the police response and investigation.

Example: the NOPD compliant operator receives a call of an armed robbery which is a Part I Crime. The call is coded a 64 and dispatched. The responding officer does one of several things: writes the report as is; after investigating determines the event is not a robbery and submits a report as to what the investigation finds the case is; determines the event as "Unfounded" as no such event happened; no report was needed but "Necessary Action was Taken;" or, the victim was "Gone On Arrival." The officer then "marks up" the call in one of the following ways: "RTF" report to follow; "NAT" no report to follow; "UNF" unfounded; or "GOA" gone on arrival. Therefore, the call's initial classification by 911 operators in the dispatch logs, the officer's response and the disposition of the call begin the "audit" trail.

After the report is submitted, there are different supervisory reviews, beginning with the first line supervisor who must review and approve the report. If the crime is a Part I crime, District Investigative Unit Detectives, or Headquarter Detectives as appropriate then review the original report and make assessments of the viability of a continuing investigation. These actions of Detectives are then reviewed by Detective Supervisors.

Any changes in disposition of a Part I crime requires the approval of senior NOPD leadership in the Districts or Headquarters Investigative units.

The <u>first audit</u> occurs with Part I calls. Working with the Office of the Inspector General, the NOPD in the summer of 2010 developed a random sample method of routinely having personnel in the Compliance Office of the Superintendent call back a <u>significant number</u> of Part I report victims. This non-District command call back helps to ensure that the "pressure" on the field command to audit these critical reports is not in play. Since June of 2010 these random calls have been made, and since August 2010 each call back has been audio taped with the victim's permission. Between June 13, 2010 and July 7, 2012 the Compliance Office supervisors has contacted 1,366 victims of Part I crimes. As the chart below shows, the NOPD has called back a significant number of persons and the evidence is clear that we can have confidence in Part I reporting. Further, if a call back is made, but no answer, the Compliance Unit still reviews the report to ensure that the report and all of its captured information are accurate to policy. Additionally, when error is found, Compliance notifies the appropriate Deputy Chief and District Commander for remedial action to be taken. The Compliance Office also notifies officers when they have done a good job and the response of the citizen as to the officer's behavior and professionalism. And, if the victim wishes to add information (Question 1a) the officer and his/her command is notified (this occurred at least 285 times). All of these notifications clearly send the message to personnel that audits are underway continually. This audit step was added by the Serpas administration.

Dates: __6/13/10__ thru __7/7/12__   Year to Date

	Q # 1	Q # 1a	Q # 2	Q # 3	Q # 4	Q # 5	Q # 6	Q # 7	Response Comparison
Yes	1,363	285		Question 1 - Yes		100%	Question 1a - Yes		23%
No	3	964		Question 1 - No		0%	Question 1a - No		77%
Strongly Agree			758	755	735	657	353		48%
Agree			568	576	594	638	560		43%
Neutral			25	22	22	56	123		4%
Disagree			13	12	13	14	282		5%
Strongly Disagree			2	1	2	1	48		1%
Very Satisfactory								636	47%
Satisfactory								587	43%
Neutral								80	6%
Unsatisfactory								42	3%
Very Unsatisfactory								21	2%
Yearly Totals	1,366	1,249	1,366	1,366	1,366	1,366	1,366	1,366	

	Q # 1		Q # 2	Q # 3	Q # 4	Q # 5	Q # 6	Q # 7	
Yes	99.78%	22.82%							
No	0.22%	77.18%							
Strongly Agree			55.49%	55.27%	53.81%	48.10%	25.84%		
Agree			41.58%	42.17%	43.48%	46.71%	41.00%		
Neutral			1.83%	1.61%	1.61%	4.10%	9.00%		
Disagree			0.95%	0.88%	0.95%	1.02%	20.64%		
Strongly Disagree			0.15%	0.07%	0.15%	0.07%	3.51%		
Very Satisfactory								46.56%	
Satisfactory								42.97%	
Neutral								5.86%	
Unsatisfactory								3.07%	
Very Unsatisfactory								1.54%	
TOTAL FEEDBACK RESPONSE (Q-2,3,4,5,7)	POSITIVE		NEUTRAL		NEGATIVE				
	95.23%		3.00%		1.77%				

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Below is the procedure and questions for conducting a Citizen Telephone Survey.

1. The interviewer will review the statement verbatim in the narrative of the report and solicit a response from the Victim as to whether or not the statement describes what occurred. Yes _____ or No _____

1a. "Thank you for your answer. After hearing what your statement was recorded as, is there any further information you want to add at this time?" List response below in Comment Section.

2. The responding officer(s) courteous. Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

3. The responding officer(s) appeared professional. Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

4. The responding officer(s) conducted his / her duties in a professional manner. Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

5. The officer(s) appeared knowledgeable about law enforcement. Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

6. I am satisfied with the follow-up assistance provided to me by NOPD regarding incident. Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

7. I would rate the quality of service provided to me by NOPD at: Very Satisfactory / Satisfactory / Neutral / Unsatisfactory / Very Unsatisfactory

Safeguards executed:
_ Began recording all surveys the week of August 15, 2010
_ We use special recording device which time stamps all recordings
_ We Assign a number for each survey so we can not duplicate an entry
_ Have same rank to administer surveys
_ We use various hours and days to administer the survey
_ We use a computer hard drive to record and save all surveys
_ We also use a back up portable hard drive for all surveys
_ Officers are given feedback individually of positive responses to surveys
_ Commanders are notified of any problems or possible training needs
_ Since we have began we have only identified 3 surveys out of the 142 surveys administered which needed further investigation of possible rule violations
_ We are continually trying to identify better and stronger safeguards as well as consulting with Dr. Fontenelle for any suggestions for the validity of the surveys.

On January 10, 2011 we began documenting the number of multiple attempts to reach a Victim.

On January 31, 2011 we began to further investigate all incidents when a citizen stated they were not satisfied with the follow up.

On June 19, 2011, we began to tally the actual amount of calls made, (duplicate calls)

The second audit occurs when an officer submits a Part II crime. It is possible that unknown to leadership, an officer could have the elements of a Part I crime but for some reason is reporting the crime as a Part II. Therefore, again working with the OIG to create a significant sampling formula, the NOPD's District Integrity Control Officers call back, and must reach at least, randomly nine Part II crime report victims each month. In doing so, this audit mimics that Part I audit completed by Compliance, except the calls are not recorded due to equipment limitations. Errors, and appropriate actions, are reported to supervisors and officers for action. From September 1, 2010 through July 1, 2012, 1,164 victims have been called and the actions of the officers audited. Additional, 333 times officers and supervisors were notified that the victim wanted to add more information to the original report (Question 1a). All of these notifications clearly send the message to personnel that audits are underway continually. This audit step was added by the Serpas administration.

ICO Citizen Call Back Survey Results - All Districts (09.01.2010 - 07.01.2012)

	Q # 1	Q # 1a	Q # 2	Q # 3	Q # 4	Q # 5	Q # 6	Q # 7	Response Comparison
Yes	1,144	333		Question 1 - Yes		98%	Question 1a - Yes		29%
No	20	830		Question 1 - No		2%	Question 1a - No		71%
Strongly Agree			930	909	921	885	715		75%
Agree			202	189	214	244	194		18%
Neutral			26	15	24	34	123		4%
Disagree			23	17	17	13	38		2%
Strongly Disagree			6	6	8	5	17		1%
Very Satisfactory								806	68%
Satisfactory								275	23%
Neutral								43	4%
Unsatisfactory								29	2%
Very Unsatisfactory								28	2%
Totals	1,164	1,163	1,187	1,136	1,184	1,181	1,087	1,181	

Below is the procedure and questions for conducting a ICO Citizen Telephone Survey.

1. The interviewer will review the statement verbatim in the narrative of the report and solicit a response from the Victim as to whether or not the statement describes what occurred.
Yes / No

1a. "Thank you for your answer. After hearing what your statement was recorded as, is there any further information you want to add at this time?"
Yes / No

2. The responding officer(s) was courteous.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

3. The responding officer(s) appeared professional.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

4. The responding officer(s) conducted his / her duties in a professional manner.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

5. The officer(s) appeared knowledgeable about law enforcement.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

6. I am satified with the follow-up assistance provided to me by the NOPD regarding this incident.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

7. I would rate the quality of service provided to me by NOPD as:
Very Satisfactory / Satisfactory / Neutral / Unsatisfactory / Very Unsatisfactory

ICO CITIZEN TELEPHONE SURVEY PERCENTAGE COMPARISON

	Q # 1	Q # 1a	Q # 2	Q # 3	Q # 4	Q # 5	Q # 6	Q # 7	
Yes	98.28%	28.63%							
No	1.72%	71.37%							
Strongly Agree			78.35%	80.02%	77.79%	74.94%	65.78%		
Agree			17.02%	16.64%	18.07%	20.66%	17.85%		
Neutral			2.19%	1.32%	2.03%	2.88%	11.32%		
Disagree			1.94%	1.50%	1.44%	1.10%	3.50%		
Strongly Disagree			0.51%	0.53%	0.68%	0.42%	1.56%		
Very Satisfactory								68.25%	
Satisfactory								23.29%	
Neutral								3.64%	
Unsatisfactory								2.46%	
Very Unsatisfactory								2.37%	
TOTAL FEEDBACK RESPONSE (Q-2,3,4,5,7)	POSITIVE 94.99%			NEUTRAL 2.42%			NEGATIVE 2.59%		

The <u>third audit</u> occurs when District Platoon (8 hour work shift) supervisors visit the scenes, randomly of three calls for service marked up by their officers, in each district, on each shift and every week, as NAT, UNF, or GOA. In this way, the NOPD is looking at another area where officers could be simply responding to a call and "talking" people out of making crime reports; or not even going to the scene itself. Platoon supervisors act if error is found as well as when an officer performs well. Between September 1, 2010

through July 1, 2012 NOPD field supervisors have reviewed 3,139 scenes of calls for service. As with Part I and Part II feedback to officers, supervisors share the findings of their observations with officers. These steps were added by the Serpas administration.

Platoon Lieutenants Scene Visits - All Districts (09.01.10 - 07.01.2012)

	Q # 1	Q # 2	Q # 3	Q # 4	Q #5		Response Comparison
Strongly Agree	1,407	1,392	2,041	1,895			58%
Agree	1,448	1,484	833	880			40%
Neutral	29	23	32	108			2%
Disagree	33	19	22	22			1%
Strongly Disagree	3	6	4	1			0%
Very Satisfactory					1,996		68%
Satisfactory					783		27%
Neutral					56		2%
Unsatisfactory					43		1%
Very Unsatisfactory					53		2%
Totals	2,920	2,924	2,932	2,906	2,931		
Was the incident marked up correctly?							
Yes						3,113	99%
No						26	1%
Totals						3,139	

Below are the questions for conducting a Platoon Lieutenant Scene Visit.

1. The responding officer(s) was courteous.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

2. The responding officer(s) appeared professional.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

3. The responding officer(s) conducted his / her duties in a professional manner.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

4. The officer(s) appeared knowledgeable about law enforcement.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

5. I would rate the quality of service provided to me by NOPD as:
Very Satisfactory / Satisfactory / Neutral / Unsatisfactory / Very Unsatisfactory

Was the incident marked up correctly?:
Yes / No

The fourth audit occurs during the quarterly UCR crime report compilation period when NOPD IT staff compare the number of dispatched Part I crimes with disposition of "Report to Follow" to the actual number of Part I crimes counted in the UCR report. For example, how many armed robbery calls were dispatched versus the number of actual armed robbery reports to be counted in the UCR statistics. The NOPD routinely finds the overall total UCR Part I crime count to be consistently accurate above the 98% range in this analysis. This audit reinforces that the first three audits are finding valuable and reliable data. This audit has been in place at least since the early 1990's.

The fifth audit occurs each month when the patrol Districts submit a re-cap report of the "changes in disposition" requests that are made to change the record of Part I and Part II crimes in our reporting system. Change requests occur based upon a documented investigation and supplemental report filed to document that investigation. These requests must also be reviewed, approved and signed by senior District leadership. In this case we monitor the number of Part I cases that become part II cases; and Part II cases that become Part I cases; and, the number of cases that change in some way but remain a Part I or Part II case. In 2011, there were 201 requests to change Part I to Part II crimes among the eight Districts. There were also 51 requests to change Part II to Part I crime, for a net difference of 150 Part I crimes that became Part II crimes after an investigation and District Commander approval. These 150 crimes represent less than 1% (actual 0.89%) of the total Part I crimes (16,760) reported by the NOPD in 2011. There were an additional 332 requests to change data (locations, dates, times of events, etc.) on Part I crimes that did not change the Part I crime disposition, but shows the efforts for accuracy the NOPD strives to achieve in reporting. For 2012 YTD there have been 133 requests to change a Part I to a Part II, and 34 to change a Part II to a Part I for a net difference of 99, or 1.22% of the 8,051 Part I crimes YTD. This audit step was added by Serpas when he was the Chief of Operations of the NOPD in the mid-1990s and continues today.

The sixth audit occurs when the Office Compliance, separately from the Part I citizen call back, routinely and randomly draws police reports from the Districts and analyzes if those reports are accurate, complete, and consistent with NOPD policy. This report review process includes all categories of reports, excluding crash reports. During the year 2011, there were 2,871 reports reviewed with 91 (3%) returned for correction. This year, through 7/7/12, there have been 1,372 reports reviewed with 18 (1%) reports returned. The reduction in percentage of reports returned in 2012 compared to 2011 is attributable to several factors, including more accurate reporting by the investigating officer, review by supervisors, as well as the department's transition to the Electronic Police Report (EPR) which accomplishes significant error checking at time of entry. Some causes for returns include failure to include contact information on victims or witnesses, incomplete narrative and signal classification.

To further ensure the accuracy of crime reporting and the certainty to all officers and supervisors that the NOPD monitors for accuracy and directs that accuracy by maintained, in 2011 In-Service Training, the NOPD UCR classification expert lectured each week using the attached PowerPoint (which has been on our web page since late 2010). After a break in early 2012 In-Service Training lectures, our UCR classification expert is again lecturing to NOPD supervisors.

The NOPD has six different audit and quality control systems in place operating continuously, four of which have been added during Chief Serpas' tenure. The fact that all six audit steps have reviewed since the summer of 2010 a total of 9,912 individual police reports and/or police actions, measuring different points in time of the life of a police report, find similar and consistent high levels of accuracy supports that we can and should have confidence in the crime reporting "system." Recently the former leader of

an association of UCR experts in the 50 states suggested that a 2% error rate in UCR Part I reports was the goal. The NOPD we believe is within this impressive goal.

These audits show high levels of accuracy in reporting because a professional organization instills the requirement for accuracy; is visibly resolute in continual audits to include notifying personnel of audit findings; and, in the alternative as we have done in NOPD, implemented as a new policy in the Serpas administration the ultimate administrative action of termination if purposeful misreporting is found. To conclude that officers and supervisors do not understand these audit dynamics, are not aware of the audit procedures, are not informed when error is found, are not also informed when they do the job of reporting and responding to calls well, is simply not supported by the data.

Simply put, we can be assured that NOPD officers and Supervisors are very aware that their investigations of and reporting of crime is monitored for accuracy – again, dramatically limiting any consideration that an "un-written" or "clandestine" practice of "down-grading" could go undetected.

The NOPD accepts that human errors exist. No different than when a car manufacturer "recalls" thousands of vehicles despite all the audits and quality controls in place when defects caused by human error exist. This is exactly the same as the journal of record in a community publishing a "corrections and clarifications" page in their journal, to correct the record. Clearly, human error exists and we must audit and create quality control mechanisms so that we can have confidence in the "system."

The NOPD accepts that there are examples of error which are clear, and also accepts the numerous real examples where officers would have seemed likely to "downgrade" yet they do not. For example, the theft report of disabled chicken; the theft report of "a" bottle of stolen beer; the theft report of "one" potted plant stolen from a porch…all of these examples have two things in common: they exist in our records and they all carry the same weight in the UCR Part I report as every other UCR Part I crime.

The NOPD accepts that in many cases in a major tourist area such as the French Quarter it is often times difficult to get a fully accurate account from the reporting person or victim on first contact with the NOPD. While there are examples that appear to be questionable, there are also countless (and easily equal to, or more) examples where UCR Part I reports are filed and are found later to be absolutely accurate. In other cases the investigating officer is provided an absolute fabrication by the victim (many times a tourist) to explain the loss of property or questionable credit card charges in a less embarrassing manner than what actually occurred (intoxication, prostitution, lap dances or drug transactions). Another very common example, and is supported by investigations, is the victim who reports their car stolen (a UCR Part I crime), only to learn that after a night of adult entertainment they misplaced or forgot where they parked their car. This original calls to police result in a UCR Part I crime report being submitted – and when necessary reclassified when the car is found. Numerous examples of follow up investigations supported by video and other electronic evidence support these truisms.

To ensure some level of documentation in events such as these, the NOPD may record some of these events as Lost or Stolen, at a minimum document that an event occurred. But, that the department - for reasons suspected by the investigating officers and their supervisors at that time - was not ready to declare the event one way or the other. This report submission is appropriate as opposed to simply not documenting the event and dismissing the reporting person or victim without any documentation.

Complexities of UCR Reporting

The FBI publishes a handbook on how to properly report UCR crimes, and participating police departments must follow these rules without exception.

UCR classifies crimes with definitions provided by the handbook and there has been very little change since its inception in the 1930s. It is only recently announced that UCR rules will likely change regarding the reporting of the crime of rape.

UCR uses a hierarchal rule. This causes great confusion to the non-law enforcement personnel. The NOPD and every department that Serpas has led, categorizes and records crimes based upon the highest CRIMINAL STATUES OF THE STATE violated or suspected violated, not the UCR reporting guidelines.

However, to comply with UCR reporting rules, departments must align internal crime reports to UCR reporting categories before submission. For example, in Louisiana, the crime of Aggravated Burglary carries a higher sentence than the crime of Aggravated Assault, which in many instances is a misdemeanor crime. Therefore the NOPD would record such a police investigation as an Aggravated Burglary. However, the UCR classifies an Aggravated Assault as a higher crime, and thus when the NOPD reports to UCR we would count the Aggravated Burglary as an Aggravated Assault, ONLY for the UCR report purpose.

Another uniqueness of the rules, UCR counts a robbery as one event, no matter how many victims. Unlike the NIBRS report that counts the robbery and each victim as a crime. UCR reporting rules do count individuals for crimes such as murder and rape and assault.

Conclusion

The NOPD has instituted many new and innovative ways to ensure the integrity of the crime reporting and UCR reporting systems. We would recommend a careful analysis of other departments to determine if the NOPD is mainstream, below, or as we suspect above the "average" of departments that invest this much analysis, audits and quality control checks.

For every example of where we see human error, we see so many more examples where the officers and supervisors are recording crimes correctly, within policy and without prejudice. We also document numerous events that after thorough investigation, facts

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lead to different conclusions and classification. To not correct the record would be as unprofessional as purposefully downgrading crime reports.

Attached is a PowerPoint that gives details on "crime classification" in the NOPD. This PowerPoint has been publicly posted on our Web Page for the last couple of years.