

# TAKOMA PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT - GENERAL ORDERS



TITLE: <b>Cold Case Investigations</b>		NUMBER: 640A
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**01 Purpose:** To define the procedures for the investigation of unsolved/cold case files.

**02 Policy:** The department recognizes that, over time, changing positions of involved persons, scientific and technological advances, and other factors present new opportunities for law enforcement to solve cold cases. This is particularly true with recent advances in DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) analysis, which has enhanced the ability of law enforcement to identify unknown offenders, even years after the crime occurred. It is the policy of the department to periodically review unsolved serious crimes against persons, specifically homicides and rapes, for new information and/or the potential application of new technology that might contribute to solving the case.

**03 Definition:** A cold case is any case of serious (Part I, UCR offense) crime against a person which is not in active investigation and has been suspended.

**04 Procedures:**

**A. Evaluation Criteria:**

1. In order to be considered for a cold case evaluation, the initial investigative file must be available and there must be some available evidence, usually physical evidence, which has not previously yielded investigative results.

2. Other criteria that must be considered in cold case investigations should be, but are not limited to, the following:

- Legal considerations, such as the application or expansion of statutes of limitations.
- Technology considerations, such as the nature and conditions of the evidence and the advancement of new technological techniques in solving a crime.

- Particular considerations, such as the availability of witnesses in the event DNA profile testing would identify a suspect and lead to an arrest and trial.
- Resource considerations, such as time, money and personnel available for investigation and forensic analysis.

3. Due to limited resources, the department will only consider unsolved homicides and rapes for routine periodic review.

- Unsolved homicides will be assigned for review by the Criminal Investigations Division Commander every three (3) years after the case is suspended from active investigation.
- Unsolved rapes will be assigned for review by the Criminal Investigations Division Commander every five (5) years after the case is suspended from active investigation.

4. Other cold or suspended cases will be re-opened and assigned by the Criminal Investigations Commander for additional investigation, only upon the receipt of additional investigative information likely to produce new leads in the determination of a suspect or ability to take the case further within the criminal justice system.

5. If there are questions about statute of limitations considerations, consultations with the State Attorney's Office will be held, prior to committing significant departmental resources into further investigation.

**B. Investigator Responsibility:**

1. The actions of the cold case investigation generally include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying potential unsolved cases according to solvability factors.
- Reviewing case files, evidence logs, laboratory reports and autopsy reports.
- Evaluating case evidence for potential probative DNA sources.
- Consulting with the Montgomery County States Attorney's Office.

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- Identifying witnesses who are willing to proceed in prosecution.
  - Submitting the DNA evidence profile to CODIS if it does not match the suspect's DNA profile.
2. Any action on a cold case will be noted by way of a supplemental report added to the case file.