



CHEVY CHASE
VILLAGE
POLICE
DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER: 5-26.1; SUICIDE NOTES

DATE: 8/1/2019 Pages: 1 ◇ New ◆ Amended

DISTRIBUTION: Sworn Personnel


Police Chief: John Fitzgerald

I. POLICY

- A. Officers attempting to protect and preserve a crime scene will be alert for documents or anything else that would indicate that the scene is actually that of a suicide.
- B. The Department will not release the contents of a suicide note to members of the media on or off-the-record.

II. PROCEDURES

- A. If a suicide note is found, whether or not the suicide was successful, officers shall use latex gloves and seize *it* as evidence.
- B. The seizing officer should attempt to look at other writings of the victim and compare them with the note.
- C. If the victim is transported to the hospital, the officer will show the note to the treating physician but will maintain custody of the original.
- D. Once the State has no further need to retain the original, a copy/image of it will be attached to the station files copy of the report and the original will be returned to the victim/victim's family.
- E. If the suicide is successful, the original will be turned over to the MCP investigator assigned to the case for placement in the MCP investigator's case file.
- F. If the family of the deceased requests the note be returned to them, and if the MCP investigator and the State have no further need for the note, a copy of the note will be inserted into the case file and the original will be returned to the family.
- G. If an officer returns the note, he/she will ensure that a photocopy/image of it has been made for the station records file, and will indicate in the Report or Supplement Report:
 - 1. to whom the note was given,
 - 2. the date and time it was relinquished, and
 - 3. the relationship of the person to the victim.

This directive voids the previous version dated 8/4/2009.