

**COUNTY OF MONROE  
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK**

<b>GENERAL ORDER POLICE BUEARU</b>	<b>DATE OF ISSUE APRIL 15, 2025</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE APRIL 15, 2025</b>	<b>NO. 031-25</b>
<b>SUBJECT: GENERAL ORDER  Cold Case Investigations</b>		<b>DISTRIBUTION  Police Bureau</b>	<b>AMENDS</b>
<b>REFERENCE:</b>			<b>RESCINDS 031-19</b>

**Purpose:** To establish a formal set of guidelines for processing cases that have exhausted all leads and remain unsolved. These cases are commonly referred to as "cold cases".

**Policy:** Members of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office will process "cold cases" utilizing the following procedures. Case evaluation, reviews and considerations for processing "cold cases" is organizationally defined for effective implementation.

**I. Cold Case Investigations**

- A. The term "cold case" refers to a criminal investigation or "case" that remains unsolved after all leads have been exhausted. "Cold cases" are violent or other major felony crimes such as: murder, attempted murder, missing adult where foul play is suspected, missing child, rape or other sexual related crimes with serious injury; which unlike unsolved minor crimes are generally not subject to statute of limitations.
- B. A cold case is considered unsolved until a suspect has been identified, charged, and tried for the crime. Cases may or may not have a suspect named at the time of the crime or developed during the original investigation. With the advent of improved DNA testing and other forensic technologies, cold cases once considered unsolvable will be reviewed:
  - 1. To properly review the case file and evidence to determine if new techniques exist that were not previously available that may help solve the case; or
  - 2. To permit a fresh perspective by either the same or different investigator for the possibility that a new approach might be considered for an additional follow-up;
  - 3. To possibly reopen the case as an active investigation when circumstances indicate the opportunity to develop the new information; or
  - 4. Upon the request from the Criminal Investigation Captain or Sheriff, a case may be taken off the cold case list if circumstances allow.

**II. Evaluation Criteria**

- A. Cold cases will be classified in the department's Case Management System using the minimum solvability factors:
  - 1. Physical evidence collected such as, but not limited to: DNA analysis, ballistics, or fingerprint databases which may substantially advance a case beyond its original level.

2. Witnesses.
3. Suspect known or named.
4. Does case meet Cold Case criteria? Y=Yes, N=No

B. Investigators may also choose to consider other solvability factors that may lead to the classification of meeting Cold Case criteria.

### III. Cold Case Review

- A. All cases meeting the Cold Case criteria will be reviewed on a yearly basis. Nothing prevents a case from being opened at any time information becomes available that may further the investigation.
- B. At least annually, the Criminal Investigation Captain or a designee will generate a report against all cases meeting the Cold Case criteria. This process required a Captain, or a designee to review the new information and make a determination as to what course of action is appropriate. The available options are:
  1. Acknowledge a review of the information in a supplemental form but take no action; or
  2. Reopen the case as an active investigation (All cases reopened will follow the guidelines in **PBGO-015 Managing Criminal Investigations**, for the recording of investigative actions or activities).

### IV. Consideration(s) for Reopening a Cold Case

The following criteria will be considered prior to reopening a cold case:

- A. Limit on statute of limitation.
- B. Technological considerations, such as the nature and condition of the evidence as originally collected, stored and in some instances subject to other forensic testing.
- C. Practical considerations, such as the availability of witnesses in the event further testing or investigation would identify a suspect and lead to an arrest and a trial.
- D. Interview with victim or victim's family (Victim(s) may not want to relive the events of the crime and choose not to participate in the investigation.
- E. Consultation with the District Attorney's Office.

By Order of the Sheriff,  
  
Todd R. Baxter