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County Grand Jury Reviews

Pt. Hueneme Police Responses to Call Requests

When members of the public contact the police to “call for service,” report a crime or file a complaint, they expect a response. That’s the subject of the latest report released by the 2014-2015 Ventura County Grand Jury, titled “Port Hueneme Police Department Public Records Request Process.”

A member of the public reported an incident to the Port Hueneme Police Department (PHPD) and requested—but did not receive—a police report. Responding to this person’s complaint, the grand jury investigated how the PHPD handles calls for any kind of service or information. The investigation consisted of reviewing the department’s written policies and procedures, doing online research that included comparing PHPD policies with those of other local police departments, and interviewing personnel of the PHPD and other city police departments.

The grand jury concluded that:

- The PHPD follows State of California law and its own internal policies in determining the need to generate a police report.
- The PHPD has a process in place for the public to request Call for Service reports, police reports and other information. The process and applicable forms are not well publicized nor easily available.
- The criteria for the PHPD to write a police report are not publicized nor is the fact that the public is not entitled to police reports where no police report is warranted.

(more)

The grand jury recommends that the Port Hueneme City Council direct the PHPD to take two actions: (1) publicize its criteria for producing police reports and the types of information/reports that are available to the public; and (2) update its website to contain information on how to request records and reports as well as directly provide any necessary forms, including the Request for Information or Records form, on the website.

The complete report may be accessed at <http://www.ventura.org/grand-jury>; click on the Annual Reports tab and consult "Fiscal Year 2014-2015."

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