

Family Contact Protocol

Starting with 2019 cases, homicides that have not been Cleared By Arrest or Exceptionally Cleared (i.e., unsolved murders), are to have at least 4 documented family contacts each year for the first two years the case remains unsolved, followed by one contact per year every year thereafter, near the anniversary date. The only contact that the assigned detective is required to make is the initial contact - subsequent contacts may be made by the assigned detective, the Homicide Branch Secretary, or the Chief's Office Administrative Assistant.

There will be dual documentation of these contacts. The assigned detective will keep such documentation in the electronic case management notes. The civilians will keep the documentation in an electronic spreadsheet that they both have access to edit. The assigned detective will notify one of the civilians about any contact, and the civilians will notify the assigned detective about any contact so that both tracking mechanisms have the same info. This documentation is to memorialize the fact that contacts were made.

The information to be captured in the documentation of these contacts, at minimum, will be date and time contact was made, who made the contact, who was contacted, phone number or address of the contact, and a brief description of the content of the contact.

The purpose of the contact is to assure the family that IMPD has not forgotten about the case. There may well be no new information that can be shared with family, and family should be encouraged to ask questions and/or provide any new information via this contact. Case-sensitive information is to remain case-sensitive - there is no obligation to reveal such information to family. An effort should, however, be made to educate family in a general way as to why certain information cannot be shared if they are asking about case-sensitive material.

The family contact should only be one person, agreed to by the detective and the family, from whom all other family members receive case updates. There are times, however, when family dynamics - such as a bitter divorce - prevent one side of the family from receiving information from the other. It is, therefore, acceptable to update two people, each of whom can update their respective sides, but that should be handled on a case-by-case basis. The side representing the legal next-of-kin must NEVER be excluded.