The purpose of this General Order is to outline the responsibilities and restrictions of the Telephone and Online Reporting Unit. This unit was established to provide an economical, yet effective and practical means of handling non-emergency citizen calls for service that do not necessitate police response to meet the citizens in person.

A. Telephone Reporting Unit

1. The Telephone and Online Reporting Unit shall be the responsibility of the Administrative Services Bureau Commander. The unit is supervised by the Records Section Manager. It will be staffed by a Records Section Supervisor, Telephone and Online Reporting Unit Operators, and other personnel approved by the Chief of Police.

2. Police calls for service that fall within the category of complaints listed below will be assigned to the Telephone and Online Reporting Unit. Calls that originate during non-working hours will be handled by Unit personnel during the next oncoming shift.

3. If a call for service meets one of the following criteria, or is an emergency and police response is necessary, it shall be assigned to a Patrol unit for service:
   a. The Telephone and Online Reporting Unit Operator determines there is physical evidence at the scene.
   b. The complainant advises that there are suspects in the case.
   c. The Telephone and Online Reporting Unit Supervisor determines, due to the circumstances of the call, it should be assigned to Patrol.

4. A patrol supervisor shall be consulted if a call does not meet the above criteria, and a complainant insists on meeting with an officer after having the Telephone and Online Reporting Unit process explained. The patrol supervisor may have an officer respond on a case by case basis when in that supervisor's judgement it is appropriate to do so based on the circumstances.

5. The following types of complaints, none of which are “in progress,” will normally be handled by the Telephone and Online Reporting Unit:
   a. Lost or Found Property
   b. Recovered Stolen Vehicle or Property (outside of Prince William County)
   c. Telephone Complaints (obscene, abusive, or annoying calls)
   d. Supplemental and/or Police Information reports of routine nature
   e. Credit Card Fraud/Identity Theft
   f. Defrauding an Innkeeper or Vehicle for Hire
   g. Indecent Exposure (except when the victim is a juvenile)
h. Larceny or Attempted Larceny (petit or grand, except narcotics, firearms, motor vehicles and copper)
i. Suspicious Person and/or Vehicle
j. Throwing Missiles
k. Vandalism or Destruction of Private Property
l. Computer Crime, Email or Internet Offenses
m. Hit and Run Offenses (property damage only, including vehicles)
n. Vandalism to Vehicles

6. Routinely, Larceny and attempted Larceny from vehicle incidents will be handled by a patrol officer. These types of calls are unique and usually result in several victims in the same area with unknown potential evidence, which requires an officer to respond. If the reporting party is unable or unwilling to meet with an officer the call may be forwarded to the Telephone and Online Reporting Unit.

7. In addition to those incidents enumerated in section 5, if a Patrol supervisor determines under the available circumstances that an incident not listed should be referred to the Telephone and Online Reporting Unit, that unit will handle the call.

B. Citizen Online Reporting

1. Citizen online reporting provides an additional option to the caller who does not wish to see a police officer or wait for a return call from the Telephone and Online Reporting Unit. Online reporting is available 24 hours a day to anyone having a computer, and may be accessed through the Prince William County Police webpage. The queue of incoming calls is checked frequently throughout the day by the unit’s supervisor, or by trained Telephone and Online Reporting Unit staff members.

2. Citizen online reporting is available if the following criteria are met:
   a. The incident is not an emergency or in-progress call
   b. The incident occurred within Prince William County
   c. There are no known suspects
   d. The reporting person is 18 years of age or older
   e. The type of incident is listed in section 3 below
   f. The reporting person has a permanent email address

3. The following incidents may be reported online:
   a. Larceny/Theft
   b. Vandalism
   c. Hit and Run
   d. Harassing Calls, Texts, and Emails
   e. Lost Property (within or outside of Prince William County)
   f. Vandalism to Auto
   g. Suspicious Incidents
h. Supplement to a report already filed online, with an officer or with the Telephone and Online Reporting Unit