POLICE TERMINOLOGY

**Arrest**: To take a person into custody, by authority of law, for the purpose of charging him/her with a criminal offense.

**Arrest Warrant**: A written order issued by a judge that directs a law enforcement officer to arrest a person and bring them to court.

**Assault**: An attempt or threat to inflict bodily injury upon another, along with the apparent ability to do so, which places the victim in fear of injury or bodily harm.

**Chief**: Generally, an appointed certified police officer who is the highest ranking officer in a Department.

**Complaint**: A statement under oath whereby a witness accuses an individual of criminal behavior.

**D.O.B.**: Abbreviation for “date of birth.”

**Detective**: A sworn member of the Department responsible for the follow-up investigation of crime.

**Evidence**: Oral statements, documents, sound and video recordings, and objects admissible in court. To be admissible, evidence must be material (it must go to a substantial issue in the case) and relevant (it must go to the truth or falsity of a matter asserted).

**Felony**: An offense for which a sentence of death or a term of imprisonment for one year or more is provided.

**Initial Responder**: First law enforcement officer receiving the reported abuse/offense.

**Juvenile**: A person under 18 years of age, also referred to as a youth.

**Lieutenant**: Police supervisor over Sergeants; generally, takes more of an administrative role.

**M.O.**: Abbreviation for modus operandi, Latin for method of operation. The pattern of behavior which is typical of how a particular offender commits a specific type of crime. Example: An offender who always wears dark glasses in the commission of a bank robbery.

**Misdemeanor**: An offense for which the maximum term of incarceration is less than one year.

**Offense**: A violation of the criminal law of a state or local jurisdiction.

**Probable Cause**: Where known facts and circumstances, of a reasonably trustworthy nature, are sufficient to justify a man of reasonable caution or prudence in the belief that a certain person has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a criminal act.

**Search Warrant**: A written order signed by a judge authorizing an officer to search for and seize property that constitutes evidence of commission of a crime.

**Sergeant**: First line police supervisor overseeing Detectives and/or Police Officers.

**Watch Commander**: A police official who directs all police activities within a jurisdiction during a specific watch.