

Royal Ulster Constabulary

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Part I

MAJOR INVESTIGATION INCIDENT ROOM STANDARDISED ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

- (1) The desirability for standardisation among United Kingdom police forces in the conduct of enquiries relating to major incidents has resulted in the development and acceptance of major investigation incident room standardised procedures.
- (2) A standardised manual procedure for major crime enquiries referred to as MIRIAM (Major Incident Room Indexing and Action Management) was implemented by the Force on 1 January 1984.
- (3) In March 1988 a computerised system known as HOLMES (Home Office Large Major Enquiry System) designed to further aid major criminal investigation procedures, was introduced to the Force.

2. PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES OF MAJOR INCIDENT ROOM

- (1) The principal objectives of any Major Incident Room are as follows:
 - (a) to provide the senior investigating officer with an accurate record of all relevant information relating to the crime, together with all police enquiries made and the results obtained therefrom;
 - (b) to show the state of the enquiry and how much work in the form of outstanding actions remains to be done at any one time;
 - (c) to provide all officers with a means of acquiring all previous knowledge of any person, vehicle, address or subject pertinent to their enquiries;
 - (d) to keep records in a manner which highlights people, vehicles, or other factors which have become subject to enquiry, in order that such records are capable of pin-pointing suspects to whom the senior investigating officer may direct special attention;
 - (e) to act as a means of historical reference so that, in a long running enquiry, officers joining the investigation team can have easy reference to major policy decisions taken earlier during the course of the enquiry;
 - (f) to facilitate, at the conclusion of the investigation, the production of a comprehensive report for legal consideration;

- (g) to ensure that all information is recorded and linked with the standardised procedural rules of the system so that it may be readily retrieved to aid the senior investigating officer and his enquiry teams to establish priorities and to ensure that the best possible use is made of staff and equipment in order that all enquiries are carried out speedily and effectively, and the results properly analysed.

3. MANAGEMENT

It is essential to note that major investigations must have a structure of management which is immediately recognisable and understood by all personnel. Standardised administrative procedures recognise specific functions within the administration of any major investigation and create new titles for administrative staff. However, the system has been designed to be sufficiently flexible to allow one person to fulfil a number of functions or, if it becomes necessary, for a number of persons to perform one particular function.

4. STAFFING AND FUNCTIONS

The following functions within an incident room are identified and explained.

(1) SENIOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER

The senior investigating officer has responsibility for the investigation of the crime. This includes the setting up of an incident room with appropriate accommodation, equipment and manpower. He must provide for the regular assessment of all work outstanding to ensure a suitable level of staff to facilitate the process of documents in the most efficient manner.

(2) DEPUTY TO THE SENIOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER

The deputy to the senior investigating officer is responsible for the control and direction of the investigation in the absence of the senior investigating officer. He must be involved in the investigation to the same level as the senior investigating officer so that, in his absence, on-going decisions may be dealt with promptly to facilitate the continuity of the enquiry.

(3) OFFICE MANAGER

The office manager has the delegated responsibility for the efficient running of the incident room. He must maintain a level of staff capable of carrying out all necessary administrative duties in the most efficient manner and ensure that all relevant information is made available to the senior investigating officer to assist him in directing the enquiry. He must be constantly aware of developments in the investigation and ensure that the senior investigating officer is kept up-to-date with all such developments.

The office manager must ensure that all actions which are raised during the course of the enquiry are dealt with satisfactorily.

The administration of a busy incident room may be such that the office manager cannot read all documents entering the incident room. He, therefore, must be able to rely on his staff to carry out their specific functions while he exercises a level of control which will ensure that all relevant documentation is read by him in due course.

(4) ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

The administration officer co-ordinates all administration with regard to staff, vehicles, accommodation, refreshments and equipment. He relieves the senior investigating officer and the office manager of all administrative matters not connected with the investigation itself. He receives claims for all expenses incurred, arranges payment, co-ordinates duty rosters, and looks after all matters of welfare.

(5) RECEIVER

The receiver receives and reads all documentation entering the incident room. He checks that actions have been properly completed and the result endorsed. He assesses whether or not there is a need for any action to be raised from the result of the returned action, or any urgent action to be raised from the accompanying documents and causes that to be carried out.

He then forwards all documents to the indexer/action writer. He decides whether or not any action is to be raised from any messages and teleprinter messages, endorses the document appropriately and underlines the content to be indexed. He examines all other documents received to ascertain whether or not there is a need for any urgent action to be raised immediately and endorses the document and forwards messages and other documents to the indexer/action writer. He raises only urgent actions from statements.

The receiver, invariably, will be the officer who is most up-to-date in relation to the current state of the investigation. He must ensure that all significant developments are brought to the immediate attention of the office manager so that the senior investigating officer may be advised.

(6) ACTION ALLOCATOR

The action allocator allocates individual actions to members of the enquiry team. In accordance with the policy of the senior investigating officer he assesses the order of priority for allocation of actions and ensures that each action is allocated to officer(s) able to perform the task required of them.

He provides briefings where necessary to members of the enquiry team and ensures that the researcher supplies all appropriate copy documentation so that they are fully conversant with their duties in respect of individual actions. He also maintains a detailed record of the state of incomplete actions.

(7) STATEMENT READER

The statement reader reads in detail all statements (and officers' reports) after they have been typed. He indicates thereon where actions are to be raised for further enquiries to be carried out and underlines any content to be indexed. He indicates on the statement any content to be included in the sequence of events, indexes and appends a summary of the statement on the top left hand corner of the statement.

He reads in detail all other documents, marks up the content to be indexed and endorses thereon where actions are to be raised for further enquiries.

(8) INDEXER(S)/ACTION WRITER(S)

This function may be carried out by two persons working as a team, one of whom has access to the index while the other writes out any necessary actions and/or endorses documentation. Team work provides a method of checking entries and reduces the risk of mistakes.

The indexer/action writer receives all documents from either the receiver or the statement reader and raises any necessary actions as instructed - having first checked the index to establish that the enquiry detailed is not already the subject of a previous action. He indexes the material content of the documents following the guide established by the receiver or statement reader when marking up the document, and includes any additional information he considers to be relevant. He cross references documents and, where appropriate, updates them from information contained within the index. In particular he ensures that, where an action is raised for a specific subject or individual, attention is drawn to any other relevant document.

The indexing section is the only part of the investigation team with the facility to continually research information. It is important to establish that the role is not reduced to one which merely records information, and officers must interrogate the system as they update information to link the relevant facts and take appropriate action.

(9) TELEPHONIST

The telephonist receives and records all telephone messages concerning the enquiry, allocates consecutive numbers to all messages whether received by telephone or otherwise and forwards the messages to the receiver. He also records all outgoing messages.

(10) RESEARCHER

The researcher acts as an extension of the index section and ensures that, where an action is raised, a copy of all previous relevant documentation is attached to the action so that the information can be supplied to the enquiry officer by the action allocator.

(11) CLERK

The clerk performs all duties required in the incident room in connection with photocopying, filing and updating documents.

(12) Two further functions are identified, namely, the exhibits officer and the supervisor of house to house enquiries. However, these functions may not be accommodated necessarily within the incident room.

(13) EXHIBITS OFFICER

The exhibits officer will record full details of all property coming into the possession of the police in connection with the incident under investigation. That will include all property which does not pass through his physical possession, eg items removed directly from the scene of the crime to the Forensic Science Laboratory. In particular, he will maintain close liaison with scenes of crime officers and record all information which will prove continuity.

He will maintain a property register and, where necessary, compile a card index system in relation to all property received by him. He will also ensure that all property is securely stored.

(14) SUPERVISOR OF HOUSE TO HOUSE ENQUIRIES

The supervisor of house to house enquiries co-ordinates all house to house enquiries and reads the contents of all documents to assess whether or not actions are to be raised for persons to be interviewed by the enquiry team. He causes all necessary actions to be raised through the incident room.

5. DOCUMENTATION AND PROCEDURE ON MANUAL SYSTEM - (MIRIAM)

The documents which are authorised for use within an incident room and the procedure to be used in connection with those documents are to be found within a manual of instruction which has been issued for the guidance of all members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary but mainly to officers of the Criminal Investigation Department who will operate the administrative procedures.

6. COMPUTERISATION OF MAJOR CRIME ENQUIRIES - (HOLMES)

- (1) Background - Further to the development of MIRIAM, SRDB (Scientific Research and Development Branch) was given approval by the Home Office to design a computer software package to meet the common needs of all U.K. forces regarding major crime enquiry procedures. From this research the HOLMES Computer System evolved providing dedicated software to run on specific hardware.
- (2) Computer Services Branch in liaison with Crime department researched the HOLMES requirement for the Royal Ulster Constabulary resulting in the purchase of:
 - (a) a HOLMES Central Facility supporting dedicated Incident Rooms at Antrim Road, Grosvenor Road, Musgrave Street, Strandtown, Gough, CIS and C1(3) Anti-Racketeering;
 - (b) 4 portable HOLMES systems.

7. OBJECTIVES OF HOLMES

The objectives of the HOLMES Computer System are:

- (a) increase the efficiency of major crime investigations;
- (b) increase the probability of detecting the perpetrator of crimes and therefore reducing the length of investigation,

provide Crime Department with management aids which are built into the system.

8. THE HOLMES COMPUTER SYSTEM

- (1) Each of the HOLMES computer systems within the Royal Ulster Constabulary consists of the following hardware:

visual display units and printer terminals.
- (2) The software package specified by the Home Office which remains compatible with all other UK forces, comprises of the following three modules:

Module 1	-	(a)	Indexing Procedures
		(b)	Production of Card Index
Module 2	-	(a)	Registration Procedures
		(b)	Action Management
		(c)	Document Management
Module 3	-	(a)	Typing Service
		(b)	Free Text Retrieval
- (3) In addition, each system is capable of handling one or more separate incidents all of which can be 'OPEN LINKED' if desired.

- (4) Each of the HOLMES Portable Systems within the Force are designed and capable of being easily transported to any serious crime incident room throughout the Force area. The accommodation identified to house the HOLMES Portable System should, however, be:
- (a) not less than 250 square feet (approximately);
 - (b) equipped with 13 amp power supply;
 - (c) free from dust and damp;
 - (d) afforded 24 hour security protection.

9. IMPLEMENTATION OF HOLMES

- (1) The implementation of HOLMES in a major crime investigation will be subject to the following criterion:
- (a) availability of a HOLMES Computer Portable System or available space on the HOLMES Central Facility;
 - (b) the generation of large volumes of information during the enquiry anticipated;
 - (c) the possibility of the investigation leading to a 'Series Crime' enquiry.
- (2) Use of the HOLMES Central Facility will be decided by the head of Criminal Investigation Department in whose region the incident occurs.

Requests for the use of the HOLMES Portable Systems will be forwarded through the regional head of Criminal Investigation Department to the Detective Chief Superintendent, C1 Department.

10. STAFFING

- (1) At present a pool of trained HOLMES computer operators from each of the three Criminal Investigation Department regions are available to staff any computerised incident room using the HOLMES Computer System.
- (2) The Royal Ulster Constabulary HOLMES Liaison Officer is a Detective Inspector attached to C1(2) Department, Knocknagoney responsible for:
- (a) monitoring the use of HOLMES and ensuring strict compliance with the Home Office rules and conventions;
 - (b) liaising with Computer Services Branch for technical support and regional heads of Criminal Investigation Department on manpower levels for incident rooms.

He is directly responsible to the Detective Chief Superintendent, C1.

11. GENERAL

- (1) Force standing orders in respect of the HOLMES Computer System are in force, a copy of which will remain with each system at all times.

- (2) It is absolutely imperative that these standing orders are rigidly enforced and adhered to as any breach of security or disobedience to orders may involve the commission of a criminal or disciplinary offence under:
- (a) the Official Secrets Act 1911;
 - (b) the Data Protection Act 1984;
 - (c) current Force instructions.

12. CANCELLATION

Force Order Part I No. 45/89, File Box C(e) is hereby cancelled.

Distribution/

All chief officers, chief superintendents, superintendents, departments, stations and offices

Index Entries/

'I' - Incident Room - Major Investigation - Standardised Administrative Procedures

'M' - Major Investigation Incident Room Standardised Administrative Procedures

'S' - Standardised Administrative Procedures - Major Investigation Incident Room