

---

## Pre-Disposition Investigations

### 503.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The pre-disposition report is intended to assist the court in making a sentencing or dispositional decision and to provide a preliminary case plan for the supervision of the case. The pre-disposition investigation consists of activities the probation officer engages in prior to completing a pre-disposition or pre-sentence report. The purpose of the pre-disposition investigation is to gather data about the offender. This chapter will provide general information for Probation Officers conducting pre-disposition investigations.

### 503.2 APPLICABILITY

This policy shall be applicable to all sworn Department Employees.

### 503.3 POLICY

All pre-disposition investigations will be objective, thorough and completed in a timely manner.

### 503.4 COMMON PRE-DISPOSITION ACTIVITIES

While pre-disposition activities will vary depending upon the information that is received, the following activities will occur during all investigations:

- Confirmation of the offender's identity.
- Verify all pertinent documents belong to the identified offender.
- Review all records in the Probation Case File and Probation Case Management System (PCMS).
- Conduct a review of all information distributed by the District Attorney's Office.
- Review and verify the offender's criminal and/or delinquent history.
- Initiate collateral contacts including victims, attorneys, therapists, treatment programs and other critical to the case.
- Interview the offender.

### 503.5 OFFENDER INTERVIEW

The offender interview is of critical importance to the pre-disposition investigation. Prior to conducting the pre-disposition interview, the probation officer must become familiar with the facts and history of the case. Additionally, the officer will complete as many record checks as possible and have a good understanding of the records reviewed and the offense. When an officer enters an interview unprepared, control of the discussion could shift to the offender. All interviews should include engagement efforts which support the objective of establishing a helpful connection and a working relationship with the offender during the interview. Engagement is a vital part of building rapport and increases the officer's opportunity to learn valuable information from the offender related to his/her attitude and motivation to change. Engaging the offender increases the likelihood

# San Diego County Probation Department

## Policy Manual

### *Pre-Disposition Investigations*

---

of understanding the interview and assists in the officer's expression of genuine empathy. To support engagement efforts, officers are expected to use Motivational Interviewing techniques including the use of open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections and summaries. Additionally, using a motivational interviewing communication style helps to build trust and decrease resistance in an effort to improve the likelihood an offender will participate in making long term change opportunities. These skills are essential to an officer's informal assessment of the offender.

The officer has an obligation to review and discuss all pertinent information, favorable and unfavorable, and to provide the offender an opportunity to clarify or rebut the information. Using the Integrated Behavioral Intervention Strategies skill of Role Clarification at the outset of the interview, the officer shall make clear that no information obtained in the interview will be held in confidence while also defining the objectives of Probation supervision and identifying the goals of the offender. Officers assigned to Juvenile Field Services (JFS) will also interview offender family members. It is therefore equally important that thorough preparations precede those family interviews.

JFS and Adult Field Services (AFS) officers shall consult their service manuals for additional information regarding pre-disposition interviews.