



SAKI Core Standards for Sexual Assault Investigation

Fundamentals for Investigators and Supervisors

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Background and Objectives of the Core Investigative Standards Guide

- Developed from the SAKI Law Enforcement Working Group (LEWG)
- Purpose of this guide:
 - Establish evidence-based standards for investigating sexual assault
 - Provide guidance to law enforcement investigators and supervisors
 - Identify and address common gaps
 - Recommend adoption for training and standardization
- About the LEWG / meet the experts



Core Standards for Sexual Assault Investigations

Purpose of This Guide

This National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) training and technical assistance guide is designed to assist you in employing fundamental, evidence-based standards of practice to investigate and resolve sexual assaults. Standards of practice can help to improve agency and individual investigator performance and ensure that nationally accepted practices are used consistently and appropriately applied (Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, 1996; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2005; Michigan Sexual Assault Model Policy Working Group, 2015; National Centre for Policing Excellence, 2005). Nationally, we acknowledge the bigger need to address police response in multiple areas of practice. Creating consistent, evidence-based standards of practice in sexual assault response is one task that aligns with this need, and this document can be a part of that effort. We have referenced research that supports a specific investigative task (see References at the end of this brief). Some topics and specific investigative steps have less research backing. In these instances, experts from the SAKI Law Enforcement Working Group (LEWG) have assisted in identifying recommended practices.

Authors

Lieutenant Jordan Satinsky is currently the Deputy Commander of a district station in the Montgomery County (MD) Police Department. He has been a law enforcement officer since 1999. Lieutenant Satinsky has worked as a patrol officer, an investigator, a patrol supervisor, and an investigative supervisor. During his career, Lieutenant Satinsky has investigated property crimes, child sex/physical abuse, adult sex crimes, elder/vulnerable adult abuse, domestic violence, and homicide. Lieutenant Satinsky founded the Sex Assault Unit for the country police and was instrumental in integrating the police department in the local Family Justice Center. He is a police instructor for investigations and leadership; he travels across the country to teach members of police departments and allied agencies. Lieutenant Satinsky is also a member of the SAFER working group.

Lieutenant Satinsky's career allowed him to develop an adult sex crimes unit in a major county police agency. He not only created the unit, but he also trained the detectives assigned to the unit. Lieutenant Satinsky firmly believes in victims and that investigators need to be sensitive to victims' needs.



Jordan Satinsky

Authors

Amy Durall is currently a Project Manager for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and her portfolio includes work on the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims and Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services.

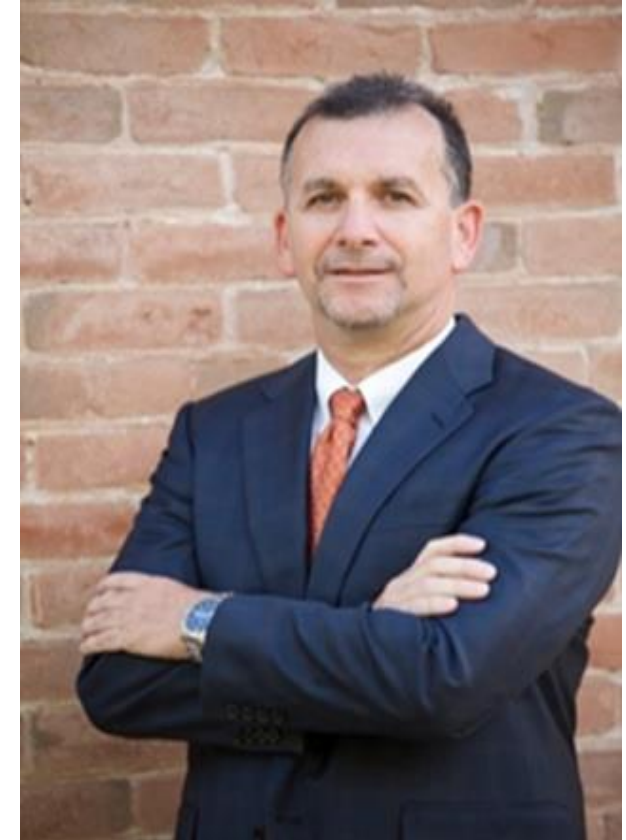
Prior to joining the IACP, Ms. Durall proudly served as the Victim Services Director for Travis County Sheriff's Office for nearly 10 years.



Amy Durall

Authors

Jim Markey, a senior law enforcement specialist in the Investigative Science Program, provides direct consultation and training and technical assistance (TTA) for 64 Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) grantees nationwide. Mr. Markey served 30 years with the Phoenix (AZ) Police Department, rising from patrolman to supervisor. For 14 years he led the adult sex crimes unit, the first detective unit to work in a multidisciplinary team. The team comprised at least 10 investigators and investigated more than 7,000 sexual assaults, including over 100 serial rape cases. Mr. Markey's work included regular meetings with internal and external partners to develop policy, conduct regular meetings, and openly communicate on a variety of issues involving violence against women. He received more than 30 commendations, including the Police Chief's Unit Award and the Distinguished Service Award.



Jim Markey

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Andre Richards, a Research Analyst in the Policing Research Program at RTI, provides input on tools to assist law enforcement operations. He served for over a decade as a law enforcement officer for Durham NC. He served in various investigative and patrol functions, culminating as a supervisor for the SVU unit for his last three years.



Andre Richards

Background and Research on the Investigative Process

- 2016 Houston Action Research Project
- Commonalities with Sexual Assault Unit Assessments
- Highlighting the need for an overall training guide

What this Guide Is and Isn't

- Is for agencies looking to improve their sexual assault response
- Is for investigators and supervisors to ensure proper and robust investigations
- Is a living document designed for agencies to assess and improve policy and practice
- Is a support document for unit supervisors to conduct clear investigative goals and oversight
- Isn't the "end all" of "how to" investigate sexual assault

What is in the Guide?

- Key areas for new and seasoned investigators to follow
- Fundamental investigative tasks designed to standardize response
- Essential “guide driven” checklist for investigators and supervisors

1. Assess the information

This is one of the first steps in the investigation and a critical step to continue throughout its duration. This threshold assessment may take into account factors or actions that have already occurred, such as an active crime scene, timing of the initial report, custodial status of one or more suspects, the need to issue search warrants or involve investigative expertise, and ongoing danger to the community. Carefully analyze the information given by the first responders or documented in the initial written report, and be prepared to continually reassess the case as facts emerge. Even when the report of an assault is delayed, perishable evidence might still exist; if so, collect it as soon as possible. Whether you are called to the initial scene or assigned the case later, complete the following:

- Review and document any initial briefing or information provided by the first responders.
- Observe and document physical conditions, witnesses, and anyone else involved.
- Identify what information is known and what information is unknown.
- Create a checklist and prioritize the next steps.

Guide Section Example

4. Obtain and process a sexual assault evidence kit

A significant piece of potential evidence in a sexual assault is the sexual assault kit, or SAK. The SAK offers you one more potential source of critical information for the case, including the potential of forensic linkage to other crimes. Investigators are responsible for the handling, impounding, and processing of this evidence. Specifically, if you are the lead case investigator, ensure these things:

- Agency policy is in place for kit management.
- SAKs are secured immediately and submitted to the agency with jurisdiction within 14 days.
- Requests for laboratory kit analysis and the actual analysis are made in a timely manner.
- All transfers and movements of the kit, along with any results, are tracked and documented in the case file.
- Additional DNA elimination samples are collected, if applicable, from suspects and witnesses.

Guide Section Example

10. Complete the written report and documentation

Documenting investigative actions is critical to preserving the work you have completed. The final report is a key factor in downstream case decisions that include prosecutorial review, judicial review, and trial, as well as future case connectivity. Take care when completing the written report. Arrange for oversight and supervisory review on each case. Document the following fundamental facts and information in your report:

- All case activity you completed and tasks that were attempted but not completed.
- All interviews of key individuals (***do not include opinions***), as well as all failed attempts to interview subjects and reasons that any given interview was not possible.
- Actions taken by all involved police personnel.
- Observations of the scene by officers and witnesses, along with any evidence collected.
 - ◆ Include all available supporting documentation and records, including whether tasks were completed successfully or were attempted but not completed. For example, record any attempts made to speak to a witness or suspect, even if no contact was ultimately made.
 - ◆ Add a scene description and a list of items observed and collected. If the scene was not processed, explain why processing was not possible.
 - ◆ Document all laboratory reports received and file them appropriately. Include evidence regardless of whether it was processed or not. Document any results.
- Contact or interaction with victim advocacy or support services.

Investigative Checklist

Reminder Checklist

- 1. Assess the information
- 2. Complete the interviewing fundamentals
- 3. Locate and process relevant crime scenes and evidence
- 4. Obtain and process a sexual assault evidence kit
- 5. Connect or refer the victim to an advocate
- 6. Reassess all the information known
- 7. Contact the suspect
- 8. Continue case assessment and evaluation
- 9. Support the investigation through intelligence analysis and research
- 10. Complete the written report and documentation
- 11. Follow procedures for final case disposition and investigative closure

Comprehensive Checklist

- For Supervisors to ensure case completion
- For Investigators to follow along with and compare during different stages of the investigation



Frequent Questions

- Where can I access this guide?
- When will the new checklist be available?
- Where can I find assistance in implementing areas of the guide?

Additional questions from the attendees?

Further Contact Information



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