Do’s and Don’ts

- Don’t reuse OTN’s. Each arrest has its own unique Offense Tracking Number.
- There should be only one SID per person and one unique OTN for each arrest.
- Don’t use the nontraffic citation numbers as the OTN.
- Don’t fingerprint a Juvenile transferred to Adult court again if he has already been fingerprinted. Juvenile OTN’s can be used in adult court. Supply the Juvenile OTN to the courts.
- Make sure the booking center enters the arresting agency ORI not the booking center’s own ORI on the arrest.
- If the court has assigned another OTN number for that arrest, the court will enter the arresting OTN into their system as a linking OTN.
- If the offender has not been fingerprinted by the time he appears before the court, the arresting agency should use the OTN assigned by the court when the offender is fingerprinted.
- When fingerprinting, use the date of offense, arrest date, name, date of birth from the criminal complaint. If this information is not the same as what the court recorded in the case management system, the disposition will not be applied to Criminal History when it is received from AOPC.
- If the offender is fingerprinted and not taken to the MDJ for an arraignment, or a criminal complaint is not being filed at the MDJ court, purge the fingerprints.

You may also want to take the “Livescan” and “Fingerprint Compliance” online training courses offered on the PAVTN virtual training network. Go to: http://www.pavtn.net

This brochure is a summary of the requirements and important aspects of fingerprinting criminal suspects. For more detailed information please refer to the PSP Guidelines for Mandatory Fingerprinting and Preparation of PSP Fingerprint Cards manual and the statutes and rules cited in this brochure.

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Why is Fingerprinting Important?

Officer Safety!
Why is fingerprinting important?
- A criminal history record is initiated upon an arrest and submission of fingerprints to the Pennsylvania State Police Central Repository (PSPCR). “A record of the arrest is not created without submission of fingerprints related to the arrest.” (Guidelines for Mandatory Fingerprinting and Preparation of PSP Fingerprint Cards manual)
- A complete Criminal History Record is important to law enforcement for investigative purposes. A key benefit of accurate data is having up to-date records of convicted felons. A complete Criminal History Record is also important for noncriminal background checks for employment, licensing, adoption, citizenship, volunteer programs, and firearms purchases.
- Fingerprinting is the only positive form of ID. The offender could be wanted and give a false name.
- PSP is the sole source contributor of PA arrest fingerprint cards to the FBI. If an arrested person is not fingerprinted, he/she will not be on III and National Crime Information Center (NCIC) RAP sheets.
- When fingerprints are submitted to PSP they are also entered into the PSP AFIS and can be searched against by remote AFIS terminals when a latent fingerprint obtained at a crime scene is introduced.
- Arrest fingerprints are legally required under the Crimes Code, 18 Pa.C.S. § 9112.

What can happen if you don’t fingerprint an offender?
- If the offender is not fingerprinted, PSP has no record of that arrest, and the arrest will not appear on the rap sheet.
- Officer safety is compromised. Officers may unknowingly confront a dangerous subject.
- With the large increase in non-criminal background checks, the risk of lawsuits increases when a person is hired and his/her criminal history record is not accurate.

What are the causes of missing fingerprints?
- The offenses were reduced to a summary and the fingerprints were not taken before the grade was changed. Consequently no fingerprint order is issued because of the reduction in the grade of the offense.
- The arresting agency released a defendant from custody pursuant to Pa. R. Crim. P.519 without fingerprinting the defendant, but instructs him/her to go to a central booking center to be printed. The defendant fails to do so, is issued a fingerprint order but never responds to it.
- The defendant was not fingerprinted after a conviction on charges filed on a private criminal complaint.
- Record was expunged and the defendant was never fingerprinted.
- The arresting agency never fingerprinted the defendant and was not aware that the case proceeded by summons.
- The victim did not want to press charges and the charges were dismissed and the defendant was not fingerprinted.
- Officer called out on another call and doesn’t fingerprint.
- Booking center is busy, and/or does not want to print other departments cases.