



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY**  
***DIVISION OF STATE POLICE***  
**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**



**DIRECTIVE TITLE: INVESTIGATION OF HARASSING TELEPHONE CALLS**

**DIRECTIVE NUMBER: GO.42.004 DISTRIBUTION CODE 1**

**DATE ISSUED: MAY 1, 1991 EFFECTIVE DATE: MAY 1, 1991**

**RESCINDS/AMENDS: SOP #21**

**CHAPTER 42-D**  
**INVESTIGATION OF HARASSING TELEPHONE CALLS**

**42-D.1.0 Discussion:**

Harassing telephone call investigations are unusual in that they typically require the investigator to depend on a private corporation, the Telephone Company, to obtain evidence. The following procedures will assist the investigator in his dealings with both the victim and the Telephone Company.

It should be noted that this directive covers only those cases where a victim is requesting that a telephone trap (a device installed by the telephone company to determine the number of a telephone used to place a call to a receiving party) be placed on his line in conjunction with an investigation of a violation of New Hampshire RSA 644:4. Cases where an investigation requires that such a trap be put on a line without a subscriber's knowledge or consent are not covered in this directive.

**42-D.1.1 Initial Investigation Procedures**

- A. Contact the victim and gather as much information as possible:
  - 1. Ascertain the time of day and frequency of calls.
  - 2. Determine possible suspects and motives.
- B. Advise the victim to contact the Business Office of the telephone company serving the victim to request a telephone trap.
  - 1. Make sure the victim has your name, title and telephone number; the telephone company will request that information from the victim.
  - 2. If it is not already being done, advise the victim to start keeping a log of telephone calls received, to include:

- a. Date and time of call. The time of a call is the time at which it starts, no matter how long it lasts. Clocks used for this purpose should be synchronized with the telephone company, the operator can provide the correct time. This is necessary because the telephone company has a two minute variance before and after the reported starting time of a phone call to determine if the times coincide. For example, if a call is reported as being received at 12:30 and telephone company records show that it occurred between 12:28 and 12:32, it will be considered a match. If the report is that a call was received at 12:30 and the telephone company records show it occurred at 12:27, it will not be considered a match.
- b. Contents of the call.
  - 1) Conversation or lack of conversation.
  - 2) Background noises.
- C. Regular contact should be kept with the victim to monitor any further calls and the telephone company's actions.
  - 1. Advise the victim to notify you after the report has been made to the telephone company.
  - 2. Obtain copies of any forms filled out by the victim for the telephone company.

#### **42-D.1.2 Telephone Company Responsibilities**

- A. When contacted by the victim, the telephone company business office will question the victim again about the nature of the complaint.
  - 1. If the harassing calls are considered non-threatening, the telephone company will advise the victim of methods other than placing a trap on the line to resolve the problem, such as hanging up, blowing a whistle into the receiver, getting an unlisted number, etc.
- B. When it is determined that a trap should be installed, the telephone company business office will send a form to the victim. This form serves two purposes:
  - 1. To obtain information about the calls.
  - 2. To give the telephone company authority to place the trap on the line.
- C. The victim will return the completed form directly to the New England Telephone Annoyance Call Bureau (ACB) in Boston, MA.
  - 1. An ACB Investigator will contact the victim directly to arrange for the trap and give specific instructions to be followed, which may differ in each case depending on the location and type of equipment used.

- D. Telephone traps will normally be installed for a period of two weeks.
  - 1. The victim will be instructed to report the receipt of annoyance calls to a special telephone number immediately. This is another instance where it is important to have times synchronized.
- E. Telephone company policy states, suspect information gathered from traps, will only be released to investigating police officers, not directly to victims.
- F. Reports will automatically be made to the investigating police officer when two or more annoyance calls originated from the same number within the two week period.
- G. There may be cases where the person making the annoyance calls is moving around and never using the same telephone twice. In this instance, the victim's log should be obtained by the investigating Trooper and brought to the Major Crime Unit. The Major Crime Unit in turn will contact the Attorney

General's Office and request they exercise their power as defined in NH RSA 7:6-b to obtain the records of the victim's telephone line and trap as they relate to these single calls. Again, accurate matching of the times of these calls is essential.

**SOURCES:** NH RSA 7:6-b, NH RSA 644:4