

Principles of Investigative Documentation: Creating a Uniform Style for Generating Reports and Packaging Information

Philip A. Becnel IV, Scott J. Krischke

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This is the only book in existence that discusses the process of documenting an investigation from start to finish. It presents just about everything an investigator needs to know regarding how to document an investigation. The first chapter discusses the five primary principles of investigative documentation: taking comprehensive notes; documenting every effort to contact witnesses and all surveillance; preparing reports whenever there is any possibility of needing to testify; taking verbatim statements from hostile witnesses and declarations from friendly witnesses; and providing all case documents to the client or maintaining a document retention plan. The second chapter details the numerous misconceptions pertaining to investigative documentation. This chapter sets the stage for the remaining chapters on note-taking, running resumes, reports, statements, and documentation retention. Each chapter is broken down into four or five sections that approximate the methods used to complete that particular documentary endeavor. The book also contains an exhaustive appendix that many investigators will find to be very useful, including: one that lists hundreds of abbreviations that investigators may find helpful when taking notes; sample reports that readers may use as templates for generating their own reports; an alphabetic stylebook that is based on styles used by the media and federal law enforcement agencies that provides a quick tool for properly referencing abbreviations, names, capitalization and numerals, among other topics; and several sample statements and declarations to show what these documents, when completed, are supposed to look like. This is an advanced book for people who already have the necessary skills to do an investigation. By following the principles outlined in this book, investigators will see the quality of their investigations improve markedly and ultimately be more successful.



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