POLICE

Cambridge Police Department

POLICY & PROCEDURES

Subject/Title

Warrant Management Process

Issuing Authority:

Met Chas

Robert C. Haas Police Commissioner Review Date:

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Rescinds:

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Mass. Rules of Criminal Procedure; M.G.L. c. 233 § 6; c. 276, §§ 23A, 29, 31, & 32; c. 268, §§ 22 & 23; c. 263, § 1; & c. 90, § 22; c. 248, § 26; & c. 280, § 6.

Accreditation Standards:

1.2.5; & 74.1.2

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the framework under which arrest warrants will be routed, prioritized, maintained, and executed. These guidelines will also address the procedures for establishing the validity of outstanding arrest warrants, and the procedures to be followed once a valid arrest warrant has been served or executed.

II. POLICY:

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, all officers assigned to serve an arrest warrant will do so without unreasonable delay. Further, if an officer encounters an individual who is the subject of a valid arrest warrant, the officer is expected to execute the warrant (after the officer has established the warrant's validity).

III. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES:

An arrest warrant is defined as written order, issued by a judge or magistrate in the name of the state, naming a person charged with a crime, directed to a proper law enforcement officer, and commanding the officer to arrest and bring before the court the body of the person named therein.

An arrest warrant is "executed" by arresting the person named in the warrant. In this directive, the term "serving" shall be used interchangeably with "executing."

The following is a list and brief description of the nine types of arrest warrants that are most commonly encountered by police:

- Complaint Warrant: Most arrest warrants are issued under a complaint filed in district court, alleging that an arrestable offense has been committed.
- *Indictment Warrant:* A judge of the Superior Court may issue an arrest warrant when the grand jury issues an indictment. Normally, bail is not available.

- *Bench Warrant:* This type of warrant is sometimes referred to as a "capias" warrant. It is used when a person who has been served with a summons to appear in court fails to do so; the judge may issue a bench warrant.
- *Default Warrant:* These warrants are issued when a person fails to appear in court after having been released on personal recognizance or bail. Normally, bail is not available on this type of warrant.
- Alias Warrant: If a warrant is returned to the issuing court and the accused is located or apprehended at a later date, a new warrant, called an alias warrant, may be issued for that person's arrest.
- Detainer Warrant: If a person sentenced on a given crime has outstanding arrest warrants for other offenses, the outstanding warrants may be used to "detain" the individual until arrangements are made for trial or other disposition of the outstanding charges.
- *Probation Warrant:* Arrest warrants may be issued by the court upon application of probation officials for violations of probation. Normally, bail is not available.
- Parole Warrant: The parole board may issue Parole violation warrants.
- *Governor's Warrant:* The governor may issue warrants for the arrest of persons subject to interstate rendition.
- Temporary or Emergency Warrant: A temporary or emergency warrant is normally sought under exigent circumstances when the court is not in session. The purpose of this type of warrant is to effectuate an arrest immediately. This type of warrant will normally remain in effect until such time as the court is back in session, when a complaint warrant should then be sought.

Police officers have a legal obligation to exercise diligence in serving arrest warrants. An officer who willfully delays the service of a warrant committed to him/her for service is subject to statutory penalties. It should be noted that no statutory time limit is imposed on the execution of arrest warrants.

Given the number of arrest warrants issued, and the limited police resources available, the police must establish priorities and exercise reasonable discretion in serving arrest warrants. This directive has been designed to provide a framework for systematic and efficient arrest warrant practices, taking into consideration the need to establish reasonable priorities and for the appropriate exercise of discretion.

Obviously, police officers should concentrate primarily on making arrests on warrants for serious offenses, arrests of multiple or potentially dangerous offenders, and in other situations meriting the loss of one's personal liberty which an arrest entails. In less critical cases, police resources, at least initially, should be directed toward providing a warning notice, advising the individual of the existence of the warrant and providing a reasonable opportunity to go to court to have the warrant revoked (See Appendix A & Section VI.E.).

With the introduction of the "Warrant Management System," also referred to as the "Paperless Warrant System," warrants issued by the court shall be entered directly in the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) by the courts. The police department will be notified of any active warrants against individuals who reside within Cambridge through CJIS. Although warrants are now being entered directly into CJIS, there still needs to be a set of procedures in place to ensure that there is sufficient accountability in place for the processing and execution of arrest warrants.

WARRANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:² IV.

- **General Background:** The Warrant Management System Reform Law was Α. adopted for the purpose of reforming the arrest and default warrant system in Massachusetts by creating an electronic "Warrant Management System," through which instant access to warrant information will be available to courts, police departments, and the Registry of Motor Vehicles. The act also expanded the jurisdiction for setting bail on warrants to the court in whose jurisdiction the defendant was arrested, as well as the court where the warrant was issued. In addition, the law prohibits those who have an outstanding warrant from obtaining, renewing, or reinstating their driver's licenses. The Warrant Management System (WMS) is accessible through the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), and is administered by the Criminal History Systems Board.
- B. Maintaining the Warrant Management System: When an arrest warrant is requested by a law enforcement officer, court clerks are required to enter into the WMS the following information to the extent known to the requesting authority: the person's name, last known address, date of birth, gender, race, height, weight, hair and eye color, the offense or offenses designated as felonies or misdemeanors, and any known aliases.
 - 1. The party requesting the warrant shall be responsible for providing to the clerks as much information as is known. The law also requires that the name of the police department initially responsible for serving the warrant, i.e., the department in whose jurisdiction the crime occurred, also be entered into the Warrant Management System.
 - 2. The act does not alter in any way the standards for issuance or execution of a warrant, nor does the act alter the standards or circumstances for making a

¹ See M.G.L. c. 276, § 23A

² CALEA Std. **74.1.3** – A written directive establishes procedures for maintaining a warrant and wanted persons file, to include:

a. establishing criteria for entering notices in regional, state, and federal information systems;

b. establishing criteria for receiving information from other jurisdictions;

c. recording the information in agency files;

d. verifying information;

e. canceling information; and

requiring 24-hour access to the warrant

- warrantless arrest based upon probable cause.
- 3. The act requires the court clerk's office, without unnecessary delay, to enter removal or recall of a warrant into the Warrant Management System.
- C. Liability Protections under the Law: The act provides that no law enforcement officer who relies in good faith upon information contained in the Warrant Management System (WMS), shall be liable in any criminal prosecution or civil action for the intentional torts of false arrest, false imprisonment, malicious prosecution or arrest by false pretense.

V. PROCESSING OF ARREST WARRANTS:

- A. Confirmation of Warrant: When an officer encounters an individual who is believed to be the subject of an arrest warrant, the officer must verify the individual's identity and ensure that the individual is correctly identified in the warrant. The officer should confirm the warrant and the nature of the charges with ECC prior to placing the subject under arrest. Once an officer places a subject under arrest for a warrant, the officer will notify the Emergency Communications Center (ECC).
 - 1. If a case number has not been generated at the time of the arrest, the ECC will generate a case number to reflect the warrant arrest. Personnel assigned to the ECC should complete a CAD entry, and attach the defendant's name to the log entry. The log entry will be classified as a warrant arrest using the appropriate action code. The incident location will be identified as the location where the subject was arrested.⁵
 - 2. The ECC will be responsible for tracking and logging the time of arrest and the time at which the arrestee is transported to the police station.
 - 3. All pertinent events that take place during the course of the arrest and booking process, and the time during which the defendant is held at the police station will be made part of the Q.E.D. system through the booking procedure(s).
- **B. Printing out the Warrant:** Once an officer notifies the ECC that a subject is being arrested on a warrant(s) that appears in the WMS System, the ECC will print out a copy of the warrant(s). If there are multiple warrants against the same

CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

³ See M.G.L. c. 276, § 23A

⁴ CALEA Std. **74.1.3** (**d**)

⁵ CALEA Std. **74.1.2** – A record on the execution or attempted service of legal process documents is maintained, and includes:

a. date and time service was executed/attempted;

b. name of officer(s) executing/attempting service;

c. name of person on whom legal process was served/executed;

d. method of service/reason for non-service; and

e. address of service/attempt.

individual, a copy of each warrant must be printed out. This computer printout of the warrant(s) will be faxed to the front desk for the arresting officer to sign and send down to court.

- 1. The arresting officer will sign the return portion of the computer-generated warrant.
- 2. The computer-generated warrant is considered a "true copy of the warrant." A copy of this computer-generated warrant should be provided to the defendant in order to satisfy the requirements of M.G.L. c. 248, § 26.
- 3. The original, signed copy (return) of the computer-generated warrant will be sent to court on the next available court date accompanied by the incident/arrest report.
- C. Placing a Locate on an Executed Warrant: The ECC will ensure that a "locate" has been placed on the warrant record. If there are multiple warrants issued against the same individual, a "locate" must be placed against each warrant. A "locate" simply flags the warrant as having been served. It is the responsibility of the issuing court to cancel the warrant from WMS.
- **D. Attempted Warrant Service:** If an officer is assigned to serve an arrest warrant, the officer should have in his/her possession a copy of the arrest warrant (computer–generated or otherwise). When an officer attempts to serve an arrest warrant, that officer will be responsible for initiating a CAD entry with ECC. The information that should be captured in the log entry is as follows:
 - 1. The name of the defendant.
 - 2. Location where the attempted service is taking place.
 - 3. Time and date of the attempted service.
 - 4. The officer should provide sufficient information to the ECC dispatcher so that the comment section reflects what actions the officer took with respect to the attempted warrant service. If there are extenuating circumstances, e.g., forced entry, etc., the officer should file a police report fully documenting the incident.
 - 5. If the officer learns that the warrant cannot be served (for instance, because the defendant is deceased or incarcerated, etc.,) the officer should ensure that these facts are incorporated into the CAD entry (or police report, if appropriate). That information should be forwarded to the Warrant Management Unit principal point of contact (POC). The Warrant Management Unit POC is responsible for taking follow-up action with the information that is received from the serving officer.⁸

⁷ CALEA Std. **74.1.2** (a) & (b)

CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

⁶ CALEA Std. **74.1.3** (e)

⁸ CALEA Std. **74.1.2** (**d**).

VI. CHECKING THE WARRANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

- A. Warrant Checks of Arrested Persons: M.G.L. c. 276, § 29 requires that prior to releasing an individual from custody, a check must be made of the Warrant Management System to determine if there are any outstanding warrants against the subject. A check will be made of any person who has either been arrested or brought into the station under Protective Custody prior to the subject's release. A check should also be made of CJIS for any other warrants that may exist.
- **B.** Processing of Permit and License Applications: As part of the normal application process for any sort of license or permit through the department, such as F.I.D. cards, License to Carry Firearms, soliciting permits, etc., the applicant should be checked for any active arrest warrants.
- C. Warrant Checks When Processing Certain Types of Court Orders: All matters similar in nature to arrest warrants, such as Chapter 209A abuse protection orders, Chapter 273A Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support orders, orders to vacate the marital home, restraining orders, cease and desist orders and other court orders should also involve arrest warrant checks.
- **D. Assignment of Warrant Priorities:** It will be the responsibility of a specific officer within the Criminal Investigations Section, assigned to the Warrant Management Unit to serve as the principal point of contact (POC) as it relates to the processing, proper classification, and maintenance of the warrants that have been entered into the Warrant Management System for any outstanding warrants for persons who are listed as residing in the City of Cambridge. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, and any other factors that may have a bearing on the seriousness of the warrant, the following priority system will be used indicating Level 1 (the most serious) to Level 5 (the least serious). Arrest warrants are prioritized in a manner consistent with the classification system established by the Middlesex District Attorney's Office. A pre-determined list of crimes (offenses) is each assigned an "offense seriousness level". The severity codes (levels) range from the most serious crimes designated as Level 1 in descending order of predetermined severity to the least severe crimes designated as Level 5.

Accordingly, those felony offenses assigned a high seriousness level (Level 1) are presumed to be extradited from continental U.S.; offenses assigned a lower seriousness level are presumed to be extradited from N.E. states only (Levels 2 and 3); and offenses assigned the lowest seriousness level (Levels 4 and 5) are presumed not to be extradited (although we may choose to put offenses from this category or others into NCIC for "officer safety/no extradition)"). Entry of warrants into NCIC is done in coordination with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office (namely, the Fugitive Rendition Coordinator) in review of rendition requests. There may be instances in which a defendant's record, circumstances of the offense or other considerations may warrant a higher or lower level of rendition.

- E. Warrant Warning Letters: The Warrant Management Unit POC shall determine whether it is appropriate to send a warning notice to the subject of an arrest warrant who may reside in the City of Cambridge (or who resides elsewhere *and* is the subject of a warrant obtained by the Cambridge Police.) The warning notice will advise the named defendant of the existence of the warrant and the course of action required to resolve the warrant. This letter is designed to encourage the defendant to voluntarily surrender him/herself to the court before an arrest is made.
- F. Review of Outstanding Warrant File: The Warrant Management Unit POC has been designated to oversee the Warrant Management System and will routinely review a listing of the warrants for those persons who are listed as living in the City of Cambridge. The purpose of this review process is to make appropriate changes in the priority of the warrants (e.g., if a more serious warrant or additional warrants have been issued for that person, if he/she is wanted for special reasons, etc.), to arrange for the removal of non-prosecutable warrants and check on the accuracy and completeness of the warrant files.

VII. SERVICE OF ARREST WARRANTS:

- A. Central Control over Arrest Warrants: General oversight and coordination of the Warrant Management System shall be the responsibility of the Warrant Management Unit POC. Oversight of the execution, cancellation or recall of warrants shall be coordinated by the Warrant Management Unit POC in collaboration with ECC's principal point of contact. All arrest warrants that are received through the court will be channeled through the Warrant Management Unit POC, which will prioritize each warrant consistent with the classification system established by the Middlesex District Attorney's Office. Arrest warrants that are received after court hours or through other authorities will be directed to the attention of the Warrant Management Unit POC for processing, unless there is an urgency to serve the warrant immediately. In any event, the Warrant Management Unit POC will be notified of all arrest warrants received by this department.
- **B. Statutory Authority:** Any person authorized to serve criminal process in any county may be directed to take an individual into custody on the basis of an arrest warrant. A valid arrest warrant may be served anywhere in the Commonwealth by a sworn police officer without regard to the county which issued it. Therefore, police officers have the authority to move beyond their jurisdictional boundaries to any place within the state in order to apprehend a person named in an arrest warrant.

⁹ See M.G.L. c. 276, § 23; M.G.L. c. 218, § 37; & Mass. R. Crim. P. 6(2)

C. Serving Warrants on Private Property/The Knock and Announce Rule: ¹⁰ To serve an arrest warrant on private property, police officers must first knock and announce their authority and purpose, and wait a reasonable period of time to be admitted before attempting a forcible entry. The reasons for the knock and announce rule are to decrease the potential for violence, to protect privacy rights, and to prevent unnecessary damage to homes. If a reasonable time has passed and the officers have not been voluntarily admitted, and there is a reasonable belief that the wanted person is on the premises, the officers may use whatever force is reasonably necessary to gain entry.

Note: The knock and announce rule applies only to forcible entry. *Peaceful* entry gained by an unthreatening ruse, such as by deceiving the suspect into voluntarily opening the door, is permissible.

- **D. Forced Entry**: Officers should not force entry to serve an arrest warrant without prior authorization of the sector sergeant, unless there are exigent circumstances. Once authority has been granted, the least amount of force that will accomplish an entrance should always be used. A forced entry should not be attempted unless one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - 1. The charges for which the person is being arrested are relatively serious in nature, i.e., a crime of violence or weapons charge.
 - 2. There is a strong likelihood that the suspect will avoid execution of the warrant if a forced entry is not made.
 - 3. The subject of the warrant is known by police officers to be dangerous and poses a threat to others.
 - 4. There are specific instructions to execute the warrant in this fashion.

Note: Anytime a forced entry is made to execute a warrant arrest a report should be filed related to the CAD entry for warrant service.

E. Authority for "NO-KNOCK" Entries: Police may obtain a "no-knock" warrant from the court when they establish probable cause to believe that: evidence will be destroyed or the suspect will escape; or there is a strong possibility that announcing their presence will result in violent resistance threatening the safety of police or others.

When armed with a no-knock warrant, police have a duty to reappraise the scene of the warrant's execution. If the circumstances actually encountered turn out to

CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

¹⁰ Officers must have a reasonable basis to believe that the subject of the arrest warrant will be present at the premises where the arrest warrant is to be executed, whether it is the subject's residence or that of a third party. *Commonwealth* v. *Gentile*, 466 Mass. 817 (2014); *Commonwealth* v. *Tatum*, 466 Mass. 45 (2013) If the arrest warrant is executed at a third party's residence, a search warrant should also be obtained absent exigent circumstances. Although only the third party owner has standing to contest the lack of a search warrant, see *Commonwealth* v. *Allen*, 28 Mass. App. Ct. 589, 592 (1990), it is nonetheless advisable before entering a third party dwelling due to the heightened expectation of privacy of the owner and exposure to potential evidence therein. See *Steagald* v. *United States*, 451 U.S. 204, 212-213 (1981).

be less exigent than expected, police may be required to knock and announce themselves notwithstanding the terms of the warrant. The changed circumstances would render ineffective the judge or magistrate's decision that a no-knock entry was justified.

Massachusetts also recognizes the "Useless Gesture" exception to the knock and announce rule in *very* limited circumstances. There is no violation of the knock and announce rule where the facts known to the officers would justify them in being virtually certain that the occupant already knows the police officer's identity and purpose, or that the suspect would not have heard the announcement of purpose. The useless gesture exception may also apply when the police enter under the emergency aid exception to the warrant requirement, for example, where occupants of a home are fighting and oblivious to the police presence. Further, violation of the "no-knock" rule may require that the evidence that has been seized, be suppressed.

F. Applying for "NO-KNOCK" Arrest Warrants: If at the time police make application for an arrest warrant, they possess probable cause to believe that dispensing with the knock and announce rule may be necessary, they should so inform the magistrate, state their reasons, and ask that the arrest warrant be marked "No- Knock and Announce Warrant."

A defendant is entitled to suppression of the evidence seized pursuant to a "no-knock" search where the officer had knowledge or information available that would have justified dispensation with the rule, but did not present the evidence to the issuing magistrate. However, when the police seek to execute the "no-knock" warrant, they must also reappraise the situation at that time. If the reasons or circumstances that justified issuance of the no-knock warrant no longer exist at the time of entry, then they must follow the normal knock and announce procedure.

- G. Temporary or Emergency Warrants: Upon receipt of a temporary or emergency warrant, every effort should be made to execute the warrant as soon as possible. If the warrant cannot be executed by the time court returns back to session, arrangements must be made to re-apply for a complaint warrant. A copy of the warrant should be left with the Shift Commander, who will also fax a copy of the warrant to the ECC.
- H. Illegal to Resist a Warrant Arrest: In making an arrest, officers should be aware, and should so inform the arrestee when appropriate, that it is illegal to resist an arrest regardless of whether the arrest is later determined to have been improper. An arrestee has no right to use force to resist even an illegal arrest if the arrest is based on a valid arrest warrant (unless the officer making the arrest is

¹¹ See *Commonwealth v. Antwine*, 417 Mass. 637, 639-40 (1994); *Commonwealth v. Herring*, 66 Mass. App. Ct. 360, 364-65 (1994)

¹² See *Brigham City* v. *Stuart*, 126 S. Ct. 1943, 1949 (2006).

using excessive force).

- I. Notification to the Defendant: When an officer arrests a person named in an arrest warrant, the officer must inform the accused of the existence of the arrest warrant and of the offense(s) charged. The officer should show the warrant (computer generated copy of the warrant) to the arrestee. If the officer does not have the actual warrant in his/her possession, the officer should explain that the arrestee will be shown the original warrant at the police station. The arresting officer should show the warrant to the arrestee as soon as it is safe to do so. An officer who refuses to answer the arrestee's questions as to the reason for the arrest, or who answers falsely, or who neglects to exhibit the warrant is subject to statutory penalties. However, the officer need not have the warrant in his/her possession when the officer makes the arrest. The preferred practice is for the officer to present a copy of the warrant to the named defendant at the time of service.
- **J. Investigative Detentions:** If an officer encounters a person in an unexpected manner and the officer has reasonable grounds to believe there is an arrest warrant for that person, the officer may detain that person for a reasonable amount of time to make inquiries and to request a warrant check.
- **K.** Use of Warrants in Seeking Suspects: If police are seeking a suspect for an offense, they may use an outstanding arrest warrant for another offense to locate and arrest that person. Once arrested under the warrant, a full search incident to that arrest should be made, as is the case for any arrest.
- L. Warrant Arrests Preferred: Officers should be aware that an arrest is more likely to be upheld by the courts if the arrest was made pursuant to an arrest warrant. Courts are unlikely to exclude evidence obtained during an arrest made pursuant to a warrant even if it is later determined by a court that there was insufficient probable cause to arrest, or that the arrest warrant suffered from some technical deficiency. Thus, any evidence obtained may be admissible against the arrestee, even though the arrest, itself, is later declared illegal.

Note: Although the U.S. Supreme Court has so ruled in cases which deal with evidence obtained during execution of defective search warrants, not arrest warrants, the reasoning and results of both cases would seem to be applicable to evidence obtained during execution of a defective arrest warrant as well - so long as the officer reasonably believed the warrant to be valid. However, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has yet to adopt such a good faith rule for defective warrants.

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¹³ Mass. R.Crim. P. 6(3)

¹⁴ See M.G.L. c. 263, § 1

- General Procedures Following a Warrant Arrest: 15 Whenever an officer Μ. makes an arrest based upon a warrant, that officer is still required to adhere to the booking procedures that have been established for the Department. In addition, the arresting officer is charged with the following responsibilities (refer to *Policy* #665 – Detainee Booking Process):
 - 1. After an arrest is made on a warrant, the officer is required to fill in the appropriate sections of the warrant and otherwise complete the "return" of the warrant.
 - 2. The arresting officer is required to complete an Incident Report, which fully documents the circumstances under which the warrant arrest was made, any notable events or incidents that may have taken place during the course of the arrest and the subsequent processing of the arrestee. Also incorporated into the Incident Report is the following information:
 - a. date and time the warrant service was executed;
 - b. names of the officers involved in the execution of the warrant arrest:
 - c. full name and identifiers of the individual who was arrested;
 - d. method of service; and
 - e. address where the warrant was executed.
 - 3. Ensure that the ECC places a "locate" on the warrants in the Warrant Management System.
 - 4. The completed arrest warrant is to be submitted along with the arresting officer's police report and completed booking forms. A copy of the completed arrest warrant should be made part of the department's records.
- N. Arrests Made on Out of Jurisdiction Warrants: With the enactment of the Warrant System Reform Law, a warrant issued within the Commonwealth may be processed within the local District Court where the defendant was arrested regardless of where the warrant may have been issued. This generally means that once a subject is arrested by officers of this department, the subject will be processed and permitted access to bail as though the warrant had been issued by the local District Court.
 - 1. Felony and Certain Misdemeanor Warrants: 16 The Warrant Management System Reform Law allows that persons arrested on a default warrant for a felony or misdemeanor punishable by more than 100 days may be brought before the court that issued the warrant or before the court that has jurisdiction over the place where the person was arrested. The arrestee may be released on bail or recognizance only by a justice of either court. If a warrant is outstanding for a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for one hundred

¹⁵ CALEA Std. **74.1.2** (a); (b); & (c)

¹⁶ M.G.L. c 276, § 29

- days or less, the person may be released on bail or recognizance by a person authorized to admit to bail.
- 2. Serving Warrants Outside of Jurisdiction: Although the law allows any sworn officer to arrest any person at any place within the Commonwealth, providing that the officer is aware of an outstanding warrant on that person, it is the preference of this department that the agency having jurisdiction actually make the arrest. There may be situations where it may be preferable for an officer to make an arrest in another jurisdiction; generally that officer should still work through the agency having jurisdiction in the city or town where the arrest is to be made. Whenever an officer makes a warrant arrest outside of Cambridge, the officer is still required to submit a complete report detailing the circumstances of the arrest.
- 3. Status of warrants for outside the state: Police officers from this state have no arrest powers on a warrant originating from another state. If an officer is aware of a person who is the subject of an arrest warrant that is living out of state or outside the United States, the officer shall notify the District Attorney of the county having jurisdiction of the warrant for assistance and guidance in this matter.