National Criminal Justice Reference Service

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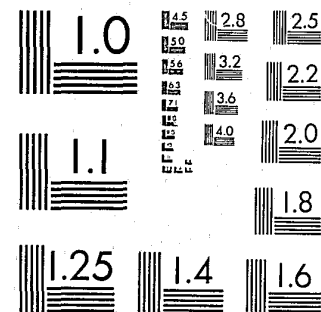
MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

National Institute of Justice
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20531

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OPERATION IDENTIFICATION

PROGRAM GUIDE

Office of Crime Prevention
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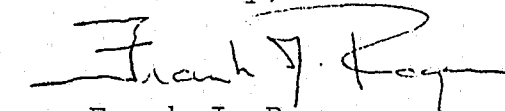457-1261

August 22, 1978

To The Citizens of New York State:

The identification, recovery, and return of lost and stolen
property has long been a concern of the Division of Criminal
Justice Services. Through the Bureau for Municipal Police and
Office of Crime Prevention, this Operation I.D. program guide
has been developed to answer this problem.

Herein you will find an explanation of the program, how it
works, and can best be implemented. The guide is the product
of many hours of research and preparation and may well set the
trend for expanded Operation I.D. programs throughout the United
States.

We hope it will serve you well.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Rogers
Commissioner

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PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

The following is a brief summary of what Operation I.D. in New York consists of, how it works, and why it was designed as it was. Both administration and staff of any implementing agency should make sure that they completely understand how this program operates; this guide will help them to do so.

The Heart of Operation I.D.

Operation I.D. is one of a series of statewide programs coordinated by the New York State Office of Crime Prevention. The program is designed to discourage burglary and larceny from homes and businesses by the engraving or marking of property with an easily traced identification number. In the event that the property is stolen and recovered, the program will facilitate its return to the rightful owner.

The staff of the Office of Crime Prevention spent many man-hours researching the question of what to use for an Operation I.D. numbering system. Law enforcement, program people, and associates dealing in crime prevention all over the country were contacted and questioned about various systems.

It became clear very early that social security numbers are not traceable due to the privacy statutes, hence rendering them useless for Operation I.D. Federal laws have been passed which make the social security number a private number; it cannot be used for identification or tracing purposes. Driver's license numbers lacked uniformity and recognizability, in addition to the fact that not everyone has a

driver's license. Finally, it was decided Operation I.D. in New York State would be based upon a two-part "Owner Applied Number" (OAN in NCIC language). The first part of the number would be the police department's own NCIC (National Crime Information Center) alpha-numeric identifier, or ORI. The second part would be a department-assigned sequence number. The alpha-numeric identifier is a unique, presently-in-place, readily recognizable number that would make en-graved OAN's easily traceable to a specific police department. The sequence number following the alpha-numeric identifier would enable the police department to identify the owner of the recovered property.

The advantages of this system are many: it is based upon a numbering system that is already in use; the NCIC has assigned an ORI to every police agency in the United States; the numbers are uniform, published and widely recognized; the numbers are easily traceable and would save the de-partment administrative costs and space; the system does not depend upon computer implementation, but is compatible with computer systems.

Assignment of Numbers

Operation I.D. in New York involves the use of a two-part perforated card system (see figure 1). The cards are supplied to local departments by the Division of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Crime Prevention.

Part one of the card records the name and address of the participant and becomes the record for the police. The back of the same card has a receipt to provide for smooth

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PROPERTY MARKING TIPS

1. Don't hesitate to mark anything of value.

2. Mark items near a name, model number or serial number. *Do not mark on a surface that is easily removed.*

3. The engraver can be used on soft plastic or the hardest metal, *but not on glass.* Paint or ink the I.D. Number on delicate valuables, furs, backs of paintings, etc.

4. Don't forget to mark valuable sporting goods and firearms. *NOTE: If guns are marked, it is illegal to remove I.D. numbers.*

**OFFICE OF CRIME PREVENTION
NEW YORK STATE DCJS
Provided by an LEAA program.**

Glenville, N.Y. Police Department —

DATE _____

I _____ hereby acknowledge the receipt of an engraver from the Police Department and agree to return it within 24 hours.

Signature _____

Date returned: _____

Received by: _____

Fig. 1

(Back)

Individual Retains This Half

(Front)

Fig. 1 Operation I.D. Card

NCIC Alphanumeric Number

Assigned Number

(Back)

Law Enforcement Agency Retains This Half

(Front)

NY0465100– 12345

List property engraved with the Operation I.D. number.

MAKE	MODEL	SERIAL NUMBER

KEEP THIS LIST IN A SAFE PLACE

NY0465100– 12345

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

ZIP _____ PHONE _____

NUMBER OF ITEMS MARKED _____

**PROVIDED BY
NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES
UNDER AN LEAA PROGRAM**

loaning and return of engravers, should your department have an engraver-lending program.

Part two of the card is torn off when the engraver is loaned and goes home with the participant. It insures that the proper corresponding number is used, and provides for a short inventory as well as marking tips.

On a first-come, first-serve basis the sequence numbers are assigned, in order, to participants in the program. Part one of the cards the police can then place sequentially in a file, either manual (a box for 3 x 5 cards) or computerized. A search of the file is then a simple exercise, as only the sequence numbers change. The ORI would obviously remain the same for the entire department.

Program Operation

Administering the Operation I.D. Program itself rests solely upon the law enforcement agency. The pre-printed two-card system is of no cost to localities, takes up little space and time, and practically administers itself.

As originally conceived, the system is one wherein the cards would be available at any police station along with the engravers to be loaned. A participant would come to the station where a card would be filled out with his name and address along with a receipt for the engraver, and then be filed.

The second part of the card, bearing the same number, would be taken to insure that the proper number was engraved. The list of articles (and their serial numbers where applicable) engraved remains with the owner. Regardless of the

number of articles engraved by each owner, the total record-keeping requirement of the police department is part one of the Operation I.D. card.

There can be many variations in the operation of the above system.

1. Officers involved in crime prevention can carry a supply of cards with them and may engrave property for people upon request.

2. Supplies of cards can be left at different police stations for convenience to the public. Since the numbers are in sequence, gaps in their order, once filed, will present no problems in searching.

3. Cards and engravers can be provided through libraries, the town hall, or be a part of a particular campaign or event to push crime prevention.

4. If retaining the cards by the police for a file of participants' names and numbers becomes too cumbersome -- the police can have a policy of collecting the cards only when the participant has had a larceny or burglary occur already. Under this program, the police will have a file and the recorded numbers of only people who have reported property lost or stolen.

These and other variations on the program are workable, do not detract from the effectiveness of the system, and

make it easier to administer the program.

The Operation I.D. brochure (figure 2) further explains the use of the program and should be handed out when a participant enters the program. The brochures, like the I.D. cards themselves, are printed and provided at no charge by DCJS.

Operation I.D. warning stickers are the final part of a participant's active role in the program (see figure 3). The stickers, also provided by DCJS, are plastic and non-fading with two types being available: those for adhesion to the inside of glass and those for the outside of solid, smooth surfaces. In other words, they are available with adhesive on the front, or the back.

Care should be taken to insure that only bona fide participants in the program are allowed use of the stickers. If citizens are allowed access to the stickers without actually marking their property, the thieves and burglars won't be long in discovering this fact. The credibility of the sticker will be lost, its deterring factor destroyed, and the Operation I.D. program rendered useless.

The window warning sticker not only must assure the burglar that the property is indeed marked, but can also reflect that the homeowner is "crime prevention conscious", which can be a reinforcing factor. After all, if the citizen has taken the trouble to mark his property, the burglar may wonder, "what other measures has he taken?" Often this can be enough to prevent an opportunistic burglary.

Program Personnel

The Project Officer's duties will be many and varied:
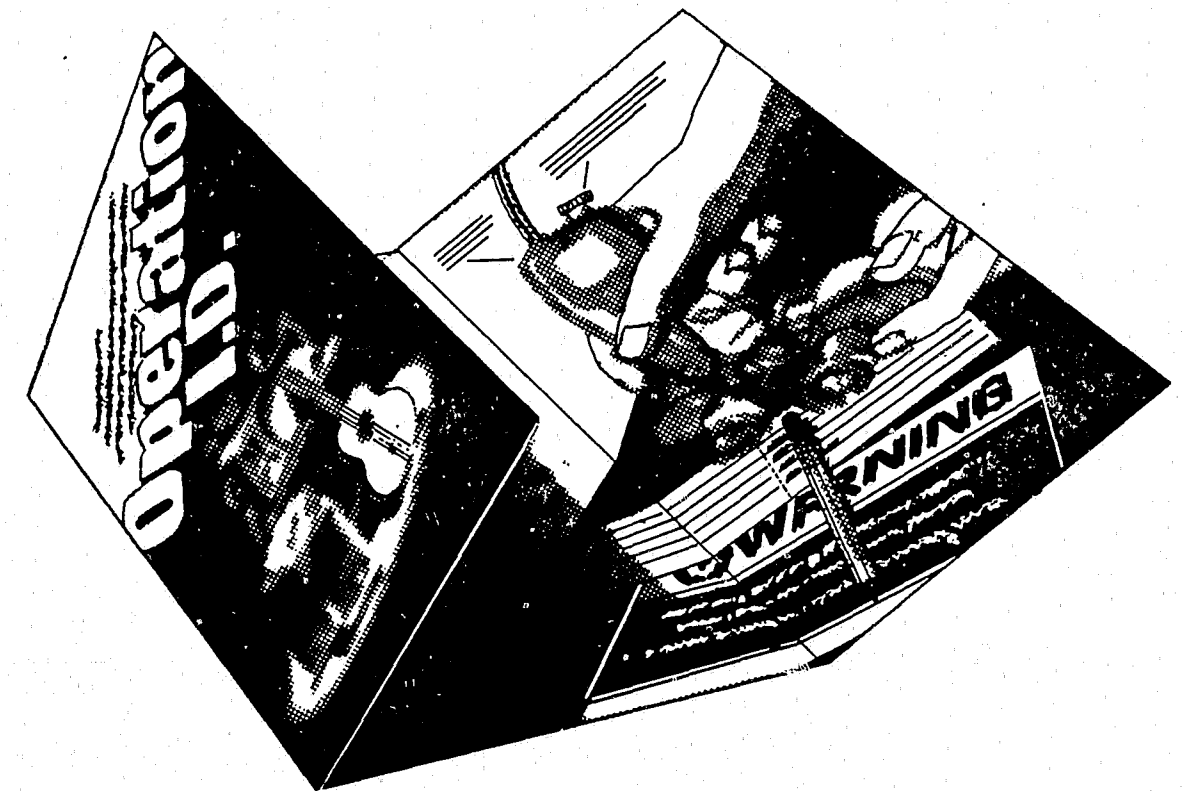
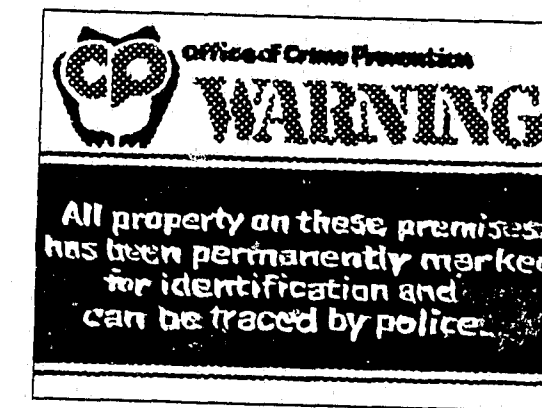Fig. 3. Window/Door Warning Decal

Fig. 2. Operation I.D. Brochure

he must be respected within the department and be able to get full cooperation from other members; he must be an administrator capable of dealing with commercial suppliers of materials and of coordinating a host of details; his judgment and law enforcement experience must be widely recognized in the department and among community leaders; he must be an effective communicator who can deal with varied public groups from business and professional people to minorities and the young; he must be able to motivate people. Motivation is the foundation upon which crime prevention programs are built; we know how to prevent crime, but what we have failed to do in the past is motivate the public to take measures which can prevent crime.

The role of the project officer must have a high priority in the department; it must not become just another program. All engagements and presentations should be fulfilled by officers on duty or on a paid overtime basis. This demonstrates the importance of the program to the department and the public, and avoids leaving the effectiveness of this aspect of the program up to the good will and self-sacrifice of personnel who have many other demands upon their off-duty hours. It must be made clear to all that this program is not a game or another "experiment", but rather an all-out effort to prevent crime, and as such it is fully worthy of being designated as "police work".

Program Implementation

Once the law enforcement agency has familiarized itself with the program characteristics and requirements, and made

the decision to go ahead with the program, enlisting community support and cooperation must be given attention. The steps outlined below are basically the same for application to a small village or town, a larger city, or even a county-wide jurisdiction.

1. An organized, structured presentation of the program should be made to the controlling board, council, or legislature, along with police department executive officials. The presentation should be made by the chief or sheriff, using visual aids to insure understanding by viewers. This presentation is to educate the political officials about the program, and in the end enlist their support.

2. Once the support of local political figures has been gained, they may be asked if they want to participate in the organization of citizens' action committees to help plan and implement this program. Regardless of the response by political figures, the same presentation (except for the financial discussion) may be made to local civic groups, and neighborhood organizations. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, senior citizen centers, Kiwanis Clubs, Parent-Teacher Organizations, etc., should not be overlooked while endeavoring to find supportive organizations.

3. Direction of such citizens' action committees

must be maintained by law enforcement people.
Committee size should be limited to no more
than ten people. If more than that number
desire to participate, divide tasks and have
sub-committees (e.g., publicity, education,
speakers bureau, etc.). Again, the law en-
forcement agency should give direction.

4. The success and longevity of these committees
will depend upon how active they are kept
and the "feeling of accomplishment" the
members have. To insure the above: don't
have meetings without specific tasks to be
done or information to give; keep meetings
orderly, structured, and as brief as possible;
keep lines of communication open and give
attention and express appreciation to those
who work hard and participate; between meetings,
make numerous contacts with members to keep
interest high and inform participants. Together
these help prevent breakdown in morale and can
result in having to conduct fewer meetings.
Often just a phone call to say hello will suffice.

Program Kick-Off

1. Contact all radio, T.V. and newspapers to explain pro-
gram and date for press conference. These contacts
are most successful if made personally and a few days
in advance.

2. Public service announcements should be considered. They

will be provided for radio use by the Office of Crime
Prevention to publicize the local program after the
first news conference.

3. Arrange the first press conference to introduce the
program formally. Involve the highest level public
officials available, from law enforcement, governmental
and civic organizations. Set up several visual displays
for the media people. Demonstrate the use of an en-
graver by a local official. Public officials may
prepare statements of support. Keep the conference
short, structured, and allow time for media people to
ask questions. Editorial support for the program should
be elicited from newspapers.

4. Follow-up publicity is important to sustain a program.
   a. Another conference one month after the first
   one can boost campaign and be used to discuss
   progress.
   b. Now pictures of participants can be shown,
   putting up stickers, etc.
   c. A proclamation by a local official can be
   made announcing "Burglary Prevention Week".

   Evaluation and Program Continuation

As has been previously stated, the success of Operation
I.D. depends as much upon the motivation of the participants
as it does upon the merits of the program itself. Operation
I.D. is not only a property marking program; it puts the
public in contact with police in a positive atmosphere, it
is a physical program where citizens can actually do some-

thing, it raises consciousness about other crime prevention
measures, it can lead to increased reporting to police by
citizens.

Operation I.D. is a program that can take many years
to achieve high levels of participation. No meaningful
measure of its success can really be made generally in less
than three years. If this is understood in the beginning
by law enforcement, discouragement and program abandonment
can be avoided.

Whatever the levels of participation and program growth,
it should be continued. As it has been set up in New York
State, this Operation I.D. program is of no cost to police
agencies. Without costs in money or manpower being pro-
hibitive there is no reason not to keep Operation I.D. going.
For millions of New Yorker's to mark tens of millions of
articles of property is a process that will take many years;
any attempt to call the program a failure in less time is
grossly premature.

END