

EXPLANATION OF THE ARREST TRACKING NUMBER (ATN) and ATN CHARGE TRACKING NUMBER

Undisposed Criminal Charges in APSIN

For a number of years, the court has been working on an effort initiated by the Dept of Public Safety to improve the quality of records in APSIN. DPS's primary problem has been a lack of dispositions for charges. According to DPS, there are currently approximately 70,000 criminal charges in APSIN without a disposition. Though the court provides DPS with a copy of all dismissals and judgments in criminal cases, DPS cannot enter the dispositions unless it can correctly match both the defendant's identity and a disposition to the initiating charge.

In the early 1990's, DPS began using the 9-digit Arrest Tracking Number (ATN), which links a defendant to an incident. Information cannot be entered in APSIN without an ATN. The use of the ATN has helped in matching dispositions to charges, but because court rules do not currently require the use of the ATN, complaints, judgments and dismissals do not always list it. As a result, DPS must contact the court or prosecutor to secure this number before the criminal history information is entered into APSIN.

Additionally, a few years ago DPS expanded the ATN to include a 3-digit "charge tracking number" to help track charges arising from a single incident. This number helps keep track of charges if they change in the course of a prosecution. Until recently, the use of the charge tracking number was restricted to DPS, police agencies and prosecutors. However, because of the installation of the court's new case management system, *CourtView*, the courts must now begin using the charge tracking number, too. The *CourtView* system requires entry of both the 9-digit ATN and the 3-digit charge tracking number for initial, indicted and amended charges.

To improve the quality of APSIN data, we are asking prosecutors, law enforcement agencies and courts to immediately begin using the charge tracking number, as well as the ATN, on all charging documents, judgments, and dismissals.

How It Works. When a defendant is charged, an officer or prosecutor must prepare a CCID form. The charging incident gets the 9-digit ATN that is preprinted on the CCID form. The CCID form provides spaces to describe each charge and gives each charge a 3-digit "charge tracking number", i.e. 001, 002, 003, etc. When the police file a complaint, issue a misdemeanor citation or arrest a defendant, they forward a copy of the CCID form to the prosecutor's office. The police agency also enters the charge into APSIN, including the ATN and charge tracking number as recorded on the CCID form. The prosecutor's office is then responsible for updating the CCID form when prosecution is declined, charges are dismissed or otherwise disposed, or new charges are added. At the conclusion of the case, the prosecutor forwards the CCID form to DPS for APSIN data entry for any charge that had a disposition of "declined to prosecute" or "no true bill". (For all other charges, DPS relies on the court to report the dispositions.) DPS then enters the prosecutor's disposition in APSIN, using the ATN and charge tracking number to match the prosecutor disposition to the corresponding arrest charge entered by the policy agency.

Likewise, when the court forwards a judgment or order of dismissal to DPS, DPS needs to match the court's disposition to the correct charge in APSIN. DPS cannot simply rely on the statute or ordinance number to match the charge to its disposition, because the court's records and the CCID forms do not always match. For example, when a Grand Jury returns an indictment on a charge not included on the CCID form, the CCID form may not get updated to list the new or different charge. Thus, DPS continues to have problems matching disposition records with the initiating charges. Use of the charge tracking number should eliminate this problem.

As a side note, a pilot project using this procedure was implemented in Palmer with the installation of the court's new *CourtView* case management system. DPS examined a sample of court dispositions statewide for one month. Palmer was the only court that had virtually eliminated the data quality errors that were measured, such as missing charge tracking numbers.

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