

# CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT FACT SHEET

March 1, 2015

## **THE FACTS ABOUT CPD'S HOMAN SQUARE FACILITY**

Recently, inaccurate and misleading information regarding Homan Square has been making its way around the Internet. The below provides facts about the facility and its uses, and the arrest and interview procedures of CPD.

Homan Square is a facility owned and operated by the Chicago Police Department since 1999. It serves a number of functions, some of which are sensitive and some of which are not, however **it is not a secret facility**.

In fact, Homan Square is home to CPD's Evidence and Recovered Property Section, which is open to the public. Homan Square is the only CPD facility where members of the public can collect evidence recovered during a now complete criminal investigation, or found property.

Portions of the facility are sensitive. Homan Square is the base of operations for officers working undercover assignments. These men and women dress in plain clothes and work to disrupt gang activity and clear drug markets out of neighborhoods. Advertising their base of operations could put their lives at risk, which is why Homan Square features little signage. Other sensitive units housed at the facility include the Bureau of Organized Crime (including the narcotics unit), the SWAT Unit, Evidence Technicians, and the CPD ballistics lab.

Like more than 25 CPD facilities throughout the City, such as district stations and detective bureaus, Homan Square contains several standard interview rooms. Most individuals interviewed at Homan Square are lower-level arrests from the Narcotics unit. There are always records of anyone who is arrested by CPD, and this is no different at Homan Square.

## **EXAMPLES OF FALSE INFORMATION RECENTLY PUBLISHED**

- The allegation that physical violence is a part of interviews with suspects is unequivocally false, it is offensive, and it is not supported by any facts whatsoever.
- The articles say a man died in one of the Homan Square interview rooms, and imply this may have been a result of physical violence at the hands of CPD officers. Published news reports indicate the Medical Examiner's autopsy report show the man died of an accidental heroin overdose.
- The articles describe Homan Square as a "secretive warehouse" despite the fact that the public is able to claim inventoried property there and members of the media have been invited on tours of the facility on a regular basis. CPD has even held press conferences inside the facility.
- One of the articles implies that during an interview police turned up the heat in an interview room at Homan Square to get an individual to admit to a crime, yet there is no way to regulate heat in individual rooms at the facility. Any change in temperature would affect an entire floor or zone, and can only be done by calling in a building engineer.

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## **What Experts Are Saying About Homan Square**

“Lawyers and local crime reporters say a widely-shared article from *The Guardian* mischaracterized a Chicago Police Department facility called Homan Square as the equivalent of a CIA “black site.”

- *WBEZ, Chicago Police's so-called 'black site' mischaracterized, February 26, 2015*

“(Craig) Futterman (a clinical professor of law at the University of Chicago who has been sued CPD on a number of occasions) says it’s an exaggeration to call it a “black site.”

- *WBEZ, Chicago Police's so-called 'black site' mischaracterized, February 26, 2015*

“Homan Square is not any more of an off-the-books location than any other facility, said one investigator who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk. Since police reports are generated on computers there, detainees are effectively put “in the system” as soon as the officer opens a computer file on an incident.”

- *Chicago Tribune, Lawyers wary of claim about Chicago police 'black site,' say abuse citywide, February 27, 2015*

“The typical Homan Square cases are “not the kinds of cases where they’re holding people for so long,” (Robert) Loeb (a criminal defense attorney who teaches at DePaul University College of Law) said. “If it was huge numbers (of complaints, lawyers) would be hearing it all the time.”

- *Chicago Tribune, Lawyers wary of claim about Chicago police 'black site,' say abuse citywide, February 27, 2015*

“... no allegations of torture have been reported in the media in connection with Homan Square.”

- *Chicago Sun Times, Chicago Police deny report of secret interrogation compound at Homan Square site, February 24, 2015*

“... the existence of the building isn’t being kept under wraps by the police: The public is able to recover inventoried property from the evidence unit and news conferences are regularly held at Homan Square when the department shows off seized drugs.”

- *Chicago Sun Times, Chicago Police deny report of secret interrogation compound at Homan Square site, February 24, 2015*

“Black sites house detainees who undergo interrogation in highly secretive prisons. But the non-descript Homan Square building on the city’s West Side is not exactly off-the-books. In the past few years WBEZ reporters and other journalists have been to the facility for tours and interviews as well as press conferences.”

- *WBEZ, Chicago Police's so-called 'black site' mischaracterized, February 26, 2015*

“... when a British newspaper published a series of articles last week alleging that the Police Department uses its Homan Square facility on the West Side as a “CIA-style interrogation black site” where detainees disappear for hours on end, the claim left many experienced criminal defense and civil rights attorneys scratching their heads.”

- *Chicago Tribune, Lawyers wary of claim about Chicago police 'black site,' say abuse citywide, February 27, 2015*

“(First Defense Legal Aid Executive Director Eliza) Solowiej, who was quoted in The Guardian piece, said the “black site” rhetoric that the story attributes to lawyers was not hers. She said she assumed the term was coined by the writer...”

- *Chicago Tribune, Lawyers wary of claim about Chicago police 'black site,' say abuse citywide, February 27, 2015*

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## **CPD'S ARREST AND INTERVIEW PROCEDURES**

Arrest and interview procedures are matters of people's most basic rights and CPD takes these rights extremely seriously. Any CPD personnel violating the established rules would be subject to immediate disciplinary investigation.

In recent years, CPD has instituted a series of internal initiatives and reforms to ensure past incidents of police misconduct – for which we have zero tolerance – are never repeated. Since 2011, CPD has instituted new training, mandatory for all officers, around fairness and respect. CPD's procedures for detentions and interviews have also been improved. Under a new state law, all interviews in homicide cases have been recorded on video since 2005.

Over the past three and a half years, CPD has also become likely the most transparent major urban police department in the country, providing the public significant amounts of crime and arrest data on the City's data portal. In addition, CPD also provides the public access to all Department Directives at: <http://directives.chicagopolice.org/directives/>

The arrest, detention and interview procedures mandated for all officers can be found in the directives database. online To summarize:

- Officers will take an arrestee to the appropriate holding facility, notify a supervisor, and report the name, circumstances and probable charge
- Officers will ensure all arrest documentation is properly completed
- Officers will create an Automated Arrest Report, which identifies the location of the arrestee
- Arrestees held at a facility that is not a district station (like Homan Square), will be transported to the appropriate district holding facility and a supervisor will “visually inspect arrestees and the conditions of the processing location to verify the arrestees’ well-being”
- Arrestees will be booked, charged, and made eligible for bond without delay. Investigation or interrogation of an arrestee will not delay the booking process.
  - Processing will be expedited so the arrestee will not be detained longer than necessary
  - Force or coercion will never be used in seeking confessions or admissions
  - Under no circumstances will an arrestee appear in court any later than 48 hours from the time of arrest
- Before any interview or interrogation takes place, arrestees or suspects will be warned of their rights
- An individual who wishes to consult a lawyer will not be interrogated until they have an opportunity to do so
- The individual will be informed if at any time a lawyer appears and requests to see them, regardless of the fact that the subject had previously waived their right to have an attorney present
- If it is determined at any point that there is insufficient reason to further detain an individual, the station supervisor will be immediately notified.
  - The station supervisor will ensure a Central Booking number is obtained. However, the arrestee will not be fingerprinted or photographed unless those processes were already completed prior to the decision to release