

SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

ECONOMIC CRIMES UNIT

OPERATIONS MANUAL

Revised July 2024



ECONOMIC CRIMES UNIT
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PREFACE

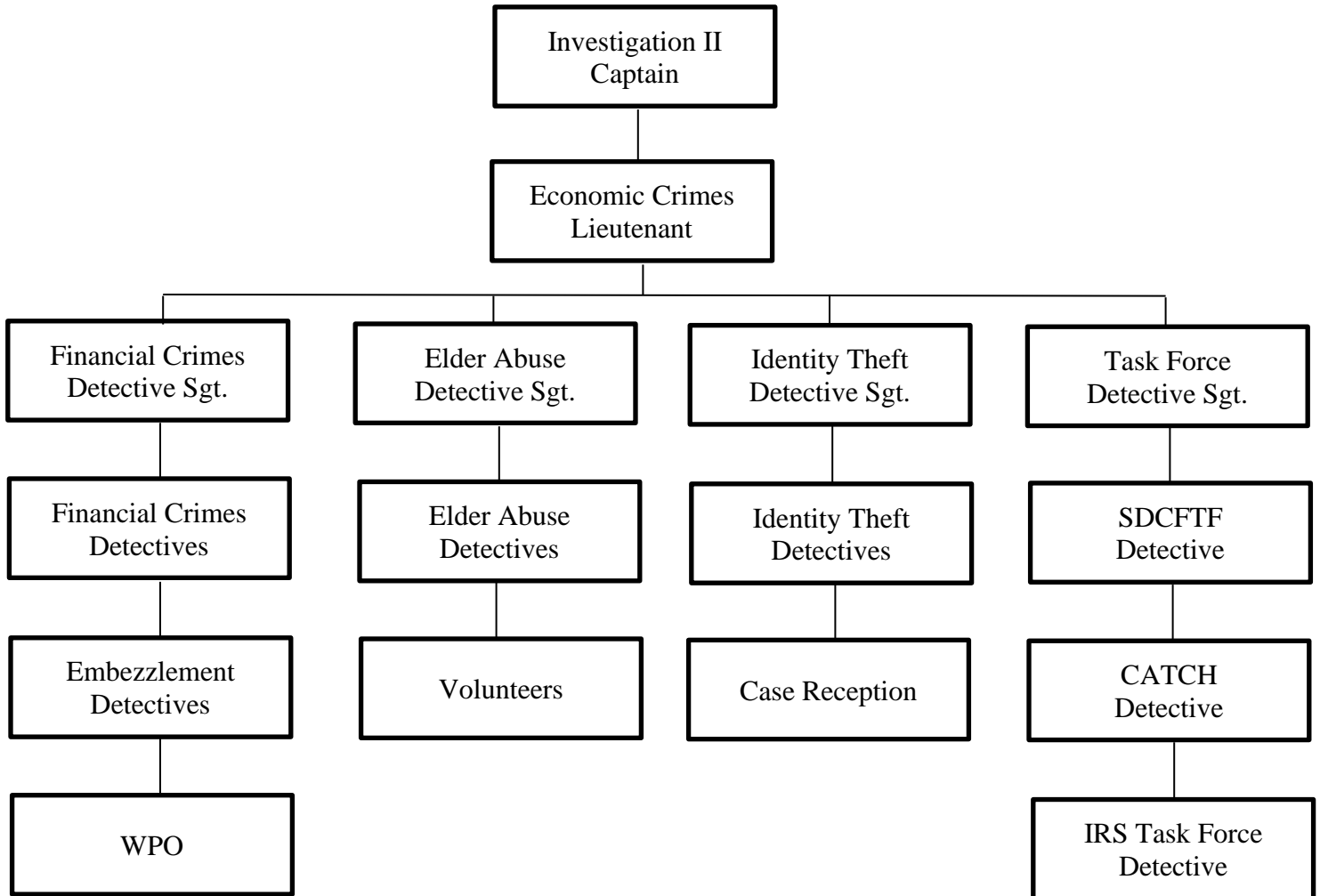
This unit operations manual supplements the San Diego Police Departments Investigative Procedures manual, but should a conflict between the documents arise, this document is subordinate.

The Economic Crimes Unit encompasses Financial Crimes, Identity Theft, Elder Abuse, San Diego Computer Fraud Task Force (SDCFTF), Computer and Technology Crime High-Tech Response Team (CATCH), and the IRS Task Force.

Information contained in this manual represents the majority of established procedures and policies, which are applicable to the efficient operation of the Economic Crimes Unit. In essence, this manual is intended to provide meaningful guidelines to Department members and specifically to members of the unit.

Unit personnel are encouraged to become thoroughly familiar with the contents of this manual and make reference to the enclosed materials and samples when questions arise.

Economic Crimes Unit Chain of Command:



POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Lieutenant

- A. **ROLE** - Responsible for overall operation of the Economic Crimes Units. Provides direct supervision of sergeants assigned to the Financial Crimes Unit, Identity Theft Unit, Elder Abuse Unit, and Task Forces (SDCFTF, CATCH Unit, IRS Task Force). Ensures unit goals and objectives are achieved; reviews and approves all unit policies and policy changes; approves and signs Department correspondence from the unit; assigns citizen complaints and City route slips for investigation; plans, prepares and submits budget requests; controls expenditures; inspects operations and maintains inventory control of the units; periodically interviews prospective new civilian and sworn personnel and candidates for Investigations II; actively participates and supervises major criminal and interdepartmental investigations within the section; and represents the Department before the media as appropriate.
- B. Liaison with San Diego Computer Fraud Task Force (SDCFTF), Computer and Technology Crime High-Tech Response Team (CATCH), and the IRS Task Force.

INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES

Refer to the *San Diego Police Department Investigative Procedures Manual*, and online training publications for the Economic Crimes and Elder Abuse Units.

OPERATION GUIDELINES

Hours of Operation

The Economic Crimes Unit's normal business hours (public) are Monday through Friday 0800 to 1700 hours. Officers are encouraged to contact the Unit directly for assistance during business hours. Investigators work hours vary between 0600 and 1800 hours, and may include select investigators working Second Watch hours.

City Vehicle Take Home Policy

The on-call detectives are authorized to take home assigned Department vehicles while assigned on-call responsibilities. Personnel not assigned take-home vehicles must receive authorization from a unit supervisor before taking a Department vehicle home. Employees who are authorized to take a Department vehicle home or use a Department vehicle outside normal working hours must adhere to the guidelines established by San Diego Police Department Procedure 1.16, "Use of City-Owned Take Home Vehicles."

Investigative vehicles will be inspected monthly by unit supervisors.

Investigator's General Duties

After receiving assigned cases, conducts investigations, prepares investigator follow-up reports, prepares investigative files for presentation to District Attorney/City Attorney, and cancels each case appropriately; assists as necessary with in-custody arrests; inactivates cases when all leads have been exhausted; maintains liaison with other units within the Department and other outside agencies.

Receives all in-custody arrests from patrol divisions; assists patrol officers in the arrest process and evidence gathering; completes any follow-up investigation necessary to present the case to the District Attorney or the City Attorney; starts pro-active investigations.

Receives in-coming tips from citizens, Crime Stoppers, and other Department units; investigates the tips and, when practical, presents the case for issuance to the District Attorney or City Attorney. Where appropriate, aids outside agencies with serving out-of-county search and arrest warrants.

Provides training to Department personnel, outside agencies, and businesses as assigned by the Unit supervisor.

On-Call Responsibilities

Detectives from Elder Abuse, Financial Crimes, and Identity Theft will be responsible for handling calls related to all three units. There will be a first-up and second-up detective assigned to on-call duties at all times. If the first-up detective requires additional assistance, with the approval of the on-call sergeant, the second-up detective will respond to assist.

On-Call is mandatory. Detectives will be available at all hours for call-outs at the discretion of the Watch Commander, Unit sergeant, and Economic Crimes lieutenant. Investigators will be assigned to a one-week rotation when assigned on-call duties. A detective's on-call duties will alternate between first-up and second-up. While a detective is on-call, the detective shall have his/her Department-issued or personal cellular telephone accessible and within the coverage area. If not within cellular telephone coverage area, the detective shall make other arrangements with the on-call sergeant to receive notification of a call.

The on-call sergeant will field calls from the on-scene supervisor. The on-call sergeant will then determine the need for a detective to respond to the scene to assist. If the sergeant believes a response to a scene is needed, the sergeant shall notify the on-call detective. The sergeant may or may not respond with the detective, based on the severity or complexity of the case.

If an on-call detective responds to a scene to assist patrol, the detective will assume responsibility of the investigation. The detective is responsible for any additional follow-up on

the case. The case WILL NOT be referred to an area station when an Economic Crimes detective responds to the scene.

Rules and Regulations

Economic Crimes personnel will work 10-hour shifts, 4-days a week. Employee work hours and days off will be determined by the unit supervisor to insure adequate personnel coverage during business hours.

Economic Crimes staff shall dress in “business casual” attire during normal work duties. All personnel SHALL dress in business attire for all court appearances.

Economic Crimes staff shall adhere to all Department procedures and policies.

Radio – Unit Designators

1701L Economic Crimes Lieutenant	
1720S Identity Theft Sergeant	1721 - 1729 Identity Theft Detectives
1730S Task Forces Sergeant	1731 - 1739 Task Forces Detectives
1740S Financial Crimes Sergeant	1741 - 1749 Financial Crimes Unit Detectives
1750S Elder Abuse Sergeant	1751 - 1759 Elder Abuse Detectives

Investigators are required to monitor the primary dispatch frequency of the area in which they are working.

Other Investigations

The FBI handles all forgeries and check cases which occur on federal property, (e.g., military bases) and employee theft in F.D.I.C. protected institutions.

The United States Secret Service investigates offenses related to government checks and counterfeit money.

The United States Postal Service is responsible for investigation of cases involving mail theft and fraud.

ELDER ABUSE UNIT

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Elder Abuse Unit strives to have a positive impact on the rising crime rate suffered by elders and dependent adults of our community by investigating these crimes and assisting in educating the community in prevention of elder/dependent adult abuse.

GOALS:

The Elder Abuse Unit will network to develop and nurture good working relationships with the community and organizations that share our goal. The unit will provide on-going training for the public, the Department and be available to officers as a resource whenever possible.

OBJECTIVES:

By maintaining liaisons with other organizations, the unit will stay abreast of current issues being faced regarding the protection of elders and dependent adults, as well as the successful prosecution of the perpetrator.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Sergeant

- A. **ROLE** - The Detective Sergeant of the Elder Abuse Unit reports to the Lieutenant of the Economic Crimes Section. The Elder Abuse supervisor oversees the daily functions of the detectives working within the unit. The supervisor also ensures training issues specific to the Elder Abuse Unit and ensures that offenses related to criminal elder and dependent adult abuse are addressed throughout the Department and community.
- B. Responsible for the direct supervision of those detectives assigned to him/her.
- C. Prepare and submit performance reports for each detective working for him/her.
- D. Evaluate elder abuse complaints and assign for follow-up investigation, if warranted.
- E. Review all reports submitted by detectives.
- F. Review all Aging & Independent Services (A&IS, formally APS) referrals and assign for follow-up investigation, if warranted.
- G. Ensure on-going training for Department first responders throughout the Department.
- H. Maintain partnerships with other units and outside agencies.

- I. Review unit operations manual annually and make any necessary changes.

Detective

- A. ROLE - The Detectives in the Elder Abuse Unit report to the Elder Abuse detective sergeant. The detectives handle all criminal fiduciary cases involving victims age 65 and over, as well as cases where the victim is a dependent adult between the ages of 18 and 64. The detectives also handle all physical abuse cases involving elder victims and dependent adult victims as outlined in Department Procedure 3.29.
- B. Elder Abuse Unit detectives are responsible for thoroughly investigating cases and complaints assigned to them, including the appropriate handling of evidence.
- C. Detectives will field telephone calls from the public and law enforcement and assist the public whenever possible.
- D. Detectives will complete and route A&IS referral forms whenever needed and/or ensure field officers have provided such notifications.
- E. Detectives will provide training throughout the Department and to the public when needed or requested.
- F. Detectives are responsible for handling all types of assigned elder abuse cases including physical and neglect cases, as well as financial.
- G. Detectives are expected to develop and maintain partnerships with other agencies, and social service and community based organizations in an effort to work more efficiently and better meet the needs of the community.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The goal of the San Diego Police Department Financial Crimes Unit is to investigate criminal matters involving forgeries, check cases, credit card offenses, and embezzlements and provide the results of said investigations to the appropriate prosecutorial agency. The unit will also assist all area stations and investigative units in problem solving efforts where financial crimes are a part of the problem, and actively seek community partnerships when starting problem solving projects as necessary within the City of San Diego. The unit provides assistance to citizens and businesses by referring them to appropriate investigative agencies where they can obtain assistance in dealing with problems not handled by the unit, such as civil matters, “Boiler Room” crimes, consumer fraud, counterfeit money, and Postal violations.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Sergeant

- A. **ROLE** - Review and assign incoming cases; maintains embezzlement assignment log including case dispositions; checks status and progress of cases being investigated; approves all fraudulent document case reports, investigative reports, follow-up reports, case cancellations, Change of Charge and Drop forms, City Attorney and District Attorney case jackets, and arrest reports; review County Jail booking log; provides supervision and advice for investigators on related work; conduct morning briefings; assists investigators in any work area when needed and field situations which require direct supervision; review problem solving projects in the unit and any projects with other investigative units, and area stations; supervises training of new personnel; conducts investigations of citizen complaints and City route slips; apprizes the Lieutenant of any unusual occurrences or cases of a sensitive nature.
- B. Provide supervision, advice, and technical expertise to unit personnel in all activities of the unit
- C. Provide needed assistance to other units of the Department regarding financial crime and identity theft matter
- D. Maintain on call responsibility for a two-week period on a rotating basis with other unit supervisors.
- E. Enforce Department rules and regulations, policies and procedures
- F. Complete related staff work; and coordinated call-outs of investigators on major crimes.
- G. Pro-active investigations.
- H. Supervision of computer crime investigations.

- I. Assign in-custody cases.
- J. Review unit operations manual annually and make any necessary changes.

Detective

- A. Conducts investigations of criminal matters involving forgeries, check cases, credit card offenses, embezzlements, and computer crimes.
- B. Assists with expertise to all area stations and investigative units in problem solving efforts where financial crimes are a part of the problem.
- C. Maintain on call responsibility for a one- week period on a rotating basis with other unit investigators. The Investigator will be available at all hours for call-outs at the discretion of the watch commander and section lieutenant.
- D. Actively seek community partnerships, starting problem solving projects as necessary, which occur within the City of San Diego.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION GUIDELINES – Financial Crimes

A. NSF/Account Closed checks:

If the case fits acceptance criteria to start an investigation, refer the person to Communications for a report.

B. Lost or Stolen Checks and Credit Card Reports

- 1. If a person wants to report a lost or stolen check or credit card, refer the person to Communications for a report on the theft of the item.
- 2. Advise the person to immediately notify the appropriate bank and/or Credit Card Company.

C. Forged checks or credit card vouchers

Returned checks or credit card vouchers that account holders have not signed, advise account holder to return item(s) to the financial institution or credit card Company declaring it as a forgery.

D. Forgery/Credit Card Procedure Requirements

1. If a suspect is in custody, notify the Financial Crimes office, Monday through Friday, 0730 hours to 1700 hours.
2. ALL evidence in any forgery-related investigation will be impounded at Headquarters. This includes: checks, credit cards, vouchers, handwriting, line-up photos and other relevant evidence to the case.
3. If the suspect entered a building to commit a forgery, charge with burglary along with the respective forgery offense.

E. Witness Information

1. Complete entire witness list with anyone you speak with that has relevant information to the case.
2. Determine if the document in question was signed in front of the witness, or was it pre-signed.
3. Verify all of your information. Confirm with the source whether the credit card or check is stolen. Document the sources of all information (i.e., bank, credit card company, or account holder), as well as the name of the person you spoke with at the business.

F. Forgery Report Requirements

1. A crime case and case number is required for all forgery-related arrests.
2. If suspect is in-custody:
 - a. Complete an Arrest/Crime report in NetRMS
 - c. Witness list. (Be sure to obtain witness information from everyone involved).
 - d. Impound evidence at Headquarters.
3. Suspect GOA:
 - a. Case report with case number.
 - b. Witness list (Be sure to obtain witness information from everyone involved).
 - c. Impound evidence at area station or Headquarters.
4. Arrest Report: List all appropriate charges in the NetRMS report.
5. Send reports through normal Records, and Property Room channels. All in-custody related reports must be completed by patrol prior to end-of-shift (submitted, approved and routed to Financial Crimes)

EMBEZZLEMENT GUIDELINES

Embezzlement is essentially theft from an employer by an employee holding a position of trust (fiduciary). Due to the length, complexity, and technical nature of these cases, a straight cash theft from a register or property from inventory would normally be handled by area command investigators. Depending on the circumstances, an arrest or misdemeanor citation may be appropriate, as determined by the area command personnel.

The Financial Crimes Unit handles embezzlements in which an employee forges documents and/or alters business records to facilitate the theft. Patrol officers shall not make arrests unless there is a warrant or authorization from a Financial Crimes detective or sergeant. All embezzlement victims will be referred to Financial Crimes for assistance.

Prior to assigning a crime case number to an embezzlement case, a Financial Crimes detective will consult with the victim to evaluate and develop the detailed evidentiary information required to support the case.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION GUIDELINES - Embezzlement

A. Cash or Property Theft - No Alteration of Records

1. Handled by area command.
2. Obtain line-up photos.
3. Consult with area station investigative unit(s).
4. Arrest or misdemeanor citation, depending on circumstances.

B. Embezzlement with Forged Documents and/or Altered Records

1. Do not arrest without a warrant or authorization from a Financial Crimes detective.
 - a. Suspect statements should be taken if the suspect is available.
2. Obtain suspect information such as photographs and fingerprints if the suspect is at the scene with police, then forward to Financial Crimes, M.S. #723.
3. Refer victim to the Financial Crimes Unit.

Patrol

When patrol is dispatched to a reported embezzlement, the patrol officer should determine whether the loss is strictly cash and/or merchandise, and contact his area command investigative unit for direction in preparing the report, if needed. If the patrol officer determines the crime is an embezzlement involving the forging of company/personal checks, the manipulation of company books or ledgers, the alterations of checks, the involvement of multiple accounts, or a complicated paper trail, the officer should contact a member of the Financial Crimes Unit for direction. After hours, this can be accomplished through the Watch Commander's Office.

Investigations

If a victim is transferred or contacts the Financial Crimes Unit in person or by telephone, an investigator or officer assigned to screen embezzlement cases will evaluate the incident. If embezzlement has occurred, the Financial Crimes Unit sergeant or the assigned investigator will contact the victim and give guidelines on how to gather information and how to proceed with their complaint. Victims are given notice that the investigators of this unit are not certified or forensic accountants, or familiar with the way each and every business maintains their books. It is up to the victim to either conduct an audit of their books by someone who is familiar with the records, and can testify to the findings, or to hire an outside independent auditor or forensic accountant to examine the books and make findings to establish the loss.

The victim will be furnished the name of the investigator assigned to assist in the preparation of their case. The assigned investigator will furnish the victim a copy of the embezzlement guidelines as outlined in the Embezzlement Letter. The report by the victim, in a written form, should contain the scope of the loss, the identity of the suspect, and how a suspect was identified. It should also contain information as to any witnesses, along with complete addresses, telephone numbers, and as to what each witness can testify. The evidence of the crime should be contained in either readable copies sufficient enough to complete the investigation, and if only the copies are submitted, the originals should be observed and be able to be produced in court. If the originals are not available, such as the suspect destroyed the originals, there should be documentation to state this and/or certified copies of the checks involved.

IDENTITY THEFT

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Sergeant

- A. **ROLE** - Review and assign incoming cases; review all appropriate cases in NetRMS including case assignment log and case dispositions; check status and progress of cases being investigated; approve all fraudulent document case reports, investigative reports, follow-up reports, case cancellations, Change of Charge and Drop forms, City Attorney and District Attorney case jackets, and arrest reports; review County Jail booking log; provide supervision and advice for investigators on related work; conduct morning briefings; assist investigators in any work area or field situation which requires direct supervision; review internal problem solving projects or those involving other investigative units and/or area stations; supervise training of new personnel; conduct investigations of citizen complaints and City route slips; complete the unit's weekly briefing report, overtime report, disciplinary report, Caseload Management report, case status report, unit funds report, and arrest log; apprise the Lieutenant of any unusual occurrences or cases of a sensitive nature.
- B. Provides supervision, advice, and technical expertise to unit personnel in all activities of the unit.
- C. Provides needed assistance to other units of the Department regarding financial crime and identity theft matters.
- D. Enforces Department rules and regulations, policies and procedures.
- E. Completes related staff work; and coordinates call-outs of investigators on major crimes.
- F. Maintain on-call responsibility for a two week period on a rotating basis with other unit supervisors.
- G. Review unit operations manual annually and make any necessary changes.

Detective

- A. Conducts investigations of criminal matters involving identity theft rings and/or fraudulent credit applications submitted to businesses, credit agencies or banks utilizing a victim's personal identifying information. Assist with expertise to all area stations and investigative units in problem solving efforts where identity theft is a part of the problem.
- B. Seeks community partnerships, starting problem solving projects as necessary, which occur within the City of San Diego.
- C. Handles on-call detective duties on a one week rotational basis with other investigators.

TASK FORCES

Task Force Sergeant

- A. **ROLE** – Supervises SDPD personnel (2 detectives) in the two financial crimes tasks forces: Computer Fraud Task Force (at US Secret Service), Computer & Technology Crimes Hi-Tech Response Team (C.A.T.C.H.) Also acts as a liaison between US Secret Service, SD District Attorney, IRS, and Homeland Security regarding major financial crimes, counterfeit currency, and money laundering investigations.
- B. Regularly brief the Economic Crimes Lieutenant on all investigations of a political and sensitive nature.
- C. Maintain and update as needed all task force Memorandum of Understandings (M.O.U.) on an annual basis.
- D. Assist in preparing, approving, and facilitating the approval of all fiscal reimbursement requests between the different federal task force agencies and SDPD Fiscal.
- E. Review and assign incoming cases; approves all fraudulent document case reports, investigative reports, follow-up reports, case cancellations, Change of Charge and Drop forms, City Attorney and District Attorney case jackets, and arrest reports; provides supervision and advice for investigators on related work; assists investigators in any work area when needed and field situations which require direct supervision; review problem solving projects in the unit and any projects with other investigative units, and area stations; completes weekly case status report, and arrest log.
- F. Provide needed assistance to other units of the Department regarding financial crime and identity theft matter.
- G. Maintain 24/7 on-call responsibility.
- H. Enforce Department rules and regulations, policies and procedures
- I. Complete related staff work; and coordinated call-outs of investigators on major crimes.
- J. Pro-active investigations.
- K. Prepare a weekly report to the unit lieutenant updating him/her on daily activities.

Task Force Detectives

Conduct investigations following standards detailed in the MOU of the task force the detective is assigned to.

MOST COMMONLY USED SECTIONS

Checks

470(d) PC, Forgery (Felony)

Person with the intent to defraud falsely makes, alters, forges, counterfeits or utters (hands the check to another), publishes, passes or falsely makes, alters, forges, counterfeits a bank bill (*if counterfeit money, Secret Service will handle*), note, check, receipt, etc.

475(b) PC, Fraudulent Possession of a Blank or Incomplete Check (Felony)

Person has in his/her possession with the intent to defraud a blank or unfinished check, money order, or traveler's check.

475(c) PC, Fraudulent Possession of a Completed Check (Felony)

Person has in his/her possession with the intent to defraud a completed check, money order, or traveler's check. *The "C" section includes passing the item.*

476 PC, Passing or Possessing a Fictitious Check (Felony)

Person makes, utters, passes, possesses with the intent to defraud known fictitious check.

476a(a) PC, Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) or Account Closed Check (Felony)

Person with intent to defraud passes checks, which are drawn on a closed account or an account with insufficient funds.

Credit Cards

484f(b) PC, Access Card Forgery (Felony)(Any card that gives you access to cash, merchandise, or service.)

Any person other than the cardholder with the intent to defraud signs the name of another to a credit card, sales slip, voucher, or sales draft. (Include the hotel register when accompanied by voucher, return slips, etc.)

484e(a) PC, Theft of a Credit Card (Felony)

(Possession in wallet is sufficient) Any person who acquires an access card without the cardholder's consent with the intent to use, sell or transfer it, is guilty of grand theft.

484e(b) PC, Possession of Four or More Credit Cards (Felony)

Every person other than the issuer, who within any 12 month consecutive period, acquires access cards issued in the names of four or more persons.

484e(c) PC, Theft of a Credit Card (Misdemeanor)

Every person who sells, transfers, conveys, or receives an access card with the intent to defraud, or who acquires an access card with the intent to use it fraudulently, is guilty of petty theft.

484g PC, Fraudulent use of access cards or account information (Felony)

Any person who signs his own name purporting to be the cardholder or purporting to be an agent of the cardholder, saying that they have the permission of the cardholder (may have a forged note from the “cardholder”) with the intent to defraud, etc.

Elder Abuse Charges

368(b)(1) PC, (Felony)

Injury LIKELY to cause Great Bodily Injury or Death, Physical, Mental, Emotional/Psychological, Threats/Intimidation.

368 (C) PC, (Misdemeanor)

Injury (not GBI) Physical, Mental, Emotional/Psychological, Threats/Intimidation

368(f) PC, (Felony)

False Imprisonment

243.25 PC, (Wobbler)

Battery on an Elder

368(d) PC, (Felony, Misdemeanor)

NON-Caretaker Theft or Embezzlement: More than \$950.00 (F), Less than \$950.00 (M)

368(e) PC, (Felony, Misdemeanor)

Caretaker Theft or Embezzlement: More than \$950.00 (F), Less than \$950.00 (M)

Identity Theft

530.5(a) PC, False Personation

Every person who willfully obtains personal identifying information, of another person, and uses that information for any unlawful purpose.

530.5(c)(1) PC, Possession Personal Identifying Information

Every person who, with the intent to defraud, acquires or retains possession of the personal identifying information of another person.

530.5(c)(2) PC, Possession Personal Identifying Information

Every person who, with the intent to defraud, acquires or retains possession of the personal identifying information of another person. Felony with prior conviction.

530.5(c)(3) PC, Possession Personal Identifying Information (10 or more persons)

Every person who, with the intent to defraud, acquires or retains possession of the personal identifying information, of 10 or more other persons is guilty of a public offense.