

CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT SEARCH WARRANTS – 2025 UPDATE



The Chicago Police Department's (CPD) search warrant policy is outlined in Special Order S04-19, "Search Warrants." This document is designed to provide an update on CPD's search warrants, respond to recent community feedback on the search warrant policy, and identify additional revisions to the new draft search warrant Special Orders.

In May of 2021, CPD issued a revised search warrant policy that incorporated significant community feedback. The revisions were the result of the feedback CPD gathered through community engagement efforts with the Chicago community, community stakeholders, and those with live experiences.

The reforms made to CPD's search warrant policy at that time are still in place.

- AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION will be conducted to VERIFY AND CORROBORATE information used to develop the search warrant.
- A CPD DEPUTY CHIEF or above MUST APPROVE residential search warrants for locations where occupants may be present.
- "No-Knock" search warrants ARE LIMITED to only when there is a DANGER TO LIFE OR SAFETY and MUST BE APPROVED by a CPD BUREAU CHIEF.
- Efforts will be made to IDENTIFY AND PLAN FOR VULNERABLE PERSONS (e.g., children) present at the search warrant location.
- A LIEUTENANT OR ABOVE and a FEMALE OFFICER will be ON THE SCENE for all residential search warrants.
- ALL OFFICERS serving a search warrant will:
 - treat all persons with the COURTESY and DIGNITY which is inherently due every person.
 - be COURTEOUS, RESPECTFUL, AND PROFESSIONAL.
 - WEAR AND ACTIVATE A BODY-WORN CAMERA.
- ALL "WRONG RAIDS" are subject to a MISCONDUCT INVESTIGATION and a CRITICAL INCIDENT REVIEW.

CPD'S PROPOSED SEARCH WARRANT POLICY

For ease of review, comprehension, reference, and training, CPD has reworked the current search warrant policy into a suite of topic-specific draft directives, that includes the identified revisions and reforms, consisting of the following:

- **S04-19 Search Warrants** – outlines the overall search warrant policies with an emphasis on de-escalation, minimizing trauma, respectful and equitable treatment, and data transparency.
- **S04-19-01 Search Warrant Development, Review, and Approval** – outlines the responsibilities and processes for the search warrant development, investigation, review, and approval.
- **S04-19-02 Search Warrant Service** – outlines the requirements for the search warrant pre-planning session, the service of search warrants, and the collection of evidence.
- **S04-19-03 Search Warrant Post-Service Documentation and Review** – outlines the requirements for the search warrant post-service documentation and administrative review of search warrants, including the review of "wrong raids."

Chicago Police Department		Special Order S04-19
SEARCH WARRANTS		
ISSUE DATE:	07 February 2025	EFFECTIVE DATE:
RESCINDS:	18 December 2022 Version	
INDEX CATEGORY:	04 - Preliminary Investigations	
CALEA:		
I. PURPOSE		
This directive:		
A.	outlines the Department policy for developing, obtaining, reviewing, serving, and returning search warrants.	
B.	defines terms associated with the development and service of search warrants.	
C.	outlines the requirements and restrictions for No-Knock Search Warrants.	
D.	discontinues the use of the Search Warrant Data form (CPD-41,703).	
E.	introduces the Electronic Search Warrant (ESW) application, which is utilized to document the creation, submission, review, approval, and retention of the following Department forms:	

As part of CPD's ongoing mission to grow trust and build partnerships within the communities it serves, CPD now invites the community to review and provide feedback on the revised drafts of the search warrant directives at:
<https://www.chicagopolice.org/policy-review/cpd-search-warrants-february-2025/>.



Where can I find CPD’s Search Warrant Policy and Revised Drafts?

- CPD’s current search warrant policy, Special Order S04-19, “Search Warrants,” is available on CPD’s Department Directives System website located at <http://directives.chicagopolice.org/>.
- CPD’s draft search warrant and other policies that are posted for public comment are available on CPD’s Transform website located at <https://home.chicagopolice.org/transform/>.

SEARCH WARRANTS IN CHICAGO

➤ **A search warrant is a court order that is reviewed, approved, and signed by a judge.**

The search warrant is based on an officer's sworn statement that specifically describes the person, place, or items to be searched or seized. Once approved by a judge, a search warrant gives officers the lawful authority to seize an item, enter a location, and/or search for evidence of a crime.

➤ **The table below identifies CPD’s reported search warrant activity:**

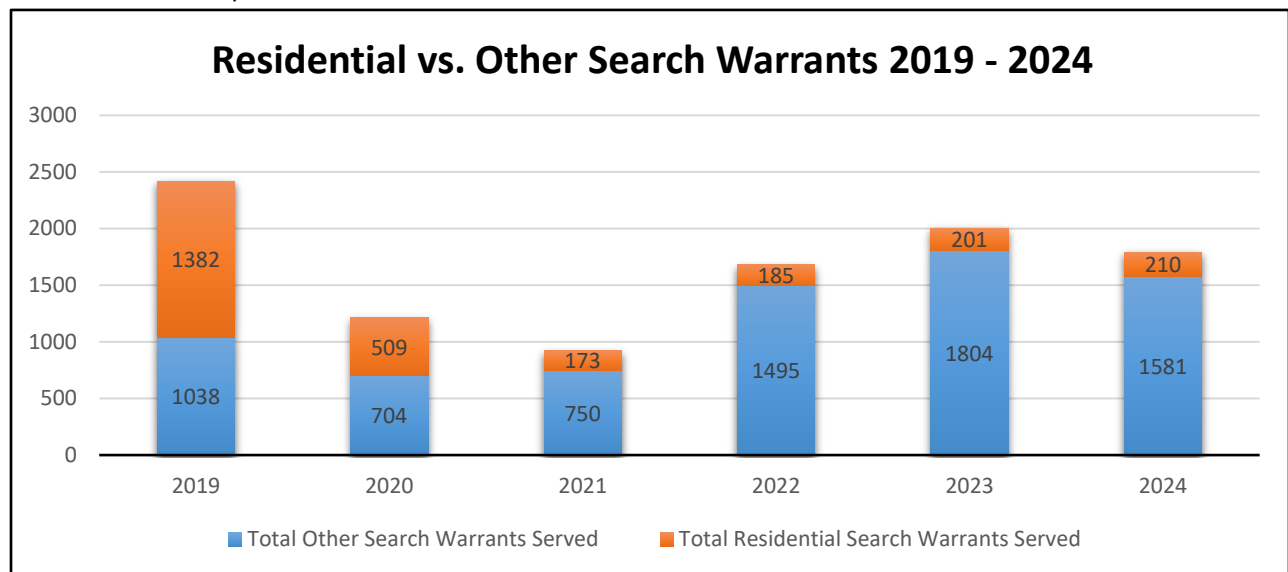
CPD Search Warrants by Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Search Warrants Issued – <i>by Year Issued</i>	2,420	1,213	923	1,680	2,005	1,791
Total Residential Search Warrants Served – <i>by Year Issued</i> ¹	1,382	509	173	185	201	210
Percentage of Total Search Warrants Served as Residential ²	57%	42%	19%	11%	10%	12%

¹ CPD has 96 hours to serve a search warrant once it is issued.

² Residential is based on the warrant location type in the CLEAR Search Warrant application.

➤ **A search warrant may be issued to recover evidence from a person, place, or item.**

A search warrant specifically describes a person, place, or items to be searched or seized and often does not involve a location, building, or residence. A search warrant may be issued to recover evidence of a crime that involves a vehicle, storage locations, digital or electronic information, (such as to access cellular phones, computers, electronic recording equipment) or evidentiary items (such as DNA from biological material or buccal swabs). A residential search warrant is a warrant that is served at a specific location where occupants might be present, such as a house or an apartment.





➤ The table below identifies the frequency in which evidence is recovered or arrests are made during CPD's service of residential search warrants:

CPD Search Warrants by Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Residential Search Warrants Served – <i>by Year Issued</i>	1,382	509	173	185	201	210
Number of Residential Search Warrants Served with Evidence Recovered ¹	1,251	477	163	168	185	197
Percentage of Residential Search Warrants Served with Evidence Recovered	91%	94%	94%	91%	92%	94%
Number of Residential Search Warrants Served with Associated Arrest(s) ¹	834	337	105	81	95	104
Percentage of Residential Search Warrant Served with Associated Arrest(s)	60%	66%	61%	44%	47%	50%

¹ Evidence Recovered and Associated Arrest are based on the Evidence Recovered and Arrest Made fields in the CLEAR Search Warrant application. The value represents the number of search warrants associated with at least one arrest or recovered evidence, not the number of arrestees or how much evidence was recovered.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CPD'S DRAFT SEARCH WARRANT POLICY

Following the previous community engagement efforts, public postings, and work with subject matter experts, including the Independent Monitoring Team and Illinois Office of the Attorney General, related to its search warrant policy, CPD reviewed the feedback to inform additional revisions to its search warrant policy. In response to the comments, concerns, and lived experiences of community members and subject matter experts, CPD developed the revised search warrant policy.

REMINDER:

CPD's revised drafts of the search warrant directives are available at:
<https://www.chicagopolice.org/policy-review/cpd-search-warrants-february-2025/>

Below is an overview of the revisions included in the newly developed drafts of CPD's search warrant policy based on the themes CPD heard during its most recent engagement efforts:

➤ Protect the Rights of all Present During a Search Warrant

- **Promoting the Sanctity of Life** – Reaffirming CPD's commitment to Sanctity of Life being the Department's highest priority, including during the service of a search warrant.
- **Emphasizing Respectful, Courteous, and Professional Treatment** – Reaffirming the requirement for courteous, dignified, and respectful treatment of all people and to comply with the Constitution, the law, and CPD policy during the service of a search warrant.
- **Accommodating Religious Beliefs** – Requiring reasonable accommodations for religious beliefs and showing respect and tolerance for religious practice, such as permitting wearing religious head coverings and clothing or possessing religious articles.
- **Producing Accountability** – Requiring supervisors to ensure compliance of all CPD members with the policy and law when developing and serving search warrants and specifically prohibiting retaliation against anyone for reporting misconduct or cooperating with a misconduct investigation involving a search warrant.
- **Respecting Gender Identities** – Requiring pat-downs and searches to be conducted respectfully and consistent with the person's gender identity as expressed, clarified, or requested.
- **Responding to People in Crisis** – Requiring a designated Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Officer, trained and prioritized for response to people in crisis, to be present on the scene of a residential search warrant.



➤ **Minimize Trauma from Search Warrants**

- **Acknowledging Search Warrants are a Traumatic Experience** – Exercising caution and using tactics to minimize potential trauma and minimize intrusion and damage to homes and property.
- **Continually Assessing the Changing Circumstances** – Modifying tactics to reduce any trauma, intrusion, or damage, including leaving the location in the same condition as originally found, to the extent possible.
- **Assessing the Need for Handcuffs** – Considering a person's age, size, actions, and conduct, and the safety of all people involved to determine if handcuffs or other physical restraints are necessary.

➤ **Verify Information Used for Search Warrant Development**

- **Assessing the Reliability of Informants** – Consider past documented CPD investigations and informant acts such as truthfulness, cooperation, attempted personal gain, or unlawful activity when determining informant credibility.
- **Requiring a Search Warrant Risk Assessment** – Conduct a documented Risk Assessment for specific locations where occupants might be present prior to submitting a search warrant for review and approval.
- **Achieving a Law Enforcement Objective** – Search warrant will not be approved unless the warrant meets the statutory and constitutional requirements, achieves a legitimate law enforcement objective, and the risks, seriousness of the criminal activity, and potential benefits of the search warrant are weighed, prior to approval.

➤ **Strengthen Requirements for Serving Residential Search Warrants**

- **Requiring Comprehensive Training** – Comprehensive search warrant training will be completed prior to applying for, approving, planning for, serving, or supervising the planning or serving of a search warrant for specific locations where occupants might be present.
- **Documented Pre-Service Planning** – Conduct a pre-service planning session prior to serving a search warrant, with a focus on the purpose and scope of the search, the location, potential occupants, and other identified risks and hazards, including identifying specialized resources needed such as language interpreters.
- **Adhere to the Knock and Announce Requirements** – A readily identifiable CPD officer will “knock and announce” the search warrant and reasonably delay entry, providing a reasonable opportunity to comply based on the size and nature of the location, time of day, and any response provided.
- **Additional Service Requirements** - Unless a specific, documented reason is approved by a command supervisor:
 - Search warrants will only be served between the hours of 6:00 am and 9:00 pm.
 - Each search warrant will have 2 entry team officers attired in uniform.
 - All CPD officers will be recognizable as police officers, by being in uniform or wearing specialized garments.
 - One marked CPD vehicle will be at the scene of a residential search warrant.

➤ **Take Special Precautions for Children who are Present During a Search Warrant**

- **Pre-Planning Identification** – Pre-planning for search warrants will pay special attention to and account for potentially vulnerable persons (such as children, the elderly, and persons with a physical, developmental, intellectual disability, a mental health condition, or limited English proficiency) and CPD will avoid selecting a time to serve a search warrant when children or other vulnerable persons are present.
- **Recognize and Minimize Trauma** – While serving a search warrant, special precautions for children will include:
 - avoid handcuffing or intentionally pointing firearm at children unless reasonably necessary.
 - avoid handcuffing a caretaker or make reasonable efforts to handcuff out of view of the child.
 - avoid questioning a child except to protect any person from a threat of physical harm and if questioning, use simple, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed communication techniques.
 - take measures to provide for a dependent child's care when a caregiver is arrested.

➤ **Increase Accountability, Data Reporting, and Transparency**

- **Review of "Wrong Raids"** – The Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) will be notified of all "wrong raids" and a newly created Search Warrant Review Board will review “wrong raids” and provide recommendations for policy, training, or tactic modifications to minimize the risk of harm to the public and CPD officers.
- **Development of New Electronic Reporting Application** – Requires data collection and maintenance for search warrant reviews and transparent data reporting and publication, including information on search warrant locations; entry actions (knock and announce); special tactical devices used; injured persons; property damage; recovered evidence; persons arrested; other persons present, including vulnerable persons; and search warrant results.