

Limit on Police Snooping

L.A. Sets Data Collection Rules

By Robert Meyers

Special to The Washington Post

LOS ANGELES, April 10— Guidelines termed "higher than the Constitution" for police collection of information on individuals and groups were disclosed here today.

Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, Police Chief Edward M. Davis and City Attorney Burt Pines joined the Los Angeles Police Commission in announcing the guidelines, which they called the most specific ever developed by a municipal government.

"In general, the political and personal beliefs or preferences of any individual, group, or organization are not of relevance or of concern to the Department," a section of the

guidelines reads. "Individuals and organizations are of concern to the Department only when their activities substantially threaten to result in public disorder."

Under the guidelines, which are tentative, "political beliefs," "sexual orientation," "drinking habits" or "ecological orientation" will no longer be grounds for police to open a file on an individual or group, an accompanying statement read.

"Today we recognize that a much narrower line (than in earlier years) must be drawn, shifting the emphasis from the holding of ideas to the performance or threatened performance of criminally disruptive acts," the statement said.

Police Commission President Samuel L. Williams said the standards "are higher than the Constitution."

William said Los Angeles police began collecting secret information almost 50 years ago. In 1973, newly elected Mayor Bradley, former police chief himself, asked the police commission to draw up new guidelines on information-gathering.

In the last 18 months, Williams said, more than 2 million cards on 55,000 individuals have been destroyed. He added that information on 2,500 individuals and organizations has been retained.

Public hearings on the tentative guidelines are scheduled for April 26.