



Kelly A. Martinez
Sheriff

San Diego County

SHERIFF

Detention Services Bureau, Detention In-Service Training Unit
Telephone: [REDACTED]

November 8, 2023

TRAINING BULLETIN

PROTESTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS at SHERIFF'S DETENTION FACILITIES

In recent years, protests have occurred at several San Diego County Sheriff's Department operated buildings. Protests are often triggered by media coverage related to in-custody deaths or other high-profile critical incidents. Protests and their supporters have adopted diverse tactics to enhance their effectiveness. One notable shift has been the use of social media to connect and organize more efficiently. Recently, leaders of these protests have redirected their attention toward detention facilities.

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department recognizes and respects everyone's First Amendment right to freedom of speech. The Department's goal is to protect the lives and property of all individuals. This will be accomplished through effective communication, planning, leadership, and the fair and unbiased enforcement of laws.

Whenever possible and appropriate, the department should strive for voluntary compliance before resorting to enforcement actions. It is important to establish a line of communication between the facility commander, on-duty watch commander or designee and the event organizer(s). This will allow for gathering as much information regarding the event as possible, including the intentions of the gathering, the number of participants, the purpose of the event, etc. Once the intentions are determined, a suggested area in which the crowd can stage should be shared with the event organizer(s) to prevent streets, and facility emergency entrances/exits from being blocked or preventing emergency medical personnel from responding to the affected facility. This will determine if normal facility operations should continue (Ex. restricted movement, facility lockdown, canceled social visits, etc.)

DEFINITIONS:

First Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Kinetic Energy Devices: Any type of device designed as less lethal, to be launched from any device as a projectile that may cause bodily injury through the transfer of kinetic energy and blunt force trauma.

Chemical Agents: Any chemical that can rapidly produce sensory irritation or disabling physical effects in humans, which disappear within a short time following termination of exposure.

Assembly Bill 48: Prohibits any law enforcement agency the use of kinetic energy devices projectiles or chemical agents to disperse any assembly, protest, or demonstration. Using kinetic energy projectiles and chemical agents to disperse gatherings requires that those weapons only be used to defend against a threat to life or serious bodily injury to an individual, including a peace officer, or to bring an objectively dangerous and unlawful situation safely and effectively under control.

IF A PROTEST OR DEMONSTRATION OCCURS AT A DETENTION FACILITY, REFER TO THIS GUIDELINE TO AID IN PREPARATION, IMMEDIATE RESPONSE, AND POST-INCIDENT ACTIONS.

In the event a line of communication is not met, alternative resources shall be used to maintain the safety and security of the affected detention facility. If an immediate response must take place, consider taking the following steps. The provisions outlined in AB48 are inapplicable **within** a county jail or state prison property.

- Establish an incident command post.
- Determine the location and totality of the incident.
- Adequately brief all personnel on the situation and their specific responsibilities.
- Appoint a scribe and videographer to document the incident.
- Determine if the facility should be placed on restricted movement or lockdown.
- Designate an interior radio frequency to relay pertinent information from the incident to the incident command post.
- Advise the communications center of the incident, any required notifications (including affected agencies due to jurisdiction), and requests for responding personnel (If necessary, request assistance from Patrol, Traffic, Detectives, Reserves, etc.)
- Consider re-routing of incoming arrestees to other intake facilities.
- Assign staff to the interior or exterior of the facility but still within jail grounds (Sally port, visit lobby, visitor parking lot, etc.)
- Assign a tactical team and deploy as overwatch of the incident.
- Establish a plan for evacuation of affected citizens/staff.
- Establish a plan for relieving personnel during lengthy operations.
- Establish alternative measures to secure the facility (Chains/Straps to secure gates, etc.)

POST-INCIDENT:

- Account for personnel and equipment.
- Preserve scene (if applicable)
- Supervise clean-up of the affected area.
- Debrief the incident as soon as possible.

The implementation of AB48 does not change the existing use of force policy for non-protest-related incidents. Additionally, it does not apply to any county detention facility. Mobile Field Force and AB48 trained personnel should be utilized to disperse a protest or demonstration outside of jail grounds.

For more information, please refer to your respective facility's Emergency Operations Manual, [Assembly Bill 48](#) and the new [Mobile Field Force Handbook](#).

This Training Bulletin was prepared by the Detention In-Service Training Unit. If you have expertise in a particular subject and would like to write a training bulletin, please contact the Detention In-Service Training unit at [REDACTED]