



**San Diego County Sheriff**

**Training Bulletin**

**William D. Gore, Sheriff**

**November 2019**



## **Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Procedures**

The Mutual Aid System is an extension of "neighbor helping neighbor." Mutual aid is the voluntary sharing of personnel and resources when an agency lacks sufficient resources to respond to an emergency or unusual occurrence. It's an all-hazards system that gets help from anywhere to anywhere at any time. Think of mutual aid as a 9-1-1 call for first responders.

The San Diego County Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Operations Agreement (Annex C) addresses the lines of communication for requesting law enforcement assets through the Operational Area (OA) Law Enforcement Coordinator. The San Diego County Sheriff (or his designee) is the OA Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Coordinator. All requests for mutual aid should be directed to:

- The San Diego Sheriff's Watch Commander, via the Sheriff's Communications Center, or
- The Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Coordinator in the Sheriff's Department Operations Center (DOC) when activated.

During emergencies, individual law enforcement agencies will operate under their own departmental emergency plans with their existing resources. However, when the head of an agency or their designee determines an emergency in their jurisdiction may extend, or is already beyond their department's resources, it is their responsibility (or his/her designee) to request mutual aid from the OA Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Coordinator. Response costs are absorbed by the responding agency or agencies notwithstanding any other agreements to the contrary, or availability of disaster reimbursement funds from another source. A proclamation of local emergency is not required before requesting mutual aid.

*The general requirements for requesting mutual aid include:*

- An emergency must be imminent; and
- A significant number (50% or more) of local resources should be committed to the incident or other incidents, prior to the request of mutual aid;
- A specific mission must be stated.



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In response to a request for law enforcement mutual aid, the Sheriff will initiate procedures to activate the mutual aid. The Sheriff will coordinate the OA response of law enforcement resources including those of unaffected operational area municipalities, the local CHP, and other law enforcement agencies including the Sheriff's Department.

No jurisdiction is required to unnecessarily deplete their personnel, equipment, and capabilities in order to provide mutual aid. A reasonable response generally consists of up to 50% of available on-duty uniformed officers/deputies.

Unless otherwise expressed, the responsible local law enforcement official requesting mutual aid will remain in charge of the incident. It is operationally essential that the local law enforcement official coordinate all actions with responding law enforcement agencies to ensure an effective application of forces. The integrity of responding forces and the policies and procedures of their departments must be maintained. Exceptions will require approval of the concerned agency. Situation reports should be shared with all interested parties and agencies, including the OA Coordinator on a timely and frequent basis.

*The agency requesting mutual aid is responsible for the following:*

- Identifying numbers and types of mutual aid resources requested
- Identifying specific missions for mutual aid responders
- Advising responders what equipment they should bring
- Establishing an assembly/staging area for responding resources
- Identifying compatible communications channels
- Designating a liaison officer to coordinate responding mutual aid resources
- Preparing a situation briefing including local maps for responders
- Providing logistical support such as food, lodging, rest intervals and equipment maintenance

*The responding agency is responsible for the following:*

- Properly equipping personnel
- Assigning a supervisor to maintain unit integrity, when possible
- Completing response rosters
- Dispatching personnel to the staging area



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- Providing relief for assigned personnel at protracted events
- Record keeping (i.e. ICS forms, timekeeping, mileage, damaged/expended resources, etc.)

The preceding guidelines do not apply to day-to-day mutual aid requiring immediate assistance, such as cover calls, back-up on traffic stops, searching for a fleeing suspect, or perimeter control pending the arrival of additional local resources. Officers and deputies may respond to these types of emergency broadcasts on their own initiative (department policy permitting) without a formal mutual aid request.

Planned events are not mutual aid incidents for planning purposes. However, even with adequate planning, some events are inherently more likely than others to develop into an unusual occurrence. The mutual aid organization (San Diego Sheriff's Department) should be alerted to this potential during the planning process. Proper planning will ensure an optimum mutual aid response should it become necessary.

All law enforcement supervisors, managers, administrators and executives should be familiar with the Cal OES Mutual Aid Plan ("Blue Book") and the County of San Diego Regional Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Operational Agreement (Annex C) and its application. The State of California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan was issued and revised under the authority of Sections 8550, 8569, 8615 – 8619, and 8668 of the California Government Code, the California Emergency Plan, and the Master Mutual Aid Agreement.

The County of San Diego Regional Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Operational Agreement (Annex C) was agreed upon and signed by each of the participating Chiefs and Sheriff in the County of San Diego. Refer to the appropriate authorities and references for more information.

The information in this training bulletin was provided by the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), in conjunction with the San Diego Sheriff's Emergency Planning Detail, and edited for distribution by the San Diego Sheriff's In-Service Training Unit. If you have any information or expertise in a particular area and would like to write a training bulletin, please contact Corporal Brent Longfellow at the In-Service Training Unit via e-mail at [REDACTED]