



San Diego County Sheriff

Training Bulletin

William D. Gore, Sheriff

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SDSD Response to School Threat Investigations

- Patrol deputies or SRO's will generally have the primary responsibility for the preliminary investigation of threats at schools.
- Upon arrival at the school, deputies should contact the school administrator to assess the threat and determine what actions the school has initiated and collect any evidence that has been obtained. Determine if there is a potential for imminent threat requiring a lock-down, student evacuations, building searches, and any additional resources needed such as K-9, ASTREA, Bomb/Arson etc. Consider the proximity of neighboring businesses, schools, or residences.
- Determine if a weapon was involved in the threat. Determine if the threats were made in person, by phone, graffiti, or through social media. If possible, deputies should determine the suspect's phone number and related social media sites as well as any identifying "call signs" or social media screen or user names. If identified, make an attempt to obtain original digital evidence such as cell phones or computers vs. obtaining screenshots of messages.
- Deputies should look for the presence of any evidence the threat might be false or might indicate the threat is an instance of "Spoofing" or "SWATting." If possible, avoid broadcasting incident information over the air unless it is immediately necessary to guide assisting units and resources.
- Obtain witness statements from school staff, students, parents, and any other witnesses that might have relevant information.
- Identify whether the suspect(s) is known and is present in the school, is detained, or is outstanding. If the suspect(s) is known, deputies should attempt to get a school information printout regarding the suspect, their address, phone numbers, and parent contacts.
- Deputies should consider whether early notification of investigative personnel would be helpful. If so:

Deputies should notify their supervisor of the need for additional support.

The patrol supervisor will notify the Area Detective sergeant or on-call investigative supervisor.

- Utilize PERT to assist with mental health evaluations whenever possible. Decisions and evaluations into the determination of whether to transport a subject for a mental health evaluation should be consistent with W&I 5150 and 5150.05 to include

credible third party information. Deputies should be prepared to assist with the seizure and impounding of any firearms per W&I 8102. If necessary, consider applying for a Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO). Sheriff's [REDACTED] can assist with this process.

- Assist as necessary with any identified Tarasoff notifications that might arise during an investigation and assessment. Departmental P&P 6.1 and 6.120 must be applied as applicable to the current investigation.
- Prepare a crime report if the elements of 422 PC, 71 PC, 647.6 PC, 653M, or any other crime exists. If the elements of a crime do not exist, document the investigation on an incident report that will capture observations and actions taken. Remember a school threat is under "Special Studies" in the NetRMS Administrative tab (Code ST).
- Conduct a computer check to determine if any adults connected to the case might provide the juvenile access to firearms. Confirm any registered firearms are secure and legally possessed.
- If an arrest is made, when preparing the probable cause declaration for booking of the minor into juvenile hall, ensure the gravity of the offense including specific threats and numbers of persons affected is articulated in the declaration.
- If a minor is detained for an excessive amount of time or taken into temporary custody, parents should be notified consistent with law current policies and procedures regarding juvenile detentions and arrests.
- Make every effort to obtain consent to search the juvenile's home, room, vehicle, etc. Obtain signed consent forms and verify all areas the juvenile has access to are searched for weapons that may be unknown to the parent. If consent to search the student's residence or vehicle is denied, consideration should be given to obtaining a search warrant. This determination should be made by a patrol or investigative supervisor.
- Upon completion of the booking process, placement on a 72 hour hold, or the submission of a crime or incident report, complete and submit a Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) on the San Diego Law Enforcement Coordination Center's (SD-LECC) website. Attach the SAR to the NetRMS case file. In addition, notification of the incident should be made to the Juvenile Services Group Sergeant, via text or phone call.

For further resources and the complete countywide school threat protocol please go to the Juvenile Services Group SharePoint located at:

<https://ssp.sdsheriff.com/LEB/MajorCrimesDivision/FPD/Juvenile/default.aspx>

This training bulletin was provided by the Sheriff's Juvenile Services Group. Please contact with any questions regarding Juvenile Services. If you have expertise in a particular subject and would like to write a training bulletin, please contact Corporal Brent Longfellow at [REDACTED]