



**Reform and Oversight Efforts:  
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department**

**April to June 2023**

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Table of Contents

**ABOUT QUARTERLY REPORTS..... 1**

**MONITORING SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT’S OPERATIONS ..... 1**

Deputy-Involved Shootings..... 1

District Attorney Review of Deputy-Involved Shootings..... 4

Special Section: District Attorney’s Decision of the Deputy Shooting of Andres Guardado..... 5

Homicide Bureau’s Investigation of Deputy-Involved Shootings ..... 7

Internal Criminal Investigations Bureau ..... 8

Internal Affairs Bureau ..... 8

Civil Service Commission Dispositions ..... 9

The Sheriff’s Department’s Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems ..... 9

Special Section: Analysis of Department Review of Category 3 Use-of-Force Incident..... 10

**CUSTODY DIVISION ..... 11**

In-Custody Deaths ..... 11

Office of Inspector General Site Visits ..... 15

Use of Body Scanners in Custody ..... 15

Taser Use in Custody ..... 16

Use-of-Force Incidents in Custody..... 16

**HANDLING OF GRIEVANCES AND COMMENTS ..... 18**

Office of Inspector General Handling of Comments Regarding Department Operations and Jails ..... 18

Handling of Grievances Filed by People in Custody ..... 19

Sheriff’s Department’s Service Comment Reports..... 20

## ABOUT QUARTERLY REPORTS

Quarterly reports provide an overview of the Office of Inspector General's regular monitoring, auditing, and review of activities related to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's Department) over a given three-month period. This quarterly report covers Department activities and incidents that occurred between April 1, 2023, and June 30, 2023, unless otherwise noted. Quarterly reports may also examine particular issues of interest. The particular issues of interest in this report are: the District Attorney evaluation of the deputy shooting of Andres Guardado and an analysis of the Sheriff's Department's review of a Category 3 use-of-force incident.

## MONITORING SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT'S OPERATIONS

### Deputy-Involved Shootings

The Office of Inspector General reports on all deputy-involved shootings in which a deputy intentionally fired a firearm at a human, or intentionally or unintentionally fired a firearm and a human was injured or killed as a result. This quarter there were three incidents in which people were shot or shot at by Sheriff's Department personnel. The Office of Inspector General staff responded to each of these deputy-involved shootings. Three people were struck by deputies' gunfire, two fatally.

The information in the following shooting summaries is based on the limited information provided by the Sheriff's Department and is preliminary in nature. While the Office of Inspector General receives information at the walk-through at the scene of the shooting, receives preliminary memoranda with summaries, and attends the Sheriff's Department Critical Incident Reviews, the statements of the deputies and witnesses are not provided until the Sheriff's Department completes its investigation. The Sheriff's Department permits the Office of Inspector General's staff limited access to monitor the ongoing investigations of deputy-involved shootings.

### **South Los Angeles Station: Non-Hit Shooting**

The Sheriff's Department reported that on April 8, 2023, at approximately 2:52 a.m., a two-person South Los Angeles marked patrol unit on Manchester Avenue observed a Porsche SUV commit traffic violations. The Porsche turned south on Western Avenue, and deputies initiated a traffic stop at 87th Street. Both the violation and the traffic stop occurred in the City of Los Angeles, near to but outside of the jurisdiction of the Sheriff's Department. The driver deputy approached the driver's side of the SUV and began speaking with the driver, while the other deputy approached the passenger's side. The deputies observed two Black men in their 30s inside.

The deputy talking to the driver noticed a handgun under the driver's right thigh and told the driver not to reach for it. The driver then put the SUV into drive and, according to the deputy, reached for the gun. The deputy reached into the SUV in an attempt to control the suspect and secure the gun, while simultaneously drawing his own firearm. The driver then began to accelerate, with the deputy's arm still inside the passenger compartment as he wrestled for control of the driver's weapon. The SUV dragged the deputy approximately 25 feet before he fell to the ground. The SUV ran over the deputy's leg as it continued southbound out of sight. The deputy ultimately gained control of the suspect's gun during the encounter, and it was later recovered at the scene. At some point during the struggle over the firearm, the deputy fired one round at the driver.

The deputy suffered non-life-threatening injuries when he fell from and was run over by the driver of the SUV. He was taken to the hospital for treatment.

At the Critical Incident Review, the Sheriff's Department showed portions of the body-worn camera video. Neither of the deputies appear to have activated their body-worn cameras until after the SUV had driven off. The cameras captured most of the incident on the buffered portion of the video, which does not include sound.<sup>1</sup>

### *Areas of Further Inquiry*

What were the deputies doing outside of their jurisdiction? Why did they initiate a stop outside their jurisdiction and what vehicle code violations did they observe that provided the basis for their stop? Why weren't all body-worn cameras activated in compliance with Sheriff's Department policy? Was reaching into the suspect's vehicle tactically sound and consistent with Sheriff's Department training? Did the shooting deputy know where his partner was when he fired?

### **Walnut Station: Hit Shooting, Fatal**

The Sheriff's Department reported that on June 19, 2023, at approximately 11:36 a.m., deputies responded to a radio call regarding a man in the street firing a rifle in the City of Diamond Bar.

Upon arrival, the deputies observed the suspect, a 30-year-old Asian man wearing a black ballistic vest and holding an AR-15-style rifle, walking away from the location.

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<sup>1</sup> When powered on, the Sheriff's Department's body-worn cameras remain in a buffering mode, in which the cameras constantly capture video (but not audio) and retain the previous sixty seconds. When a deputy presses a button to activate their body-worn camera for a traffic stop or other contact, the camera retains the sixty seconds of silent video prior to the activation and begins recording both audio and video from the moment of activation. Here, the sixty seconds of silent video captured most of the early part of the traffic stop, but audio does not start until the SUV drives away.

Deputies used their patrol vehicle's public address (P.A.) system to instruct the suspect to drop his weapon. The suspect ignored the instructions and continued walking away. Deputies followed, using a patrol vehicle as cover, and continued using the P.A. to order the suspect to drop his weapon. When the suspect reached Diamond Bar Boulevard, he walked northbound in the southbound lanes causing a civilian driver to come to a complete stop in the roadway. Deputies exited their patrol vehicles and gave the suspect additional verbal commands to drop his weapon, which the suspect ignored. The suspect continued to advance toward the man in the vehicle while holding the AR-15-style rifle. At this time, two deputies fired at the suspect. One deputy fired three rounds from a handgun, and another fired two rounds from a shotgun. After the shooting, the suspect dropped his firearm and fell to the ground. The suspect sustained several gunshot wounds to the upper torso. He was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

The suspect's firearm, an AR-15 style .223 caliber rifle loaded with a magazine containing live .223 caliber rounds, was recovered at the scene. A ballistic vest and two loaded rifle magazines containing live .223 caliber rounds were also recovered from his person. Additionally, eight live .223 caliber rounds and seven expended .223 caliber casings were recovered along the route the suspect reportedly traveled before the deputies arrived.

Responding deputies later discovered the suspect had stabbed his 61-year-old mother, who suffered non-life-threatening injuries, following an argument and pointed his rifle at a man, who was standing on the front steps of his residence.

#### *Areas for Further Inquiry:*

Did the responding deputies use sound tactics while following the suspect? Did deputies have adequate cover? Did deputies face a potential crossfire situation?

#### **East Los Angeles Station: Hit Shooting, Non-Fatal**

The Sheriff's Department reported that on Thursday, June 22, 2023, at approximately 4:33 a.m., a deputy on his way to an unrelated call observed a white SUV impeding traffic and making an unsafe turn. The deputy initiated a traffic stop, but as he got out of his patrol car, the SUV drove off. The deputy followed a short distance without activating the patrol vehicle's lights or siren. As the SUV entered the intersection of Eastern Avenue and Florence Avenue in the City of Bell, the driver began honking the horn and doing "donuts" in the middle of the intersection.

As [a bystander video](#) shows, when the deputy entered the intersection and positioned his car to block oncoming traffic, the suspect rammed the rear driver's side of the patrol

vehicle, apparently deliberately, knocking it to the side of the intersection.<sup>2</sup> The SUV immediately reversed, accelerated forward, and struck the deputy's patrol vehicle a second time, this time at the driver's door. The SUV again reversed, accelerated forward, and struck the patrol vehicle at the driver's door a third time, at which point the deputy, still in the driver's seat of his patrol vehicle, shot at the SUV.

The suspect again reversed the white SUV, accelerated forward, and struck the deputy's vehicle directly at the driver's door for a fourth time, knocking it several feet to the side. As the SUV began to reverse quickly once more, the deputy shot at the car again, this time firing more than a dozen rounds over about eleven seconds, pausing for several seconds, then firing several more rounds. As the deputy fired, the SUV slowed but continued reversing in a circle until it came to a halt on the median.

The deputy fired a total of 19 rounds. He suffered non-life-threatening injuries and was taken to the hospital for treatment. The deputy's gunfire hit the suspect, a 45-year-old Hispanic man, an unknown number of times. He was transported to the hospital in critical but stable condition.

*Areas for Further Inquiry:*

Was every round the deputy fired reasonable and necessary? What was the backdrop when the rounds were fired? Was the deputy's body-worn camera activated in compliance with Sheriff's Department policy? Did the deputy put out any radio traffic regarding the initial traffic stop or while he followed the vehicle?

### **District Attorney Review of Deputy-Involved Shootings**

The Sheriff's Department's Homicide Bureau investigates all deputy-involved shootings in which a person is hit by a bullet. The Homicide Bureau submits the completed criminal investigation of each deputy-involved shooting that results in a person being struck by a bullet and which occurred in the County of Los Angeles to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (District Attorney's Office or District Attorney) for review and possible filing of criminal charges.

Between April 1, 2023, and June 30, 2023, the District Attorney's Office issued 4 findings on deputy-involved shooting cases involving the Sheriff's Department's employees.

- In the December 31, 2019, non-fatal shooting of Frank Summage, the District Attorney opined in a [memorandum dated April 5, 2023](#), that there

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<sup>2</sup> Marc Sternfield, *Video shows driver repeatedly ram L.A. County deputy's SUV, get shot*, KTLA5 (Jun. 22, 2023)

was insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that deputy Francisco Velazquez did not act lawfully in self-defense at the time he fired his weapon.

- In the September 11, 2021, non-fatal shooting of Edwin Pizzaro, the District Attorney opined in a [memorandum dated April 13, 2023](#), that deputies Larry Aguilar and David Sanchez acted lawfully in self-defense and in defense of others.
- In the February 4, 2018, fatal shooting of Anthony W. (a juvenile), the District Attorney opined in a [memorandum dated April 13, 2023](#), that there was insufficient evidence to disprove that deputy Gregory Van Hoesen acted in lawful self-defense. From the evidence, the District Attorney concluded that Deputy Manuel Escobedo was not involved in the shooting.
- In the June 18, 2020, fatal shooting of Andres Guardado, the District Attorney opined in a [memorandum dated April 14, 2023](#), that there was insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that deputy Miguel Vega did not fire in lawful self-defense at the time he fired his weapon. Both the Sheriff's Department's investigation and the District Attorney's filing decision in the Guardado shooting is discussed in greater detail below.
- In the September 21, 2022, non-fatal shooting of Arthur Wright, the District Attorney opined in a [memorandum dated June 21, 2023](#), that Deputy Joseph Welch fired his weapon reasonably believing that deadly force was necessary to defend against a deadly threat that was imminent and therefore acted in lawful self-defense.
- In the April 3, 2020, non-fatal shooting of David Albala, the District Attorney opined in a [memorandum dated June 28, 2023](#), that Deputy Brittany Page reasonably used deadly force to defend against the imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to herself and another deputy, thus acting in lawful self-defense and defense of a fellow deputy.

### **Special Section: District Attorney's Decision of the Deputy Shooting of Andres Guardado**

Both the investigation into the shooting of Andres Guardado by the Sheriff's Department and the Los Angeles District Attorney's reliance on that investigation in [deciding not to file charges against Deputy Vega](#) raise unusual concerns that led the Civilian Oversight

Commission (COC) to inquire into those investigations and bear closer examination here.

Less than two months after the shooting, another deputy, testifying under oath in an unrelated lawsuit, identified Deputy Vega and his partner, Deputy Chris Hernandez, as “prospects” of the Executioners, an alleged deputy gang operating out of the Sheriff’s Department’s Compton Station. As [reported by the L.A. Times](#), the deputy testified that there were about 15 to 20 Executioners, as well as prospective members who are “chasing ink,” or seeking to join the Executioners, and that many Executioner members and prospects had been involved in high-profile shootings or beatings.<sup>3</sup> Despite these reports, the Sheriff’s Department’s investigation failed to inquire as to the existence of the Executioners, whether the group met the definition of a law enforcement gang under Penal Code section 13670, or whether there was evidence that Deputy Vega or Deputy Hernandez were seeking membership. Separately, in April 2023, [a federal grand jury indicted](#) Deputies Vega and Hernandez for civil rights violations and obstruction of justice arising from their conduct in an unrelated incident, including charges of falsifying records and witness tampering. The Sheriff’s Department had already opened an investigation into this incident at the time of the Guardado investigation and so was aware of the potentially dishonest conduct.

Compounding these concerns, the two lead Homicide Bureau detectives investigating the shooting refused to answer questions at the November 2020 Coroner’s Inquest into Guardado’s cause of death by [invoking their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination](#), not only to questions related to the Guardado investigation but [to general questions](#) about their assignment, supervisor, their occupation, even questions about whether there was any way for them to answer questions.<sup>4</sup>

The District Attorney’s memorandum [acknowledges](#) the allegations that Deputies Vega and Hernandez had sought membership in the Executioners, that the Executioners were an alleged violent deputy gang at the time of the shooting, as well as the credibility issues arising from the federal indictment. The memorandum notes that those “are concerning and arguably provide a motive to use unreasonable force,” but ultimately finds them “insufficient to prove that Vega lied about Guardado possessing and reaching for a gun.” The memorandum, however, makes no mention of the assertion of Fifth Amendment privilege by the Homicide Bureau detectives.

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<sup>3</sup> Alene Tchekmedyan, *Compton Executioners deputy gang lied about guns and hosted inking parties, deputy says*, Los Angeles Times (Aug. 20, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Jessica P. Ogilvie, [Morning Briefing: Sheriff’s Deputies Clam Up In Court](#), LAist (Dec. 1, 2020); [Hearing Transcript](#), Los Angeles County Medical-Examiner-Coroner, Inquest in the Death of Andres Guardado Pineda, at 74-78 (Nov. 30, 2020).



In response to direct questions posed by the COC, the District Attorney's Office stated [in a letter dated June 1, 2023](#), that it had been aware of the detectives' assertion of Fifth Amendment privilege (and in fact that its assigned attorney had been present at the inquest hearing), but they had done so in the context of "news reports alleging that they committed a crime," specifically allegations that they had tampered with video cameras that might have captured the shooting. But it noted that it had never asked the Sheriff's Department to replace the investigators who had asserted their Fifth Amendment rights, saying there was "no evidence the detectives tampered with evidence or committed any crimes" and that they "cooperated fully" with the District Attorney during the investigation and review process.

The failure of both the Sheriff's Department and the District Attorney to seek replacements for the detectives following their assertion of Fifth Amendment rights at a minimum creates the perception that the District Attorney had decided not to file charges in the shooting of Mr. Guardado long before the investigation was completed. Notwithstanding the District Attorney's confidence that the investigators committed no crime, by asserting that their answers might provide evidence that could be used to charge them with a crime, the detectives themselves suggested they may have committed crimes during the investigation. This would almost certainly provide such a potent tool to impeach the reliability of the investigation such that no prosecution would be possible unless the investigators were replaced.<sup>5</sup> The Sheriff's Department was actively obstructing civilian oversight of the Guardado investigation at the time the Homicide detectives claimed they were concerned about being criminally prosecuted in order to avoid providing information to the Coroner. The Sheriff's Department's failure to replace the detectives with unconflicted investigators, along with the District Attorney's support for that failure, deprived the public of a valid investigation into a homicide committed under color of law.

## **Homicide Bureau's Investigation of Deputy-Involved Shootings**

For the present quarter, the Homicide Bureau reports that it has 16 shooting cases involving Sheriff's Department personnel open and under investigation.

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<sup>5</sup> Had the District Attorney's Office filed charges in the shooting, the court in the criminal trial would determine whether the detectives' assertion of their Fifth Amendment right was potentially exculpatory evidence that should be admitted as evidence of their lack of credibility or bias. Because it is unusual for an investigating detective to assert this right in relation to an investigation, no precedent clearly indicates whether the court would admit the evidence. But certainly, the assertion would be sufficiently exculpatory that the testimony at the Coroner's inquest would have to have been turned over to the defense. And given that there was never any criminal investigation of the detectives, their assertion of the privilege against self-incrimination in this context calls the credibility of the investigation into question such that a judge might find it to be relevant and admissible.

The oldest case in which the Homicide Bureau maintains an active investigation is related to an October 19, 2021, shooting which occurred in the jurisdiction of Temple Station. For further information as to that shooting, please refer to the Office of Inspector General's report [Reform and Oversight Effort: Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, October to December 2021](#). The oldest case that the Bureau has open is a 2019 shooting in Downey, which was submitted to the District Attorney's Office and for which the Sheriff's Department still awaits a filing decision.

This quarter, the Sheriff's Department reported it sent three deputy-involved shooting cases to the District Attorney's Office for filing consideration.

### **Internal Criminal Investigations Bureau**

The Sheriff's Department's Internal Criminal Investigations Bureau (ICIB) reports directly to the Division Chief and the Commander of the Professional Standards Division. ICIB investigates allegations of criminal misconduct committed by Sheriff's Department personnel in Los Angeles County.<sup>6</sup>

The Sheriff's Department reports that ICIB has 68 active cases. This quarter, the Sheriff's Department reports sending three cases to the District Attorney's Office for filing consideration (in addition to the three deputy-involved shooting cases sent by ICIB, discussed above). The District Attorney's Office is still reviewing 35 cases for filing. The oldest open case that ICIB has submitted to the District Attorney's Office for filing consideration is related to conduct that occurred in 2018, which ICIB presented to the District Attorney in 2018 and for which the Sheriff's Department still awaits a filing decision.

### **Internal Affairs Bureau**

The Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) conducts administrative investigations of policy violations by Sheriff's Department employees. It also responds to and investigates deputy-involved shootings and significant use-of-force cases. If the District Attorney declines to file criminal charges against the deputies involved in a shooting, IAB reviews the shooting to determine whether Sheriff's Department personnel violated any policies during the incident.

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<sup>6</sup> Misconduct alleged to have occurred in other counties is investigated by the law enforcement agencies in the jurisdictions where the crimes are alleged to have occurred.

Administrative investigations are also conducted at the unit level. The subject's unit and IAB determine whether an incident is investigated by IAB or remains a unit-level investigation based on the severity of the alleged policy violation(s).

This quarter, the Sheriff's Department reported opening 170 new administrative investigations. Of these 170 cases, 79 were assigned to IAB, 70 were designated as unit-level investigations, and 21 were entered as criminal monitors (in which IAB monitors an ongoing criminal investigation conducted by the Sheriff's Department or another agency). In the same period, IAB reports that 120 cases were closed by IAB or at the unit level. There are 513 pending administrative investigations. Of those 513 investigations, 339 are assigned to IAB and the remaining 174 are pending unit-level investigations.

### **Civil Service Commission Dispositions**

The Office of Inspector General received no reports from the Sheriff's Department of dispositions of cases by the Civil Service Commission for this quarter.

### **The Sheriff's Department's Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems**

The Sheriff's Department reports it deployed its Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) five times between April 1, 2023, and June 30, 2023, in the following incidents:

- On April 7, 2023, to assist Special Enforcement Bureau in West Hollywood to locate a suspect who was shooting in his apartment. The Department used the UAS to clear the interior of the location.
- On April 10, 2023, to assist Special Enforcement Bureau in Artesia with an armed barricaded suspect. The Department used the UAS to locate the suspect.
- On April 24, 2023, to assist Special Enforcement Bureau in Canyon Country to view a suspect who had barricaded himself in his vehicle at the end of a pursuit. The Department used the UAS to observe the suspect's actions within the vehicle.
- On June 1, 2023, to assist Special Enforcement Bureau with serving a high-risk search warrant in Huntington Beach. The suspect fled leaving behind his firearm. The Department used the UAS to search for the weapon.
- On June 21, 2023, to assist Special Enforcement Bureau in El Monte to locate a victim of a potential homicide. The Department used the UAS to search the Whittier Narrows Regional Park.

## Special Section: Analysis of Department Review of Category 3 Use-of-Force Incident

In April 2023, the Department's Executive Force Review Committee (EFRC) reviewed a Category 3 use of force to determine whether the use of force and tactics utilized by the deputies were within Department policy and training.<sup>7</sup> According to the deputies' interviews, they were on patrol when they observed a vehicle make an illegal U-turn against a red light. Deputy A (the passenger deputy) reported that they ran the vehicle's license plate via the Mobile Digital Computer (MDC) which showed the vehicle had been reported as stolen.

The deputies activated their patrol vehicle's lights and siren to pull the suspect over. The suspect promptly pulled into a parking lot, but immediately got out of his car and started walking away from the deputies, despite them ordering him to stop. Deputy A briefly pursued the suspect on foot, then used force when the suspect resisted Deputy A's efforts to detain him. Deputy B drove the patrol vehicle to their partner and the suspect's location where they helped detain the suspect. During the incident, Deputy A punched the suspect in the face, causing a facial nasal fracture (broken nose).

During EFRC review, the investigative sergeant from Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) presented the case. The presentation included CCTV footage obtained by the Sheriff's Department from a nearby business, which showed both the patrol unit and suspect's vehicle prior to, during, and after the suspect's U-turn. During the presentation, the Office of Inspector General representative pointed out that it appeared highly unlikely that the deputies had enough time between observing the violation and initiating stop (two to three seconds) to allow them to see the vehicle's license plate and run the plate on their MDC as they described. The Office of Inspector General representative inquired whether the deputies had run the suspect vehicle's license plate any time prior to the contact. The Sheriff's Department agreed to conduct a further investigation to determine whether the deputies had run the license plate prior to the time they reported running it. Meanwhile, the panel ruled the tactics and force used by the deputies within policy.

The Sheriff's Department acted quickly. It immediately checked to determine if the deputies had queried the suspect's vehicle license plate earlier and discovered that, in fact, they had, approximately 23 minutes prior to the traffic stop. Later in the day of the EFRC review, the Sheriff's Department informed the Office of Inspector General

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<sup>7</sup> Under Manual of Policy and Procedures section 3-10/038.00, Reportable Use of Force and Force Categories, classifies the most serious uses of forces as Category 3 Force, which includes any force resulting in admittance to a hospital and or any use of force that causes skeletal fractures (with the exception of minor fractures of the nose, fingers or toes).

representative to advise them of this new information and inform them that the Department would investigate the circumstances in which the deputies located and stopped the suspect, including the patrol vehicle's GPS location, queries via the Stolen Vehicle System (SVS) and the patrol vehicle's MDC in addition to re-interviewing the deputies.<sup>8</sup>

Upon completion of this additional investigation by Internal Affairs, the Sheriff's Department charged both deputies with dishonesty and false statements.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, a Case Review panel deemed all charges founded, and imposed the discipline of discharge against Deputy B. Deputy A had been discharged previously on a prior unrelated case.<sup>10</sup>

The Sheriff's Department reports that because of the events surrounding this case, IAB has taken several actions to improve their investigations: using this case as an example and holding meetings, briefings, and training with supervisors and investigative sergeants emphasizing the need for investigators to search for and discover all pertinent evidence in cases. The Captain of IAB reports that revised IAB training for interviewing is being finalized that incorporates case preparation, interview planning, recognizing when to ask clarifying questions, and thorough evidence gathering. The problem here, however, lay not only with the investigation, but with the fact-finding panel at EFRC failing to identify the potential issue until the Office of Inspector General representative raised it. In February 2021, the Office of Inspector [issued a detailed report](#) identifying problems with LASD fact-finding. We urge the Sheriff's Department to adopt its recommendations.

## CUSTODY DIVISION

### In-Custody Deaths

Between April 1, 2023, and June 30, 2023, 17 people died in the care and custody of the Sheriff's Department. While the Department of Medical Examiner has yet to determine manner of death classifications, preliminary findings suggest eight deaths resulted from natural causes, one death resulted from an accident (suspected

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<sup>8</sup> Although Deputy A had been discharged from the Department in an unrelated case, Internal Affairs investigators requested to re-interview him for this follow-up investigation. Deputy A did not respond to the request.

<sup>9</sup> Specifically, the Department charged the deputies with violations of Manual of Policy and Procedures section 3-01/040.69 Honesty; section 3-01/040.70 Dishonesty/False Statements; section 3-01/040.75 Dishonesty/Failure to Make Statements and/or Making False Statements During a Departmental Internal Investigations.

<sup>10</sup> When a Case Review panel seeks to impose discharge for a violation, deputies' collective bargaining agreement, state law, and the County Code provide the deputy with various appeals. The appeals have not been completed in either Deputy B's discharge for this incident or Deputy A's discharge in the unrelated incident.

overdose), one death was a homicide, and seven deaths remain undetermined.<sup>11</sup> Seven of these people died at Men's Central Jail (MCJ), 3 died at Twin Towers Correctional Facility (TTCF), 1 died at Pitchess Detention Center-North (PDC-North), 1 died at East Los Angeles Patrol Station, and 5 died at hospitals to which they had been transported. The Sheriff's Department posts the information regarding in-custody deaths on [a dedicated page on Inmate In-Custody Deaths on its website](#).<sup>12</sup>

Office of Inspector General Staff attended the Custody Services Division (CSD) Administrative Death Reviews for each of the 17 in-custody deaths.

The following summaries, arranged in chronological order, provide brief descriptions of each in-custody death:

On April 9, 2023, a person was found unresponsive by another person in custody who then alerted deputies. Deputies pulled the unresponsive person off their bunk, applied the automated external defibrillator (AED), and administered three doses of Narcan. Correctional Health Services (CHS) personnel arrived, initiated cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and took over resuscitative efforts. Paramedics arrived and took over aid but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Accident (suspected overdose).

On April 10, 2023, an individual died at Los Angeles General Medical Center (LAGMC).<sup>13</sup> The individual had been transported to LAGMC on February 27, 2023, following a medical emergency and remained there until their death weeks later. Preliminary manner of death: Natural.

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<sup>11</sup> In the past, the Office of Inspector General has reported on the preliminary cause of death as determined by the Medical Examiner, Correctional Health Services personnel, hospital personnel providing care at the time of death, and/or Sheriff's Department Homicide investigators. Because the information provided is preliminary, the Office of Inspector General has determined that the better practice is to report on the manner of death. There are five manner of death classifications: (1) natural, (2) accident, (3) suicide, (4) homicide, and (5) undetermined. Natural causes include illnesses and disease and thus deaths due to COVID-19 are classified as natural. Overdoses may be accidental, or the result of a purposeful ingestion, the Sheriff's Department and Correctional Health Services (CHS) use evidence gathered during the investigation to make a preliminary determination as to whether an overdose is accidental or purposeful. Where the suspected cause of death is reported by the Sheriff's Department and CHS, the Office of Inspector General will include this in parentheses.

<sup>12</sup> As previously reported, the passage of AB 2671 amended the Penal Code to include section 10008 requiring the reporting of information on in-custody deaths within 10 days of a death, including the manner and means of death, with updates required within 30 days of a change in the information, including the manner and means of the death. This law went into effect on January 1, 2023, and requires that the information be posted on the agency's website.

<sup>13</sup> As of May 2023, LAC+USC Medical Center has been renamed Los Angeles General Medical Center (LAGMC).

On April 26, 2023, deputies conducting a safety check at MCJ received notice of an individual in distress near a shower area.<sup>14</sup> CHS personnel arrived on scene and administered two doses of Narcan, initiated CPR, and applied the AED.<sup>15</sup> Paramedics arrived and took over resuscitative efforts, but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Natural.

On May 2, 2023, people held at PDC-North alerted deputies to an unresponsive person on the floor near their bunk. Deputies cleared the dorm, initiated CPR, applied the AED, and administered one dose of Narcan. CHS personnel arrived and took over resuscitative efforts and administered two more doses of Narcan. Paramedics arrived and took over aid but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Undetermined.

On May 2, 2023, a person died at East Los Angeles Patrol Station after a deputy conducting a safety check found them unresponsive in their cell. Deputies administered two doses of Narcan and applied the AED. Paramedics arrived and began CPR but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Undetermined.

On May 8, 2023, a person died at LAGMC, after their health declined following a medical procedure for a chronic, critical medical condition. The person had been transported to LAGMC for the medical procedure on March 11, 2023, and remained hospitalized until their death. Preliminary manner of death: Natural.

On May 13, 2023, a deputy conducting a safety check at MCJ found an unresponsive person. Deputies initiated CPR, administered two doses of Narcan, and applied the AED. CHS personnel arrived and took over resuscitative efforts and administered three more doses of Narcan. Paramedics arrived and took over aid but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Undetermined.

On May 17, 2023, an individual died at LAGMC, after being transported three days earlier from TTCF, they had been found unresponsive in their cell. Preliminary manner of death: Undetermined.

On May 20, 2023, an individual died at LAGMC, after being transported from TTCF four days earlier for a higher level of care. Preliminary manner of death: Natural.

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<sup>14</sup> The California Code of Regulations, Title 15, Section 1027.5, requires timely safety checks through direct visual observation and that there be a written plan that includes documentation of routine safety checks. The [Sheriff's Department Custody Division Manual section 4-11/030.00](#) requires that all safety checks include visual checks for "signs of life (e.g. breathing, talking, movement, etc.) and obvious signs of distress (e.g. bleeding, trauma, visible injury, choking, difficulty breathing, discomfort, etc.)."

<sup>15</sup> The Sheriff's Department's Custody Division Manual, 5-03/060.00 Response to Inmate Medical Emergencies, requires responding personnel to administer Narcan to all people in custody found unresponsive.

On May 30, 2023, at MCJ, several inmates alerted deputies to an individual in distress and deputies found the person unresponsive in their cell. Deputies cleared the cell, initiated CPR, administered Narcan, and applied the AED. CHS personnel arrived and took over resuscitative efforts and administered two more doses of Narcan. Paramedics arrived and took over aid but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Natural.

On June 6, 2023, deputies discovered a person unresponsive inside a cell at TTCF. Deputies initiated CPR, administered Narcan, and applied the AED. CHS personnel arrived and took over resuscitative efforts and administered three more doses of Narcan. Paramedics arrived and took over aid but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Undetermined.

On June 13, 2023, deputies at MCJ found a person unresponsive on a bunk with obvious facial trauma. Deputies cleared the dorm, initiated CPR, and applied the AED. CHS personnel arrived, took over resuscitative efforts, and administered three doses of Narcan. Paramedics arrived and took over aid but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Homicide.

On June 13, 2023, a deputy conducting a safety check at TTCF's Correctional Treatment Center (CTC) found a person unresponsive. The individual was admitted to TTCF's CTC on March 24, 2023, to receive a higher level of care for various medical conditions. Deputies and CHS personnel initiated CPR, applied the AED, and administered one dose of Narcan. Paramedics arrived and took over resuscitative efforts but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Natural.

On June 13, 2023, an individual died at LAGMC after being transported from the Inmate Reception Center (IRC) the day before. About 18 hours after arriving at LAGMC, the individual became unresponsive. LAGMC staff administered advanced cardiac life support medications and CPR and intubated the individual. Resuscitative efforts continued, but the individual died. Preliminary manner of death: Natural.

On June 16, 2023, people in custody at MCJ alerted deputies to a person having a medical emergency. Deputies initiated CPR and administered two doses of Narcan. CHS personnel applied the AED, took over resuscitative efforts, and administered a third dose of Narcan. Paramedics arrived and took over resuscitative efforts but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Undetermined.

On June 17, 2023, deputies at TTCF found a person unresponsive on their bunk during a safety check. Deputies entered the cell and initiated CPR and applied the AED. CHS personnel arrived and took over resuscitative efforts and administered three doses of Narcan. Paramedics arrived and continued resuscitative efforts but pronounced the person dead. Preliminary manner of death: Natural.



On June 28, 2023, deputies and CHS personnel at MCJ found a person unresponsive in their cell. Additional CHS personnel responded and initiated CPR, applied the AED, and administered three doses of Narcan. Paramedics arrived and pronounced the individual dead. Preliminary manner of death: Natural.

## Office of Inspector General Site Visits

The Office of Inspector General regularly conducts site visits and inspections at Sheriff's Department custodial facilities. In the second quarter of 2023, Office of Inspector General personnel completed 59 site visits, totaling 170 monitoring hours, to CRDF, East Los Angeles Patrol Station, IRC, Lakewood Patrol Station, Lomita Patrol Station, Marina del Rey Patrol Station, MCJ, North County Correctional Facility (NCCF), and TTCF.<sup>16</sup>

As part of the Office of Inspector General's jail monitoring, Office of Inspector General staff attended 87 Custody Services Division (CSD) executive and administrative meetings and met with division executives for 122 monitoring hours related to uses of force, in-custody deaths, COVID-19 policies and protocols, Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audits, and general conditions of confinement.

## Use of Body Scanners in Custody

The Sheriff's Department continues to operate X-ray body scanners at MCJ, CRDF, PDC North, PDC South, NCCF, and IRC. The Sheriff's Department policy for body scanners requires each facility using screeners to maintain a unit order describing when and where inmates shall be screened, the staffing requirements to do so safely, and the logistical considerations pertaining to their facility.<sup>17</sup> The policy also requires handling sergeants to document the discovery of contraband into the electronic Line Operations Tracking System (e-LOTS). Although, the body scanners continue to detect anomalies that may be contraband, the Sheriff's Department reports that facility staff do not consistently complete documentation for contraband detected by body scanners. The Custody Support Services Bureau intends to create guidance on the responsibilities for documentation of found contraband into e-LOTS. The Sheriff's Department should evaluate the effectiveness of this guidance by reviewing the entries into the e-LOTS system.

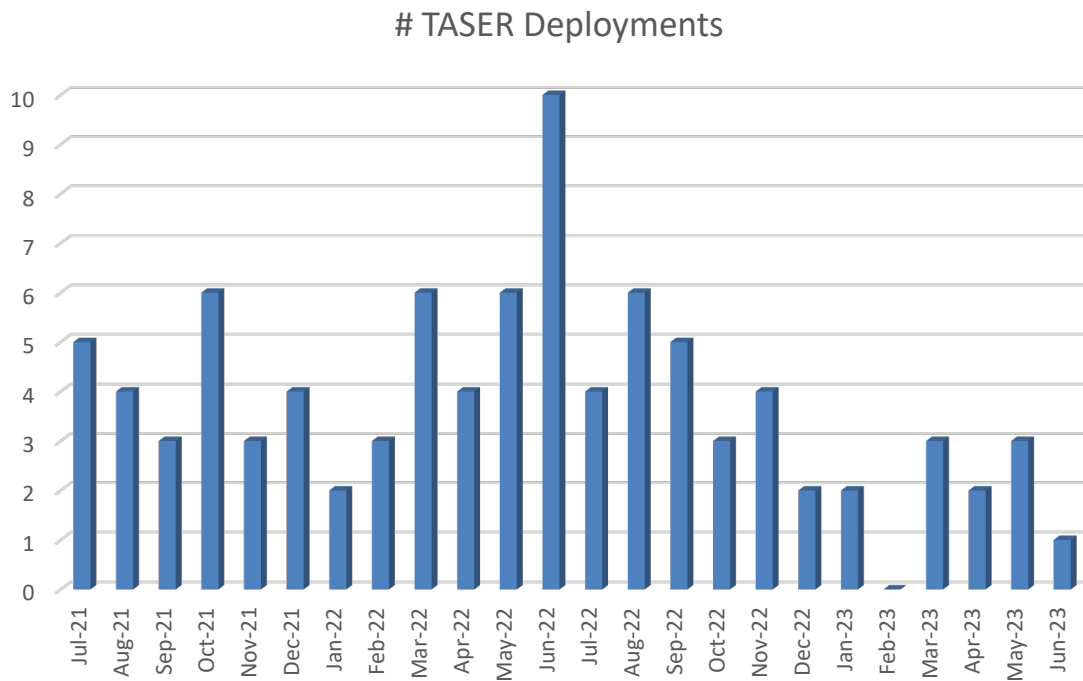
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<sup>16</sup> These figures include site visits and meetings related to monitoring for compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act ("PREA").

<sup>17</sup> See Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Custody Division Manual, section 5-08/020.00, [Custody Safety Screening Program \(B-SCAN\)](#).

## Taser Use in Custody

According to the *Monthly Force Synopsis* that the Sheriff's Department produces and provides to the Office of Inspector General each month, the following chart reflects the number of use-of-force incidents in custodial settings in which deputies employed a Taser, over the past two years:



## Use-of-Force Incidents in Custody

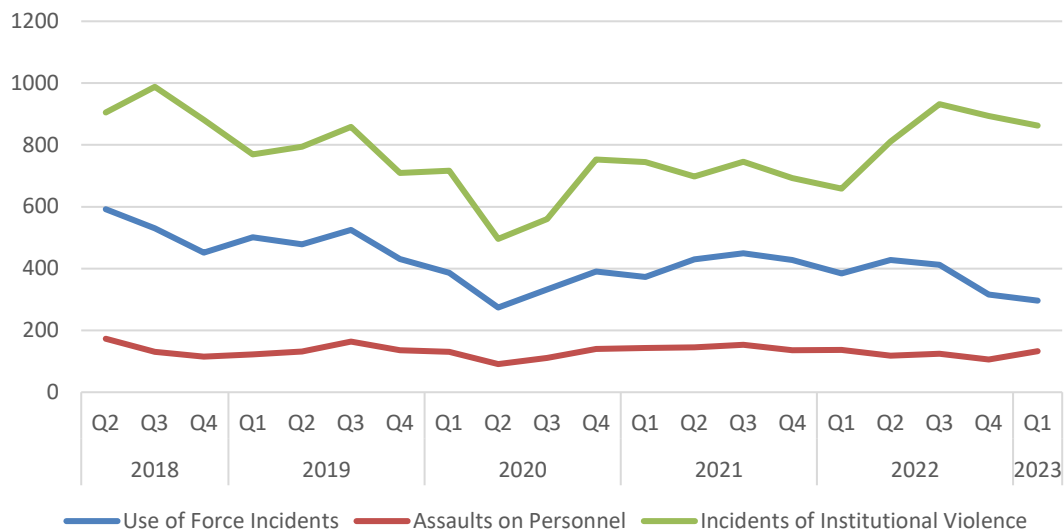
The Office of Inspector General monitors the Sheriff's Department's use-of-force incidents, institutional violence, and assaults on Sheriff's Department or CHS personnel by people in custody.<sup>18</sup> The Sheriff's Department reports the following numbers for the uses of force and assaultive conduct for people in its custody.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Institutional violence is defined as assaultive conduct by a person in custody upon another person in custody.

<sup>19</sup> The reports go through the first quarter of 2023 because the Sheriff's Department has not yet verified the accuracy of reports for the second quarter of 2023. The Sheriff's Department recently provided information to the Office of Inspector General regarding some discrepancies in the reported data based upon its internal reporting systems. The Office of Inspector General will work with the Sheriff's Department to understand the reasons for the discrepancies and to ensure accurate reporting.

		Use of Force Incidents	Assaults on Personnel	Incidents of Institutional Violence
2018	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	592	173	905
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	530	131	988
	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	452	115	881
2019	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	501	122	769
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	478	132	794
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	525	164	858
	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	431	136	709
2020	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	386	131	717
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	274	91	496
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	333	111	560
	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	390	140	753
2021	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	373	143	745
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	430	145	698
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	450	153	746
	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	428	136	693
2022	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	384	137	659
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	428	118	811
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	412	124	932
	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	316	106	894
2023	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	296	133	863

Use of Force, Assaults, and Institutional Violence in Custody Over Time



## HANDLING OF GRIEVANCES AND COMMENTS

### Office of Inspector General Handling of Comments Regarding Department Operations and Jails

The Office of Inspector General received one hundred sixty-four new complaints in the second quarter of 2023 from members of the public, people in custody, family members and friends of people in custody, community organizations and County agencies. Each complaint was reviewed by Office of Inspector General staff. One hundred and thirty-six of these grievances were related to conditions of confinement within the Department's custody facilities, as shown in the charts below:

Grievances/ Incident Classification	Totals
Medical	78
Personnel Issues	15
Mental	8
Living Condition	7
Showers	5
Food	5
Clothing/Bedding	2
Property	2
Indecipherable	2
Mail	1
Education	1
Telephone	1
Visiting	1
Other	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>

Twenty-eight complaints were related to civilian contacts with Department personnel by persons who were not in custody.

Complaint/ Incident Classification	Totals
<b>Personnel</b>	
Improper Tactics	5
Improper Search, Detention, Arrest	4
Harassment	4
Force	3
Discrimination	2
Discourtesy	1
Dishonesty	1
Neglect of Duty	1
Other	2
<b>Service</b>	
Response Time	2
Policy Procedures	2
Other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

### Handling of Grievances Filed by People in Custody

The Sheriff's Department has not fully implemented the use of computer tablets in its jail facilities to capture information related to requests, and eventually grievances, filed by people in custody. There are 165 iPads installed in jail facilities: 31 at CRDF, 49 at MCJ, and 85 at TTCF. These iPads were installed in 2013. The Sheriff's Department reports that less than 25% of the iPads (41) are presently functional, all of which are at CRDF and TTCF. The Sheriff's Department cannot fully implement the use of tablets to provide information or eventually capture complaints and grievances in the jails if more than 75% of them do not function. In addition to repairing or replacing nonfunctional tablets, the Sheriff's Department should work to determine why tablets have been breaking and implement a system to ensure sufficient tablets remain operational.

As [previously reported](#), the Sheriff's Department implemented a policy in December 2017 restricting the filing of duplicate and excessive grievances by people in custody.<sup>20</sup> The Sheriff's Department reports that between April 1, 2023, and June 30, 2023, two persons in custody were restricted from filing six grievances under this policy.

<sup>20</sup> [See Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Custody Division Manual, section 8-04/050.00, Duplicate or Excessive Filings of Grievances and Appeals, and Restrictions of Filing Privileges.](#)

The Office of Inspector General continues to raise concerns about the quality of grievance investigations and responses, which likely increases duplication and may prevent individuals from receiving adequate care while in Sheriff's Department custody.

### Sheriff's Department's Service Comment Reports

Under its policies, the Sheriff's Department accepts and reviews comments from members of the public about departmental service or employee performance.<sup>21</sup> The Sheriff's Department categorizes these comments into three categories:

- External Commendation: an external communication of appreciation for and/or approval of service provided by the Sheriff's Department members;
- Service Complaint: an external communication of dissatisfaction with the Sheriff's Department service, procedure or practice, not involving employee misconduct; and
- Personnel Complaint: an external allegation of misconduct, either a violation of law or Sheriff's Department policy, against any member of the Sheriff's Department.<sup>22</sup>

The following chart lists the number and types of comments reported for each station or unit.<sup>23</sup>

INVESTIGATING BUREAU/STATION/FACILITY	COMMENDATIONS	PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS	SERVICE COMPLAINTS
ADM : CENTRAL PATROL ADM HQ	1	0	0
ADM : COURT SERVICES DIV HQ	1	0	1
ADM : CW SRVS ADM HQ	1	0	0
ADM : SOUTH PATROL ADM HQ	1	0	0
ADM : TECH & SUPPORT ADM HQ	1	0	0

<sup>21</sup> See [Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Manual of Policy and Procedures, 3-04/010.00, "Department Service Reviews."](#)

<sup>22</sup> It is possible for an employee to get a Service Complaint and Personnel Complaint based on the same incident.

<sup>23</sup> The chart reflects data from the Sheriff's Department Performance Recording and Monitoring System current as of July 13, 2023.

INVESTIGATING BUREAU/STATION/FACILITY	COMMENDATIONS	PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS	SERVICE COMPLAINTS
AER : AERO BUREAU	1	1	0
ALD : ALTADENA STN	0	2	1
ASH : OFFICE OF THE ASST SHF I	1	0	0
AVA : AVALON STN	1	1	0
CCS : COMMUNITY COLLEGE BUREAU	0	2	1
CEN : CENTURY STN	1	6	2
CER : CERRITOS STN	6	1	0
CMB : CIVIL MANAGEMENT BUREAU	5	4	1
CNT : COURT SERVICES CENTRAL	1	4	0
COM : COMPTON STN	1	12	2
CPB : COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP BUREAU	0	3	0
CRV : CRESCENTA VALLEY STN	6	4	2
CSB : COUNTY SERVICES BUREAU	3	5	0
CSN : CARSON STN	8	3	2
ELA : EAST LA STN	0	3	0
FCC : FRAUD & CYBER CRIMES BUREAU	0	1	0
HOM : HOMICIDE BUREAU	1	1	0
IND : INDUSTRY STN	7	3	1
IRC : INMATE RECEPTION CENTER	0	2	0
LCS : LANCASTER STN	12	15	3
LKD : LAKEWOOD STN	3	12	7
LMT : LOMITA STN	8	4	0
MAR : MARINA DEL REY STN	4	6	3
MCB : MAJOR CRIMES BUREAU	1	0	0
MCJ : MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL	0	4	3
MLH : MALIBU/LOST HILLS STN	11	7	0
NAR : NARCOTICS BUREAU	0	1	0
NCF : NORTH CO. CORRECTL FAC	1	0	0
NO : PITCHESS NORTH FACILITY	1	0	0
NWK : NORWALK REGIONAL STN	9	6	1
OSS : OPERATION SAFE STREETS BUREAU	1	3	0

INVESTIGATING BUREAU/STATION/FACILITY	COMMENDATIONS	PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS	SERVICE COMPLAINTS
PER : PERSONNEL ADMIN	0	1	0
PKB : PARKS BUREAU	2	1	0
PLM : PALMDALE STN	9	32	3
PRV : PICO RIVERA STN	1	3	2
RIB : RECORDS & IDENTIFICATION	1	0	0
RMB : RISK MANAGEMENT BUREAU	1	0	0
SCV : SANTA CLARITA VALLEY STN	12	10	4
SDM : SAN DIMAS STN	12	7	2
SEB : SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT BUR	0	1	0
SIB : SHERIFF INFORMATION BUREAU	1	1	0
SLA : SOUTH LOS ANGELES STATION	5	3	0
SVB : SPECIAL VICTIMS BUREAU	1	2	0
TEM : TEMPLE CITY STN	10	4	1
TRP : TRAP	2	0	0
TSB : TRANSIT SERVICES BUREAU	0	4	0
TT : TWIN TOWERS	0	1	1
WAL : WALNUT/SAN DIMAS STN	6	3	2
WHD : WEST HOLLYWOOD STN	10	8	3
WST : COURT SERVICES WEST	1	11	0
<b>Total :</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>48</b>