San Diego County
POLICE CHIEFS' & SHERIFF'S
Association

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March 7, 2007

Public Information Statement
Vehicle Stops

San Diego County Law Enforcement Agencies would like the public to know that the safety of the motoring community is very important to us, as it is to you.

We remind all motorists in San Diego County, when approached by an emergency vehicle on the roadway, the driver must yield the right of way by pulling to the right side of the roadway and stopping. If the vehicle is a law enforcement vehicle, it should have a steady, red burning light and flashing blue and/or red lights. The driver, or rider, should be in uniform or identifiable as a sworn law enforcement representative. A siren may accompany the officer's attempts to pull you over. Again, pull safely to the right side of the road and stop. Follow the officer's instructions.

There may be an instance when an off-duty officer in an unmarked vehicle may attempt to pull you over. If the vehicle attempting to pull you over is not easily identifiable as a law enforcement vehicle, or the driver is not wearing a recognizable uniform, you may proceed to the nearest well lit area. That may be, for example, a shopping center, convenience store, fire station or hospital. You may also call 911 and report that a stop is being attempted and ask that a uniformed officer or deputy be sent to the scene. Once stopped you may ask the individual who pulled you over to show you his or her department I.D. card. You should limit your movement inside the vehicle while waiting for a uniformed officer or deputy.

Again, the safety of the motoring community is very important to San Diego County Law Enforcement Agencies. We feel strongly about motorists obeying the rules of the road. It saves lives and makes our streets safer for everyone.

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"OFF DUTY INTERVENTION POLICY"

Law enforcement officers, whose on duty employment involves performing police functions, retain full power and authority to act as peace officers when off duty. Prior to taking law enforcement action, off duty peace officers who observe or who are told of criminal activity, shall first consider contacting the appropriate law enforcement agency and have on duty officers/deputies respond. Off duty peace officers should, if possible, make mental notes of the criminal incident and attempt to be a good witness to the event.

In determining whether or not to intervene the off duty peace officer should consider the totality of the situation. In a case where action is considered necessary, to prevent death, the possibility of death or serious bodily injury, significant property damage or loss, the off duty peace officer should consider the offense involved, the difficulty that being off duty tactically and operationally presents, and/or other factors as articulated and observed by the off duty peace officer.

If an off duty peace officer intervenes in the criminal conduct, he/she must, if reasonably possible, identify themselves, their agency and their intent to stop the criminal conduct. Any law enforcement action taken by the peace officer will be governed by the policies and procedures, rules and regulations that apply to on duty personnel.

When outside the limits of their jurisdiction, but within the state of California, off duty peace officers may assist any law enforcement officer who appears to be in need of immediate assistance and may assist in the prevention of the commission of any crime involving the immediate danger to persons or property, or of the escape of the perpetrator of the offense.

Off duty peace officers outside the state of California, do not have police officer powers/status and therefore have only the rights and obligations of private citizens of that state.