

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURE**

DATE: APRIL 9, 2024
NUMBER: 6.10 – PATROL
SUBJECT: UNSECURED STRUCTURES
RELATED POLICY: N/A
ORIGINATING DIVISION: OPERATIONAL SUPPORT
NEW PROCEDURE:
PROCEDURAL CHANGE: **EXTENSIVE CHANGES**
SUPERSEDES: DP 6.10 – 03/16/2020

I. PURPOSE

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for sworn Department members to follow, should they encounter unsecured structures in the course of their duties.

II. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all sworn members of the Department.

III. BACKGROUND

- A. The discovery of unsecured, non-residential structures should be an integral part of every police officer’s patrol strategy, as they are prime targets for criminal activity.
- B. Normally, unsecured structures are discovered by police officers while making routine security checks, but some may be found as the result of radio calls (i.e., burglary alarms, collisions into structures, etc.).
- C. Periodic visits to businesses not only serve to deter possible unlawful entry but lead to the early discovery of crimes already committed and can act as a valuable public relations tool.

NEW

NEW

- D. On November 11, 2022, San Diego Municipal Code 54.12 was enacted to provide specific authority to the San Diego Police Department and San Diego Fire-Rescue Department regarding the abatement of unsecured structures.

IV. DEFINITIONS

NEW

Unsecured Structure – Any structure of any kind with a window, wall, roof, or door that is broken or damaged, and invites intrusion, vandalism, trespass, theft, malicious mischief, or other criminal activity. This definition also includes windows, walls, roofs, or doors whose state constitutes a hazard to public health or safety, and any damage that may result from the lawful actions of a public officer in the performance of official duties (SDMC 54.1202).

V. PROCEDURES

NEW

- A. Upon discovering an unsecured structure, officers must notify Communications Division, giving the name and address of the establishment.

NEW

- B. A cover unit will be dispatched, if appropriate or if requested. When checking any unsecured structure, caution should be exercised until it has been definitively established that no danger exists.

NEW

- C. If a structure is found to be unsecure and the officer is able to enter, an attempt should be made to determine if an unlawful entry has been made. If such an entry has been made, the officer(s) shall:
1. Notify Communications Division, who will attempt to contact the owner of the business or other responsible person to respond to the officer's location.
 2. Prepare the appropriate incident report.
 3. Officers shall complete a note with the following information: Event number, Date, Time, Investigative Unit and Contact Phone Number, Your Name and ID Number. The note should be left in a conspicuous place. The note should also advise that a partial report was taken and provide instructions on how to contact the appropriate investigative unit so the report may be completed.

NEW

- D. The officer should attempt to secure the structure if it is possible to do so in a responsible manner without physically altering the structure. If, for some reason, the structure cannot be secured, the officer must attempt to notify the owner or a representative before leaving.

1. In some instances, it may be necessary to remain on the premises until that person's arrival, within a reasonable amount of time, subject to emergency and priority radio calls.
2. If the officer has made reasonable attempts to notify the owner, but has been unsuccessful, and there is no reasonable public health hazard, safety hazard, or potential for criminal activity, then the officer can leave the scene. Notes of all reasonable attempts to contact the owner/responsible party shall be documented on the call.

NEW E. If in the course of evaluating an unsecured structure an officer determines that a public health, safety hazard, or potential for criminal activity exists AND an owner or responsible party is not able to respond to take possession of the property within thirty minutes (additional time can be allowed at the discretion of the officer), the officer shall notify the Communications Division to callout Belfor (1-800-BOARDUP) to secure the structure.

NEW F. If an unsecured structure is located on property owned by a local public entity other than the City of San Diego, Belfor (1-800-BOARDUP), or other City contracted vendor, may be utilized ONLY with the consent of an authorized representative of the public entity having jurisdiction over the property.

1. **Department personnel shall work with City contracted vendors only.** Department member shall not direct non-contracted vendors to board and secure unsecured structures.