



SDPD

San Diego Police Department

San Diego Police Department

Watch Commander

Operations Manual

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October 2024

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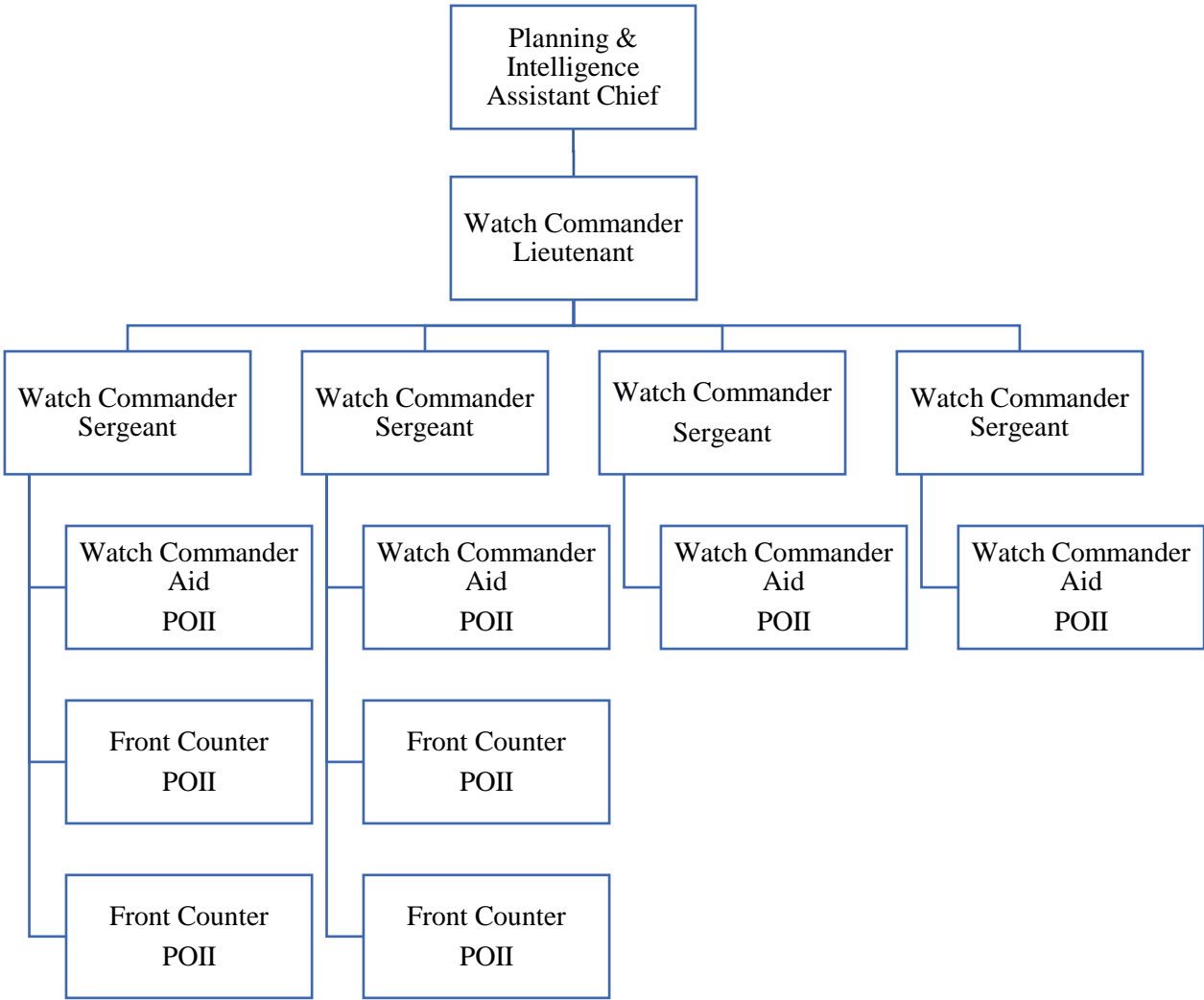
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Mission Statement

The mission of the Watch Commander's Office is to support the Department's commitment to Neighborhood Policing by providing real-time support and resources to patrol and investigative personnel and be a central point for timely, accurate, and reliable information within the San Diego Police Department.

Staffing and Organization



The Watch Commander's Office also supervises the employees working at the Headquarters' Broadway Front Counter and E Street Counter.

Watch Commander Hours

The Watch Commander's Office operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including all holidays.

Personnel work 12-hour shifts three days a week and an 8-hour shift every other week.

Personnel work one of two shifts: a day shift from **(Redacted – record exempt)** hours or a night shift from **(Redacted – record exempt)** hours.

On a rotating basis, each area command is required to provide relief personnel when one of the permanently assigned Watch Commanders or Watch Commander Aids are on leave. The assigned area command is responsible for providing relief; however, the Watch Commander's Office should take staffing into consideration and reserves the authority to allocate personnel from another Patrol Division. A list of the rotational responsibility is maintained in the Relief Schedule Book (Black Book) in the Watch Commander's Office.

Radio Designators

Watch Commander Lieutenant	WL01
Watch Commander Sergeant	WC01
Watch Commander Aid	WC02

Responsibilities and Duties

The Watch Commander's Office is responsible for abiding by the information contained in legal updates, orders, training bulletins and Department policies and procedures.

Watch Commander Lieutenant

The Watch Commander Lieutenant will be responsible for the following:

- Supervise all personnel assigned to the Watch Commander's Office and the Real Time Coordination Center.
- Prepare and implement scheduling of all personnel assigned to the Watch Commander's Office.
- Maintain liaison within all patrol, investigative and specialized units of the Police Department.

- Represent the Watch Commander's Office, as needed, at Department and community meetings.
- Assess Unit needs, prepare supporting documentation and submit any annual budget request(s) to fiscal management for consideration and approval.
- Review and conduct assigned inspections and submit appropriate reports by the 10th of the month.
- Perform other unspecified duties as may be assigned by the Assistant Chief of Planning and Intelligence.

Watch Commander's Office

- Enforce the policies and procedures of the Police Department and the Chief of Police.
- Maintain command of the Department's field personnel and make knowledgeable, timely and appropriate decisions in assigning resources to manage critical or unusual incidents,
- Review all arrest declarations to ensure all Department arrests are lawful and within policy.
- Be versed in all aspects of Department operations, applicable laws, and act as a resource for all employees.
- Act as liaison with other public and private agencies and organizations.
- Provide appropriate information to the media in compliance with state law and applicable Department policies and procedures.
- Hold a virtual Line-up briefing with all patrol divisions during each patrol shift.
- When required, notify command-level personnel and others to assist in the successful resolution of field incidents. The protocol is dictated by the "Major Incident Checklist" (3-ring binder), located at the Watch Commander's desk. These checklists specify required notifications for specific major incidents.
- Prepare the Watch Commander Incident Log, which contains information on significant incidents occurring throughout the City. The log is distributed via e-mail to the news media and Department personnel.
- The Watch Commander Sergeants will conduct all required inspections in accordance with the Department Inspections Guide.
- A Watch Commander Sergeant is responsible for the morale fund and will maintain records of income and expenses in accordance with the Department Inspections Guide.

- A Watch Commander Sergeant is responsible for monitoring all forced blood draws.

Badges

Badges for Police Investigative Service Officers, Reserve Officers, and all sworn personnel through the rank of Lieutenant are available in the Watch Commander's Office for use during the shift. The badges are on loan and made available to personnel on a per-shift basis and must be returned at the end of the officer's shift. Officers who break or lose their badge shall be referred to Human Resources to obtain a permanent replacement.

All badges will be signed out on the badge log and signed in upon return.

Blood Draws

During normal working hours, the Watch Commander's Office will contact California Forensic Phlebotomy at **(Redacted – record exempt)**, and a phlebotomist will be dispatched to the Sally Port to conduct the blood draw.

A phlebotomist is on duty in Room 138 seven days a week from **(Redacted – record exempt)** hours. If a suspect is injured and transported to a hospital, the Watch Commander will arrange for the on-call phlebotomist to respond to the hospital.

Forced Blood Draws

All forced blood draws will take place in the Safety Control Chair directly in front of the Watch Commander's Office.

Officers needing a forced blood draw for 23152 CVC, or 11550 H&S arrests must now obtain a search warrant. The exception to this is if the person is currently on parole or probation with a valid Fourth Amendment waiver so long as: (1) the officer is aware of the parolee's status or probation condition prior to the taking of the blood; (2) the search is pursuant to a valid DUI stop/11550 arrest; and (3) the blood draw is performed in a reasonable manner. A forced blood draw conducted according to existing Department procedures would be considered reasonable.

Officers must also obtain the Watch Commander's approval for all forced blood draws. All forced blood draws must be witnessed by the Watch Commander and documented in the Blood Draw Log located in the Watch Commander's Office. Blood draws will normally be performed with the suspect seated in the chair anchored in the sally port outside the Watch Commander's Office. The only force appropriate should be restraint of movement. Pain compliance holds will not normally be used, unless the safety of the phlebotomist or the officers is threatened.

Booking Approvals

All Declaration and Determination forms for arrests, both adult and juvenile, where the suspect will be placed in a custodial facility, will be reviewed and approved by the Watch Commander prior to booking to ensure the elements of the crime are present, and the arrest was proper and lawful.

The Watch Commander will review and approve the Declaration and Determination form prepared by the arresting officer. The Declaration should contain the following:

- Reason for the stop/contact,
- Elements of each crime being charged,
- How it was determined the person arrested was responsible,
- Verification of the suspect's identity.

Declarations are intended to be brief and are not intended to replace the crime and arrest report.

Callouts

The Watch Commander's Office maintains an updated phone list of personnel assigned to specialized units and whom to contact for a callout. If the callout criteria are met, the Watch Commander can facilitate contacting specialized units if needed.

Centralized Investigative Units will submit a list to the Watch Commander's Office. The list will include the assignment, the person's name and cell phone number. These units are responsible for keeping their lists updated and current.

Critical Incident Expenditures

In the event an unanticipated critical incident requires purchases for items not maintained by the Police Department, the field supervisor will contact the Watch Commander, who will make arrangements with the on-call person in the Emergency Planning Unit.

Emergency Plan for the Headquarters Building

The emergency plan for Headquarters is maintained in the Watch Commander's Office. The plan covers fire alarms, fires, medical emergencies, bomb threats, found bombs, other suspicious items and earthquakes. The following actions are the responsibility of the Watch Commander:

Fire Alarm

When the fire alarm activates, the Watch Commander will identify the origin of the alarm by checking the alarm sensor station. The origin of the alarm will be noted on the panel. The Watch Commander is also responsible for physically checking that location to see if there is a real fire or if it is a false alarm. If the alarm is in Dispatch, they will evacuate

and not return until it is confirmed there is no fire. It is the responsibility of the Watch Commander to either call the Fire Department or FM&D in the event of equipment malfunction. If the Field Lieutenant is available, they will respond to Headquarters to evaluate if assistance is needed. The Watch Commander will ensure all officers in the Sally Port have been directed to leave the Sally Port with their prisoners.

The Fire Department is not automatically called when there is an alarm. The Watch Commander must verify that the Fire Department is notified if there is an actual emergency.

Fire

In addition to the above, Watch Commander personnel will advise over the building PA system to evacuate and relocate the Watch Commander's Office to Central Division.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, Watch Commander personnel will ensure appropriate first aid is rendered and, if appropriate, ensure medical assistance has been requested.

The Watch Commander's Office maintains one of the four Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) devices located in the Headquarters building.

NARCAN

Operational Support maintains a supply of Narcan which is kept in the Watch Commander's Office.

Bomb Threats

The Watch Commander is responsible for coordinating a search process of the Headquarters building, notifying the Chief's Office and evacuating the building, if appropriate.

Found Bomb

The Watch Commander will coordinate with the Fire Department's EDD team, notify the Chief's Office and, if necessary, evacuate the building per the fire evacuation plan.

Earthquake

The Watch Commander will determine if an evacuation is necessary and follow the fire evacuation plan.

Equipment

The Watch Commander maintains a limited supply of equipment for field units. The equipment will be distributed per the Operational Support guidelines.

Federal Arrests

The Watch Commander must approve all arrests for violations of Federal Codes prior to transporting the prisoner to the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC).

To obtain a booking time, you must call the MCC at **(Redacted – record exempt)**.

Mobile Field Force Activation

The Watch Commander will make all appropriate notifications during a Mobile Field Force activation, whether actual or training. For details on who to notify, refer to the Major Incident Checklist.

Operation Plans

Operation Plans are generally provided to the Watch Commander on planned events. The Watch Commander shall ensure the Filed Lieutenants are made aware of the Operation Plans.

Personnel Files

Personnel files for officers and sergeants assigned to the Watch Commander's Office and the front counter positions are retained in the Watch Commander's office.

Phone Numbers

The Watch Commander's Office shall not give out Department members' personal phone numbers or addresses by telephone without first authenticating the person making the query.

Phones

The Watch Commander's Office has seven phone lines. One of these lines, **(Redacted – record exempt)**, is the tape-recorded media line. This is the only line media representatives may use. Since only two people staff the Watch Commander's Office, a critical incident or other significant matter where events unfold rapidly can tax the ability to handle the phones and monitor the incident. During such situations, the officer's first responsibility is to manage the incident and ensure adequate support is given to field units. Therefore, it is permissible to turn off the media line until such time as the incident has stabilized. The media phone line will be turned back on at the earliest [possible opportunity. None of the Watch Commander's phone lines are to be given to the public.

Additionally, there is a phone with a direct link from the Lead Dispatcher in Dispatch to the Watch Commander. This line is only used to convey relevant information to and from Dispatch when time is of the essence.

The primary phone number for the Watch Commanders Office is **(Redacted – record exempt)**. In the event of power or Network outages, a secondary (analog) phone number is **(Redacted – record exempt)**

Photographs of Suspects

Mug shots or file photos of adults may be released **ONLY** to aid in the capture of, or to warn the public of, dangerous wanted persons or if the responsible Investigative Unit Lieutenant has authorized the release.

Media representatives shall not be granted access to the Sally Port to photograph, videotape, observe or talk to suspects except when requested by the supervisor or Media Relations Personnel responsible for investigations. The Watch Commander must approve all such requests. If the request is granted, the media personnel shall be escorted at all times by the requesting supervisor or Media Relations personnel. The Watch Commander shall designate what may be photographed and what is restricted.

Police Equipment Accidents

The appropriate notifications for injury collisions will be made according to the matrix found in the Major Incidents Checklist binder.

Preferential Treatment

Persons arrested are not to be given preferential treatment due to their status in the community or their occupation. Established procedures will be followed at all times when processing arrestees. If, for example, a police officer is arrested for driving under the influence, the officer shall be placed in County Jail. The Watch Commander will notify the Jail Watch Commander to ensure the safety of the officer who was arrested. The Department is not required by any policy to notify the employing agency of any federal, state or local law enforcement officer of an officer's arrest. Generally, the employing agency is notified as a courtesy by the respective Field Lieutenant.

Primary Response Team (PRT)

A copy of the daily PRT schedule for each shift is maintained in the Watch Commander's Office. At the beginning of each watch, PRT officers and sergeants are required to contact the Watch Commander to be placed on the daily PRT list. The PRT Leader will be identified on the shift schedule that is emailed to the Planning and Intelligence Chief, Patrol Commanders, and the Field Lieutenants.

Probation Department

Probation Department officers are not trained to write arrest reports or do evidentiary impounds. The MOU signed with San Diego County Probation states SDPD officers will prepare crime and arrest reports for any new cases discovered by Probation Officers.

Sally Port Access

The sally port is under the direct control of the Watch Commander and is considered a secure area. The Watch Commander must approve non-police personnel's access and ensure that they are escorted at all times.

Sick Calls

During non-business hours, department personnel may contact the Watch Commander's Office to report illness/injury that will make them absent from duty. The person taking the call must complete a Redbook entry for the appropriate command.

Watch Commander's Incident Log

The Watch Commander's Incident Log is a brief, factual synopsis of significant events that have occurred during any 24-hour period. The log frequently has incidents of interest to the news media.

The log is distributed daily throughout the Police Department and to various local news media outlets. The Watch Commander should review entries for appropriateness of release to entities outside the Department.

There is "SDPDMedia" in the "All Groups" list in Outlook. Informational Services maintains this list so anyone Department wide can use it. This list should be used to send the Incident Log or Missing Person flyers to the news media.

Each Incident Log entry will contain the following:

- MPS event number,
- Date and time of occurrence,
- Type of incident (include penal code designation and description e.g., 11-80/11-44 fatal accident; 211PC commercial robbery),
- Location of the incident,
- Service area,
- The neighborhood where the incident occurred,
- Brief synopsis of the incident, and
- The Watch Commander's name.

Incidents to be Included

- All Homicides

- Include which Homicide Team responded and that Homicide will issue a press release.
- All Traffic Fatalities
 - Traffic Division will provide a news release.
- Missing Persons at Risk
 - If still missing at the end of the shift.
- Missing Juveniles
 - If still missing at the end of the shift.
- All Officer-Involved Shootings (other than animals)
 - Include which Homicide Team responded and that Homicide will issue a press release.
- Serious Injury Vehicle Accidents (Including police vehicles)
- Police Vehicle Pursuits resulting in serious injury or death.
- Significant SWAT Incidents
- All Aviation Crashes / Emergency Landings (other than at the airport)
- All Commercial Robberies
- Significant Street Robberies and/or Sexual Assaults in High Pedestrian Areas
 - For example, shopping malls, trolley stops, parks, and beaches. Consideration should be given to events where the media could help us locate the suspect and warn people in the area.
- All Significant Assaults with Deadly Weapon incidents
- All Civil Disturbances where MFF is activated, or significant property damage or injuries occur.
- Significant Arrests
- All Evacuations
- Major Hate Crimes
- Kidnappings
- Found Explosive Devices/ Bombings
- *Any significant incidents, as deemed by the Watch Commander.*