

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunday, January 18, 2026

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SDPD Investigating In-Custody Death in El Cajon

San Diego – On January 4, 2026, at about 6 a.m., El Cajon Police Department responded to a report of a man running in traffic and yelling for help in the area of Magnolia Ave. and West Chase Ave. When officers arrived and contacted the man, he refused to follow their verbal commands, and laid face down on the street. Officers handcuffed the man and applied soft restraints to his ankles. Officers then called paramedics to evaluate the man.

While officers awaited the arrival of medics, the man became non-responsive. Narcan was administered by the officers, as was CPR, but the man did not regain consciousness. He was transported to a local hospital by paramedics, but his condition did not improve. On January 17, 2026, the hospital notified the El Cajon Police Department that the man had died. The decedent is described as a 52-year-old Vietnamese man. He is not being identified at this time.

Due to force being used to subdue the man, the death is being investigated as an in-custody death. Per the Countywide Memorandum of Understanding, the San Diego Police Homicide Unit was notified and will conduct the in-custody death investigation. Detectives will be working with the Medical Examiner's Office to determine if the use of force played any role in the man's death.

The investigation and review process for in-custody deaths are extremely thorough. When the Homicide Unit completes its investigation, it will be reviewed by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office to determine if the officers bear any criminal liability for their actions. The El Cajon Police Department will conduct an administrative investigation into the actions of the officers. The Federal Bureau of Investigations and the United States Attorney's Office will also be monitoring the investigation.

Anyone with information regarding this death is asked to call the Homicide Unit at (619) 531-2293 or Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477.

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