

SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT COURT LIAISON UNIT



OPERATIONS MANUAL

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MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Court Liaison Unit is to strengthen the partnership between the San Diego Police Department and its prosecuting agencies. By promoting clear, consistent communication and coordinating the timely submission of prosecution materials, the unit helps both agencies operate as a unified team in the pursuit of successful case outcomes.

The Court Liaison Unit ensures that all pertinent reports, evidence, and case information are thoroughly and accurately shared with prosecuting partners in advance of court proceedings. When documentation is incomplete or delayed, the unit works collaboratively with SDPD personnel and prosecutors to promptly resolve outstanding issues, reinforcing an efficient and coordinated process that strengthens overall case preparedness and ensures each matter is fully prosecuted.

I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- A.** The Court Liaison Unit coordinates and monitors the processing of all San Diego Police Department felony and misdemeanor complaints with the appropriate prosecutorial agency.
- B.** Maintains consistent communication with the District Attorney's Office, City Attorney's Office, Superior Court, and Kearny Mesa Court regarding matters involving the San Diego Police Department to support the successful prosecution of submitted cases.
- C.** Serves as the San Diego Police Department's primary point of contact for all court-related matters.
- D.** Processes requests from attorneys, clerical staff, and paralegals to locate police and laboratory reports, provide case status updates, process warrant requests, and share missing Body-Worn Camera (BWC) footage.
- E.** Assists detectives by providing case status inquiries, contacting assigned attorneys, offering guidance on completing Complaint Request Evaluations (CREs), and providing instruction on the digital submission of case files or BWC footage when necessary.
- F.** Tracks all Complaint Request Evaluations (CREs) that require follow up to ensure timely completion.
- G.** Maintains records of served subpoenas and collects declarations for continuances, ensuring the subpoenaing attorney receives the declaration promptly.
- H.** Facilitates hospital arraignments.

II. UNIT DESCRIPTION

The Court Liaison Unit is comprised of three functional components responsible for facilitating coordination between the San Diego Police Department and prosecuting agencies. Each component ensures accurate case processing, effective communication, and compliance with established court-related procedures.

A. COURT LIAISON SERGEANT

The Court Liaison Unit Sergeant supervises all liaisons assigned to the unit, including the District Attorney's Liaisons, City Attorney's Court Liaison, and Traffic Court Liaison. The sergeant oversees daily operations, ensures compliance with departmental and court procedures, monitors case-related workflows, and serves as the primary point of contact for internal and external agencies regarding court-related matters.

B. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S LIAISON

Two officers are assigned to the District Attorney's Liaison Unit and maintain an office on the 8th floor of the Hall of Justice located at 330 West Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101. The office is operational from 0600 to 1600 hours, Monday through Friday. Personnel are responsible for logging and tracking all felony case submissions to the District Attorney's Office, reviewing and signing complaints, monitoring Complaint Request Evaluations (CRE), and maintaining direct communication with District Attorney personnel.

C. CITY ATTORNEY'S COURT LIAISON

One officer is assigned to the City Attorney's Court Liaison and maintains an office on the 5th floor of the City Attorney's Office located at 1200 Third Ave, San Diego, CA 92101. The office is open from 0600 to 1600 hours, Monday through Friday. Responsibilities include managing the subpoena file, monitoring officers' court attendance and punctuality, and ensuring consistent communication with the City Attorney's Office and Superior Court.

D. TRAFFIC COURT LIAISON:

One officer is assigned to the Traffic Court Liaison and maintains an office at the Kearny Mesa Court located at 8950 Clairemont Mesa Blvd, San Diego, CA 92123. Operating hours are 0600 to 1600 hours Monday through Thursday and 0600 to 1400 hours on Friday. Duties include maintaining the subpoena file, preparing the court calendar, monitoring officers' court appearances and timeliness, and maintaining communication with the City Attorney's Office and Kearny Mesa Court administration.

III. UNIT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. COURT LIAISON UNIT SERGEANT

- i. Ensures felony and misdemeanor packages are submitted in a timely manner and coordinates efforts to prevent releases under Penal Code §825.
- ii. Reports to the Operational Support Unit Lieutenant and provides weekly updates regarding the status of unit operations.
- iii. Attends Investigative Command Group (ICG) meetings and coordinates attendance by representatives from the District Attorney's Office and City Attorney's Office.
- iv. Serves as a resource for Department personnel and court staff.
- v. Mediates issues or concerns between the District Attorney's Office, City Attorney's Office, and Police Department personnel.
- vi. Ensures Court Liaison Officers adhere to Department policies and the rules and procedures of the Court Liaison Unit.
- vii. Tracks Complaint Request Evaluations (CREs) for San Diego Police Department cases submitted to the City Attorney's Office and District Attorney's Office.
- viii. Responds to issues or concerns related to the prosecution of infraction cases at Kearny Mesa Court.
- ix. Ensures court coverage for all three locations—District Attorney's Office, City Attorney's Office, and Kearny Mesa Court—throughout the five-day court work week.
- x. Supervises and evaluates the performance of personnel assigned to all three offices.
- xi. Conducts inspections in accordance with the Department's Inspection Guide.
- xii. Notifies commands of missed court by providing a copy of the signed subpoena, and court calendar.

B. DISTRICT ATTORNEY COURT LIAISON OFFICER

- i. Provides assistance to DA personnel, including but not limited to: obtaining additional reports, contacting officers for information, running rap sheets, and determining investigative status in high-profile cases.
- ii. Identifies all San Diego Police Department third-day in-custody felony arrests and uses NetRMS to determine the assigned investigator for each arrest.
- iii. Receives and signs felony criminal complaints for all San Diego County law enforcement agencies. SDPD felony criminal complaint dispositions are entered into the SDPD database.
- iv. Creates and shares BWC footage when cases are redirected to the City Attorney's Office from the District Attorney's Office.
- v. Provides assistance to SDPD personnel and other law enforcement agencies, including but not limited to: status of current and past cases submitted to the DA's Office, advising investigators on felony case preparation, DA contact information, booking procedures, arraignment dates for in-custody defendants, and bail-to-appear court dates.
- vi. Prepares felony case file packages that have been referred to the DA's Office from the City Attorney's Office. This includes completing all required forms, running rap sheets, and obtaining laboratory reports.
- vii. Processes Complaint Request Evaluations (CREs) for SDPD cases.

C. CITY ATTORNEY'S COURT LIAISON OFFICER'S DUTIES

- i. Provides assistance to CA personnel, in obtaining additional reports, and contacting officers for information
- ii. Monitors the Department's Electronic Subpoena Database Program to check status of issued subpoenas and ensure subpoena clerks are utilizing the system.
- iii. Processes Officer Declaration for Continuance Forms for District Attorney, City Attorney, and other law enforcement agencies.
- iv. Handles the filing of all subpoenas, Officer Declaration for Continuance Forms, and any paperwork from the San Diego Police Department.
- v. Serves as the Department's primary contact for any questions regarding an officer's request for continuance of a case.
- vi. Provides support and assistance to Department's personnel and Deputy City Attorney's in the Criminal Division.
- vii. Creates and shares BWC footage when cases are being redirected to the City Attorney's Office, and from the District Attorney's Office.

D. TRAFFIC COURT LIAISON OFFICER'S DUTIES

- i. Prepares the daily court calendar for officers appearances at Kearny Mesa Court.
- ii. Verifies service of subpoenas for all scheduled cases.
- iii. Documents officers' arrival times on the daily court calendar.
- iv. Coordinates with the Records Division to locate missing citations.
- v. Works with court commissioners to identify, address, and resolve issues that arise during the daily operation of the court.
- vi. Provides guidance to Department personnel testifying in court.
- vii. Monitors officer attendance and reports any unexcused absences to the Court Liaison Sergeant.
- viii. Assists other law enforcement agencies with matters related to traffic court.

IV. OFFICE PROCEDURES:

A. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE:

i. Arraignment Calendar

Receive the jail arraignment calendar from DA JURIS staff and identify all scheduled arraignments involving SDPD arrests. Run each case in NetRms to determine the assigned investigators and disposition information, when available. Notify the Case Issuance Deputy District Attorneys via email regarding the number of case files expected for review that day.

ii. Felony Da Packages

a) All incoming SDPD felony packages submitted to the District Attorney's Office shall be reviewed to ensure they contain the following:

1. A completed witness list, including all involved officers, victims, witnesses, and laboratory personnel.
2. A Statement of Case form (DA-160) for each defendant.
3. State and federal criminal history information for each defendant.
4. Narcotics laboratory reports, when applicable.

b) When required documents are missing, the assigned investigator shall be notified and instructed to submit the missing items through NetRms discovery package or if NetRms is not available, to the DA Liaison Unit at **(Redacted- record exempt)**.

For time-sensitive cases, liaison officers may attempt to obtain missing items using the SDPD computer; however, the investigator must still be notified of the deficiencies.

c) All **PAPER**-SDPD cases (excluding task-force cases) shall be processed through the DA Liaison Unit and entered the SDPD DA Database located on the X-drive of the DA LAN system. The following information shall be entered:

1. Date and time the case was received
2. Defendant name(s)
3. Crime type

4. Submitting officer/detective's name, identification number, and command

d) Third-day in-custody SDPD felony case files shall be delivered to the District Attorney Liaison Unit at 330 W. Broadway, 8th floor, or via NetRms discovery package by 0815 hours Monday through Friday.

iii. **Subpoenas**

All felony subpoenas shall be filed appropriately at the District Attorney's Office and retained for one year following the scheduled court appearance.

iv. **Mail**

The District Attorney Liaison receives mail through standard interoffice mail.

Felony packages may also be delivered directly to the District Attorney's Court Liaison Office on the 8th floor of the Hall of Justice at 330 West Broadway.

B. CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE PROCEDURES

i. **Mail Handling**

All CLU mail pertaining to District Attorney and City Attorney cases is delivered to the 7th floor of the City Attorney's Office twice daily, at approximately 0900 and 1400 hours. The CLU receives all served subpoenas and retains them for a period of one year following the associated court appearance. The City Attorney Liaison is responsible for sorting all incoming mail on behalf of the CLU.

a) **Subpoenas:**

1. **City Attorney's Office-**

All misdemeanor and civil court subpoenas shall be filed appropriately at the City Attorney's Office and retained for one year following the scheduled court appearance.

2. **District Attorney's Office-**

All felony subpoenas shall be forwarded via interoffice mail to the District Attorney Court Liaison Officers, Mail Stop **(Redacted- record exempt)**.

3. Traffic Court-

All infraction subpoenas shall be forwarded via interoffice mail to the Traffic Court Liaison, Mail Stop 36.

ii. Court Continuance Forms

All Court Continuance Forms are received electronically. Upon receipt, each form shall be saved to the G Drive and filed by its corresponding court date. The City Attorney Liaison will email completed City Attorney Declarations to the assigned attorney. Additionally, the Liaison will remind District Attorney Liaisons to ensure that completed declarations for felony cases are forwarded to the assigned Deputy City Attorney.

iii. Court Room Testimony

The CLU receives a daily court calendar listing matters requiring in-person testimony from SDPD personnel. This calendar is provided the day prior to the scheduled appearances. The CLU will contact each attorney who has SDPD officers scheduled to testify the following day and will coordinate with them to determine whether any assistance or additional support is needed.

iv. Officer's Waiting Room:

The San Diego Sheriff's Office (SDSO) unlocks the Officer's Waiting Room located on the 7th floor of the courthouse each morning.

C. KEARNY MESA COURT OFFICE PROCEDURES

i. Subpoenas

Numerous subpoenas are received daily and must be filed according to month and day. Service of each subpoena is verified for officers scheduled to appear in court. Appropriate notations are made on the Daily Calendars to indicate whether the subpoena was issued, issued but not served, or not issued.

All infraction court subpoenas handled at the Kearny Mesa Traffic Court Office will be filed accordingly and retained for one year following the scheduled court appearance.

ii. Daily Court Calendar

- a) A master copy of the daily court calendar is provided to the Court Liaison Officer by court staff.
- b) From Monday through Thursday, four court appearance times require calendars: 0800, 0930, 1300, and 1430 hours.
- c) On Fridays, three appearance times require calendars: 0800, 0930, and 1300 hours.
- d) Each court session requires two copies of the calendar:
 - 1. One copy for the Court Clerk
 - 2. One copy for the Commissioner

iii. Sign in Sheets

Law enforcement officers from all agencies will be checked in on both copies of the court calendar. San Diego Police Department officers are required to sign in on the designated log. These logs are maintained and retained for one year.

iv. Records Division Coordination

Officers are responsible for contacting the Department's Records Division to request that a copy of their citation be faxed to the Kearny Mesa Court. If officers require assistance obtaining their citation, the Court Liaison Officer will contact the Records Division on their behalf and attempt to secure the required documents. The Court Liaison Officer will also coordinate with a Records Division representative to resolve any issues or concerns.

V. REQUESTS

Attorneys routinely submit requests to the Court Liaison Unit (CLU) seeking various reports, files, or evidentiary materials. The CLU will make every effort to fulfill these requests within the unit. However, certain matters may require substantial follow-up beyond the unit's capabilities. In such instances, the CLU Sergeant will evaluate the request and determine the appropriate entity to handle the follow-up (CLU staff, City Attorney or District Attorney Investigators, or SDPD Detectives).

A. BODY-WORN CAMERA (BWC) REQUESTS

Attorneys may request the assistance of the CLU in obtaining BWC footage for issued cases. Several circumstances may prevent an attorney from having immediate access to BWC evidence:

i. Felony Drop Cases

This occurs when the District Attorney reduces a case from a felony to a misdemeanor and transfers it to the City Attorney for prosecution. The SDPD Detective who originally submitted the case shared the BWC evidence with the District Attorney's Office. In these instances, the CLU must share the existing case file with the City Attorney's Office.

ii. Failure To Share

The SDPD Detective created a BWC case but did not share it with the prosecuting agency. The CLU will share the created case with either the District Attorney's Office or the City Attorney's Office, as appropriate.

iii. Mislabeled BWC

Officers may fail to properly label BWC files, resulting in the assigned detective being unable to locate and share the correct footage. In these cases, the CLU will advise the requesting attorney to contact the assigned investigator so that a new case file containing all relevant BWC can be created.

iv. Notification to Detective and Detective Sergeants

The CLU will notify the assigned detective and their sergeant regarding any corrections made to shared BWC files. These notifications serve two purposes:

1. To inform the detective of new or corrected evidence relevant to the current case.
2. To alert both the detective and their supervisor to prevent future errors of the same nature.

Reference: (Redacted- record exempt).

B. NARCOTIC RESULTS

Attorneys may request preliminary narcotics results through the CLU. These results may be obtained by entering the event number into the [Narcotics Main Viewer](#). The CLU will generate the corresponding report and forward it to the requesting attorney.

C. REPORTS AND CAD

Attorneys may request CAD printouts or police reports that were not included in the initial discovery package sent to the District/City Attorney's Office. All such reports and CAD records are available in [NetRms](#). The CLU will locate and provide the requested materials to the attorney.

VI. COMPLAINT REQUEST EVALUATIONS (CRE'S):

Complaint Request Evaluations (CREs) are non-discoverable work products generated by the District Attorney's Office or City Attorney's Office. CREs are utilized to request additional information from the investigating or arresting officer, or to inform the officer of identified issues or deficiencies within a case.

- A.** The District Attorney Office uploads all CREs into [JELS](#).
- B.** The City Attorney's Office does not utilize JELS for their CREs. Instead, City Attorney CREs are hand-delivered to the CLU, which is responsible for forwarding them to the appropriate officer for follow-up.
- C.** There are four classifications of CREs:

- i. ISSUED – FURTHER INVESTIGATION NEEDED (R-1)**

- The case has been issued, and immediate follow-up is required. The CRE shall be email to the assigned investigator with a return date within seven days.

- ii. REJECTED – FURTHER INVESTIGATION NEEDED (R-2)**

- The case has been rejected pending additional investigative work. The CRE shall be emailed to the assigned investigator with a return date within three weeks.

- iii. REJECTED (R-3)**

A copy of the CRE will be forwarded to the appropriate command.
No follow-up is required, and R-3 CREs are not tracked by the CLU.

iv. **REDIRECTED**

The case has been reassigned to another prosecuting agency.
No follow-up is required.

- D. The District Attorney/City Attorney Liaison will distribute a copy of each CRE that requires follow up (R-1 and R-2) directly to the designated detective.
 - i. For District Attorney cases, it is the command's responsibility to log into JELS to review CREs that do not require follow-up (R-3 and Redirected).
 - ii. For City Attorney cases, CREs that do not require follow-up will be disseminated to the command by the City Attorney assigned to their command.
- E. If an investigator fails to respond to a CRE within the designated timeframe, an email reminder will be sent to the investigator and their supervisor requesting completion of the CRE.
- F. If no response is received within 30 days, the CLU Sergeant will be notified.
- G. The CLU Sergeant will then contact the investigator's sergeant to request completion of the outstanding CRE.
- H. If the investigator still fails to complete the CRE, the CLU Sergeant will notify the command via email regarding the lack of response.
- I. If no response is received following command notification, the file will be returned to the assigned attorney for final case disposition.
- J. District Attorney CREs are tracked by the District Attorney Liaisons through JELS.
- K. City Attorney CREs are tracked by the City Attorney Liaison using an internal tracking sheet.

VII. COURT CONTINUANCE/EXCUSAL FORMS

The San Diego Police Department requires all employees to comply with duly issued subpoenas and to appear for all scheduled court proceedings. Circumstances such as scheduled leave or unforeseen events may occasionally render an employee

unavailable. The procedures for requesting an excusal or continuance vary depending on the type of case and whether a prosecuting attorney has been assigned.

A. FELONY AND MISDEMEANOR CASES

For felony and misdemeanor matters in which a District Attorney or City Attorney has been assigned, employees subpoenaed by any attorney—whether representing the prosecution or the defense—must personally contact the issuing attorney to request an excusal from the scheduled court appearance. Following this communication, the subpoenaed employee shall complete a **Declaration for Continuance** form. The subpoenaing attorney will use this completed form to petition the court for a continuance.

- i. All completed **Declaration for Continuance** shall be emailed to the CLU at **(Redacted- record exempt)**.
- ii. Once received, the City Attorney Liaison will save the completed form to the G Drive.
- iii. The CLU will then promptly email the completed form to the attorney assigned to the respective case.

B. INFRACTION CASES

Continuances are not granted for infraction-level offenses. If an employee is unable to attend the scheduled court appearance for an infraction, the case will be dismissed. In such situations, the employee shall complete an **Excusal for Infraction Cases** form.

- i. All completed **Excusal for Infraction Cases** shall be emailed to the CLU at **(Redacted- record exempt)**.
- ii. Upon receipt, the Traffic Court Liaison will print the completed form and file it in accordance with the relevant court date

C. RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS

All original **Declaration for Continuance** and **Excusal for Infraction Cases** forms shall be retained by the subpoena clerk at the employee's command for a period of 60 days following the scheduled court appearance.

D. RETENTION OF DIGITAL AND PAPER COPIES BY CLU

The CLU shall retain all digital and hard-copy versions of the forms for a period of one year following the scheduled court appearance.

VIII. HOSPITAL ARRAIGNMENTS

The Court Liaison Unit facilitates all hospital arraignment processes as required. When notified by a command that a hospital arraignment is required, the CLU will:

- A. Distribute the hospital arraignment checklist to the assigned detectives.
- B. Forward the Probable Cause Declaration (PC DEC) to the on-duty judge for signature.
- C. Advise District Attorney staff of the defendant's scheduled court date.
- D. Serve as the point of contact between District Attorney staff and detectives to facilitate the hospital arraignment process and ensure a coordinated transition of custody responsibilities from officers to detentions personnel when the defendant is arraigned.

IX. DRESS CODE

The unit dress code requires personnel to wear approved business attire or a Class B uniform.

X. TIMECARDS

Timecards shall be maintained by the Operational Support Unit Word Processing Operator. Electronic timecards and leave slips must be submitted to the Court Liaison Sergeant no later than the Thursday of the pay-period ending week. The designated cost center for the Court Liaison Unit is 1914141214.

XI. ACCEPTING SUBPOENAS

The San Diego Police Department receives federal, civil, and out-of-county subpoenas via fax at **(Redacted- record exempt)**. The Department does not accept subpoenas submitted by email. Subpoenas may also be mailed to:

San Diego Police Department
Attn: Subpoena Desk
1401 Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

All inquiries regarding the service of subpoenas shall be directed to the Subpoena Desk at **(Redacted- record exempt)**.

XII. MISSED COURT

The Court Liaison Unit Sergeant shall be notified whenever any member of the Department fails to appear for a scheduled court proceeding. The CLU Sergeant shall notify the officer's command via email, attaching a copy of the served subpoena and the applicable court calendar.