

SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT



OPERATIONS MANUAL

May 2026

Nothing in this manual is intended to supersede or contradict the San Diego Police Department's Policies and Procedures or any Department Order or Bulletin, which constitutes Department Policy promulgated by the Chief of Police.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is committed to assisting all Department Investigators with case enhancement by providing personnel with expertise in operations planning, surveillance, and intelligence gathering. SIU will also assist investigators and allied agencies with apprehending suspects and fugitives. SIU will initiate or participate in long term investigations based upon the needs of the Department.

Cases necessitating the utilization of SIU typically involve but are not limited to violent or series related crimes, cases that are complex or sophisticated in nature, and cases requiring substantial resources or labor.

DESCRIPTIONS OF DUTIES:

Lieutenant:

- a. Provide direct supervision to the SIU sergeant.
- b. Ensure the Unit goals and objectives are being pursued.
- c. Keep current on SIU operations.
- d. Monitor overtime usage.
- e. Conduct monthly inspections.
- f. Maintain investigative funds
- g. Ensure all Department Policies and Procedures are followed by Unit members.
- h. Overall administrative responsibility for SIU

Detective Sergeant:

- a. Review incoming correspondence, crime cases, and investigative reports.
- b. Determine which cases SIU will investigate.
- c. Assign work to investigators.
- d. Prepare weekly and quarterly reports.
- e. Oversee proactive tactical operations.
- f. Supervise and advise detectives in conducting of criminal investigations.
- g. Manage SIU staffing.
- h. Inspect personnel and equipment assigned to the Unit.
- i. Serve as coordinator/facilitator between the Unit and prosecutors, area stations and allied law enforcement agencies.
- j. Supervise the use of Unit equipment.
- k. Train newly assigned personnel.
- l. Manage Unit investigative funds.

Detectives:

- a. Conduct thorough and complete investigations.
- b. Make arrests.
- c. Appropriately utilize Unit equipment.
- e. Prepare and serve arrest and search warrants.
- f. Collect and impound evidence and arrange for laboratory examination when needed.
- g. Prepare and submit investigative reports for prosecution.
- h. Present case for prosecution.
- i. Testify in court.
- j. Develop and manage Confidential Informants.
- k. Manage investigative funds.
- l. Follow established guidelines for handling of Digital Evidence per DP 1.49

SIU OPERATIONS GUIDELINES

Appearance and Grooming

Detectives will wear plain clothing that is appropriate to this assignment. Attire must be neat, clean and in good repair. The SIU Sergeant will ensure Detectives maintain appearance standards in accordance with Department Procedure 5.10.

Call Back and On Call Procedures

Stand-By and Call Back procedures are detailed in DP 1.20 – Overtime Compensation.

The SIU sergeants and detectives are subject to callouts. SIU personnel will monitor their cell phones unless they are approved otherwise. SIU personnel will notify a supervisor immediately if for any reason they are not available to respond to a callout.

The SIU sergeant will be responsible for making an on-call schedule. Generally, there will be one sergeant and two detectives on call. Due to the likelihood and necessity of SIU personnel being called back to assist all Department Units, the SIU Sergeant may require all SIU personnel to be on-call. On-Call personnel subject to Investigative Call Back are eligible to take their City vehicles home per DP 1.16 Off Duty Use of Department Take Home Vehicles.

Equipment:

The SIU Sergeant will be responsible for issuing and tracking Unit specific City equipment issued to team members. Each investigator will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of assigned equipment. Any lost, stolen, misplaced, or damaged equipment will be reported immediately to the unit supervisor. When a detective transfers out of the unit, all assigned equipment will be returned to the SIU Sergeant. See DP 1.23 Department Equipment Accountability for complete details.

Equipment utilized by SIU will adhere to procedures defined in Chapter 2, Article 10, of the San Diego Municipal Code, “Transparent and Responsible Use of Surveillance Technology.”

Office Security

Office security is of prime importance due to the highly sensitive nature of investigations conducted by SIU. All personnel will adhere to the following security measures:

- All personnel will display proper identification while in the station.
- No sensitive crime/arrest reports, photographs or other investigative material will be left on desktops.

- Informant files will be maintained in a locked area under control of the Custodian of Records.
- All rooms, cabinets and drawers containing equipment (i.e., cameras, radios, shotguns, etc.,) will always remain locked and secured.
- SIU office shall be locked when the office is unoccupied after hours. The last person leaving will be responsible for securing the office.

Operations Outside the City:

The Robbery Lieutenant will be notified prior to any pre-planned operation outside the city. The Investigations II Captain will be notified by the Robbery Lieutenant prior to any pre-planned operation outside of San Diego County. When working outside of the City of San Diego, personnel will advise the concerned law enforcement agency of their location and provide a brief synopsis of their investigation. Personnel will attempt to use uniformed personnel from the allied agency for assistance when possible.

Travel

Investigative travel with less than seven days' notice that requires overnight accommodations will generally require the use of investigative funds. Detectives using investigative funds for travel must prepare a memo and have it approved by his/her command. Receipts are required for all investigative fund expenditures.

Travel expenditures are arranged through Fiscal Management. Receipts shall be required based on the policies of Fiscal Management.

Investigative Funds

Procedures regarding Investigative Funds are outlined in the Investigative Procedures Manual. Forms are in the F drive/Templates/Investigative Reports/Investigative Expense Reports. The Robbery Unit Lieutenant manages the Investigative Funds for SIU. Requests for Investigative funds should be requested through the Robbery Lieutenant,

VEHICLE POLICY

General Policy

The Robbery Unit Lieutenant will assign the vehicles to individual detectives for the purpose of accountability. Detectives will not trade assigned vehicles without Command approval. Vehicles may also be re-assigned according to unit needs.

Some of the unmarked SIU vehicles are equipped with emergency lights and siren. The intent of placing emergency lights and siren in the SIU vehicles is threefold:

- To identify detective vehicles and provide a warning to the public that a law enforcement incident is taking place.
- To provide an opportunity for the public to avoid a particular area.
- To give an immediate visual and auditory indicator to both the public and other officers that identifies the SIU personnel as law enforcement.

SIU personnel shall not drive Code 3 nor activate their emergency lights and siren unless it is to accomplish one of the above objectives **during an SIU operation**. The only other time Code 3 driving is authorized is for an immediate, life threatening emergency. All other Code 3 driving, and activation of the emergency lights and siren is prohibited, including, but not limited to, engaging in pursuits and making traffic stops. SIU personnel must adhere to Department Procedure 1.13 – Emergency Vehicle Operation when driving Code 3.

SIU detectives have the potential to be called back at any time and are authorized to take their vehicles home on a full-time basis.

SIU personnel shall not drink intoxicating beverages and operate a City vehicle while on duty or off duty. Employees are prohibited from using City vehicles at any time when their driving ability has been impaired through the ingestion of drugs, medicines, or alcoholic beverages.

SIU personnel are responsible for all citations received on the vehicle while it is assigned to them. If for some reason the vehicle is out of the control of the assigned detective for any reason, (i.e., vacation, in for maintenance, loaned out for a day) it is their responsibility to mark those days on the Monthly Maintenance Report prior to submitting them to their sergeant at the end of the month.

Additional guidelines are set forth in the San Diego Police Department Investigative Procedures Manual and Department Procedure 1.16.