

San Diego Police Department

TRAINING BULLETIN

A PUBLICATION OF THE SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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**SAN DIEGO COUNTY DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN (DEC) TEAM
PROTOCOL**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide Department members with guidelines and protocol for using the San Diego County Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Teams.

II. BACKGROUND

In 2003, the District Attorney, Director of the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, and the San Diego County Sheriff formed the Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Coordinating Council and began meeting under the auspices of the Methamphetamine Strike Force. They formed a committee to create the San Diego DEC Protocol, which resulted in Child Welfare Services (CWS) creating and implementing DEC teams to respond to assist law enforcement in every region of the County.

III. PROTOCOL FOR USE

Each CWS region has a DEC phone. Every day, a worker or supervisor carries that phone and is responsible for coordinating the region's response to DEC calls from law enforcement. The DEC phones are manned from 0700 until 1700 hours. **From 1700 to 2300 standby workers are available to respond to DEC calls by calling the Law Enforcement Child Abuse Hotline (888-242-5722).** If the worker responsible for the DEC phone cannot pick up, officers should leave a message. The expectation is someone will call that officer back within five minutes.

DEC calls involve any situation where the welfare of children in the home are impacted or likely to be impacted by drug use, drug sales, or the manufacture of drugs. This can range from clandestine labs present in the home (meth, honey oil, etc.) to the simple use by the parents, leaving the parents unable to adequately care for the children or putting the children at risk of exposure to dangerous drugs (marijuana still counts if there is a perceived risk or impact, i.e. candy edibles out where small children can access them, etc.).

DEC workers can respond to assist officers in the field who happen upon a DEC situation while responding to a call. They can also assist with planned operations such as the service of search warrants, 4th Amendment Waiver searches, or similar operations when it is believed drugs and children may both be present. Given 24-hour notice of such operations, the DEC teams can respond even outside of their normal operating hours, including on weekends.

When DEC workers come to a scene, they will assist law enforcement by making assessments regarding placements/transportation of the children, notifying the Child Abuse Hotline, and beginning the CWS investigation into child abuse/neglect.

SDPD patrol divisions fall into the following CWS Regions:

- Central Region (DEC #(858) 344-1186) – HQ, Central, Mid-City, Southeastern
- North Central Region (DEC #(858) 750-0699) – Eastern, Northern, Northwestern, Western
- North Region (DEC# (760) 535-2086) – Northeastern
- South Region (DEC # (619) 892-2577) – Southern

Questions regarding this program can be directed to Senior Protective Services Worker Erik Martin at (858) 877-8471.