98-009 VINE Program Procedures

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services

VINE PROGRAM PROCEDURES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the spring of 1996, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors directed the Sheriff to establish a domestic violence warning system, whereby victims of domestic violence would be notified of their attacker's impending, or actual release from custody. This program, called, VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) has recently been implemented by the Sheriff's Department. VINE is a comprehensive awareness program that utilizes public education, state-of-the-art technology and a centralized Call Center to connect communities with vital criminal justice information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Although VINE focuses on domestic violence and its related crimes, it will work with **every** type of crime and offender.

The VINE system interfaces with the Automated Justice Interface System, (AJIS), for its information. When a suspect's booking information is entered electronically into AJIS, it is automatically transmitted to the VINE system. In addition, every time the offender's information is electronically updated with court dates, release dates, etc., VINE is automatically notified. All of an offenders information transmitted to VINE is available to anyone who registers with the VINE system. Registration with VINE is simple, all a person must know is the suspect's name and/or booking number, and have access to a touch-tone phone. There is no fee for registering with VINE, and anyone may register, for example; the media, victim advocates, victim's family and friends, suspect's family and friends, detectives and special interest groups.

This Field Operations Directive establishes procedures for patrol personnel to use when informing victims in the use of the VINE program.

FIELD DEPUTIES' RESPONSIBILITIES

When handling a domestic violence incident or a violent crime where the suspect(s) are identified or arrested, the patrol deputy shall:

I. **HAND OUT THE VINE PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET**

The VINE program information sheet contains step-by-step instructions on how a victim can register, access and retrieve information from the VINE system.

As is often the case, victims of domestic violence and violent crimes are suffering from the effects of a traumatic situation. The handout serves as a vital component in keeping the victim informed, after the initial stress from the violent event has passed. Consequently, the victim can use the information provided by the

handout at a later, more calm, time to register with the VINE program.

I. **EXPLAIN THE VINE PROGRAM TO THE VICTIM**

Victims and others, (family, friends, advocate groups, etc.) may register and utilize the services of the VINE system by calling a toll-free telephone number and entering a personal identification number (PIN) selected by them. By using the suspect's name and/or booking number, the VINE system locates the suspect in the Automated Justice Interface System (AJIS), and provides designated information to the caller. When the offender approaches his/her release date, the VINE system automatically telephones the victim at a prearranged number every 30 minutes within a 24-hour period until the victim answers. To acknowledge the call, the victim inputs their PIN by using a touch- tone phone. If the victim fails to input their PIN to acknowledge the warning, and they have chosen the certified letter option through VINE, a certified letter will be sent to the victim's address informing them of the offender's impending release date.

In the event a suspect is released and subsequently re-arrested on another charge, the victim must re-register with VINE using the suspect's new booking number.

This program places the responsibility on the victim to stay informed and assists them in taking an active role in their own protection.

Note: Access to the VINE program can be gained only after the suspect has been booked into AJIS.

I. **INCLUDE VINE NOTIFICATION IN COMPLAINT REPORT**

Document that you have handed out the VINE information sheet and explained the VINE program to the victim(s) in the complaint report.

JAILERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Whenever any station jail release is prepared, whether it be bail, bond, citation, or 849b1 P.C., the suspect's release must be processed electronically through the Justice Data Interface Controller System (JDIC) or the Automated Justice Information System (AJIS), prior to his/her physical release. This process applies to any and all releases from station jails since the crime of Domestic Violence is dispersed throughout and related to many other crimes. Performing the electronic release prior to the actual physical release of the suspect, ensures that the VINE system (which receives offender information directly from AJIS) is immediately updated. Consequently, victims may obtain instant, accurate offender release information by accessing the VINE system.

STATION CLERKS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Updating offender release information must be considered imperative. Upon receipt of a release package from the jailer, the release information must be transmitted through JDIC or AJIS immediately, prior to the offender leaving Sheriff's custody. Accuracy of offender status in AJIS generates accuracy for the VINE system. Without the immediate information available to VINE, through AJIS, the victim may not be notified of their offender's release.

This process will only be successful with full cooperation between station clerks and station jailers.

UNIT COMMANDERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Due to the urgency of keeping AJIS updated with immediate release information, every Unit Commander shall have personnel available 24-hours a day, seven days a week to update AJIS. During times when a station clerk is unavailable for AJIS entry, a back-up plan shall be in effect. This plan should consist of jail personnel who are accountable to the AJIS network and have a working knowledge of station release policy.

> **Note**: Electronic release updates cannot occur without first entering the initial booking package information.

During those occasions when the AJIS network is out of service, (i.e. routine maintenance), inmates should not be released until such time as the AJIS network is brought back on line.