89-008 Air Support Policy

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services

AIR SUPPORT POLICY

The purpose of this directive is to provide guidance to all personnel concerned with using, ordering, or providing air support to ground law enforcement units. It constitutes the policy of this Department and may involve the basis for recovering any monetary reimbursement for providing air support service.

AIR SUPPORT IN UNINCORPORATED AREAS

The Sheriff's Department provides helicopter patrol of the unincorporated areas, as available.

AIR SUPPORT IN CITIES WHEN A LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION OR A MUTUAL AID REQUEST EXISTS

The Sheriff's Department will provide air support free of charge, as available, to the policing agency of any city within Los Angeles County under the following criteria:

- When a situation exists that is life-threatening to a citizen or police officer. (The initiator of requests for air support must be able to reasonably articulate why a life was directly threatened.)
- When an air unit monitors and responds to the following specifically identified types of activity and call codes that are designated as inherently life-threatening:
  - 187 - Murder
  - 207 - Kidnapping
  - 211 - Robbery
  - 217 - Attempt Murder
  - 245 - Assault with a Deadly Weapon 246 - Shooting at an Inhabited Dwelling 261 - Rape
  - 417 - Person with a Weapon 451 - Arson
  - 904 - Fire
  - 997, 998, 999 - Officer needs help or assistance FP, VP - Foot or Vehicle Pursuit
- The original nature of the call determines its character and not the circumstances when concluded. Example: If an air unit responds to a 211 call and it is subsequently determined to be a 415 call, the air support will be free to the concerned city agency.
- Upon the request from any city for mutual aid, the criteria required under the State Master Mutual Aid agreement must be satisfied. These requests are routinely expressed to the Watch Commander at a Sheriff's Station as identified in Enclosure 1-3 to the Los Angeles County Multi-Hazard Functional Plan. Response under circumstances described in 1-3 are considered "county wide" in nature, and supported

by the County General Fund.

AIR SUPPORT IN CITIES OF A NON-LIFE-THREATENING OR NON-MUTUAL AID NATURE

The Sheriff's Department may provide, as available, air support to ground units in any city, which are involved in non-life-threatening or non-mutual aid activities, on a fee basis according to rates established by the Los Angeles County Auditor- Controller.

While most support services are included in the contract rate for patrol service, air service is not. Therefore, it is critical that Watch Commanders become quickly involved in the decision making process of determining the duration of the air unit's involvement since these costs could be passed on to the contract city. Desk personnel shall immediately notify the Watch Commander when an air unit is requested or when the air unit has self-initiated a response to a call within a contract city.

The air unit has the prerogative to respond to a call likely to require air support, without first being requested, in order to have aerial support over the location as soon as possible. The air unit shall advise SRC on the appropriate radio frequency that it is responding. A Watch Commander can decide to terminate the response or support and the air unit shall comply. If the air unit has arrived over the site of an incident that is not listed as inherently life-threatening and it is determined to be non-life-threatening, the service time is billable to the contract city up to the time the air unit is discontinued by the Watch Commander or the air unit returns to other duties or regular patrol.

While it is recognized that all situations are not always clear, Unit Commander discretion in changing billable call codes to non-billable, or visa-versa, is limited.

If a Unit Commander does deem changes appropriate, he/she should have ample reasons for the change.

STATION/BUREAU PROCEDURES

The Aero Bureau will provide support service as described within the above policy. The time spent handling all air support will be documented. Each Aero Bureau patrol crew will complete an "Aero Bureau Log" at the end of each shift documenting all service activity provided in unincorporated areas or cities. At the end of each month, Aero Bureau shall prepare a report synopsizing the aerial support provided to each contract city. Station Commanders shall receive a copy of this report for each contract city in their respective station area, not later than the fifth of each month.

Each station is required to record Aero Bureau support activity for contract cities in the station area on a daily basis. A "Station Aero Bureau Request Log" shall be maintained by the Watch Deputy, under the direction of the Watch Commander. It will reflect emergent, non-emergent, and mutual aid deployment of Aero units in the station's area of responsibility, and shall be submitted to the station's operations personnel daily. Upon receipt of the monthly Aero Bureau Activity Report for contract cities, The Unit Commander shall ensure that the station's log and the Aero Bureau's report is compared and a list of billable and non-billable activity for each contract city is compiled. By the seventh day of each month, Station Commanders shall submit a memorandum, listing the type, location, and time spent on aerial activity, to the Commander of the Contract Law Enforcement Bureau, with a copy to the concerned contract city manager. This memorandum shall reflect both billable and non-billable activity.