

## 20-002 Ring Neighbors Law Enforcement Portal

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### Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

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### RING NEIGHBORS

### LAW ENFORCEMENT PORTAL

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Department recognizes that innovative crime prevention efforts in partnership with the community are essential to reduce crime. The purpose of this directive is to set policy and guidelines for the Department's use of the "Ring Neighbors Law Enforcement Portal," now referred to as "Neighbors Portal." The Neighbors Portal is a website portal that allows access to shared video, comments and questions submitted by local private residents.

#### **PROCEDURE**

Access to and use of the Neighbors Portal is strictly controlled. Only Department members authorized by their Unit Commander shall have access to the Neighbors Portal. Department credentials will be provided by the Station's Neighbors Portal Coordinator. Department personnel shall not use another member's credentials to access the Neighbors Portal. Only those personnel who have attended a Sheriff's Information Bureau training class shall have the ability to post comments on behalf of the Department/Station.

All use of the Neighbors Portal shall be for law enforcement purposes only. Use of video or photos obtained from the publicly shared Neighbors Portal shall be downloaded and shared for investigatory or intelligence gathering purposes only. All media obtained shall be stored and archived in compliance with Department record retention and evidence retention policies. Unless specifically authorized by the Unit Commander or designee, members shall only access the Neighbors Portal from Department computers and devices.

Use of the Neighbors Portal to assist another law enforcement agency in their investigation shall be only be done with the express approval of the Station's Neighbors Coordinator. Agencies requesting information about the Neighbors Portal System should be referred to the vendor.

#### **Two Levels of Access**

Administrative – Full administrative rights to create new user accounts, request video, ability to turn on/off controls for all basic users, full posting rights, ability to create assigned geographic areas, ability to assign individuals to specific areas, and ability to respond to public posts. The Neighbors Portal Coordinator (Administrator) shall be the Station/Unit Operations Lieutenant or Unit Commander's designee.

Basic User – These are limited user rights which are controlled and set by the Station's Neighbors

Coordinator. A Basic User can request video or respond to public posts. This function can be modified to view only. The Crime Prevention Coordinator (Basic User with rights to view and post) shall be deputies assigned to the Community Relations Office and/or personnel approved by the Station/Unit Operations Lieutenant or Unit Commander.

#### NEIGHBORS PORTAL COORDINATOR

A Neighbors Portal Coordinator shall be designated by each Station's Unit Commander and will be responsible for:

- Determining appropriate access levels for Department members based on their investigative or intelligence gathering need and best interests of the Department;
- Implementing a regular schedule for monitoring the Local Neighbors Portal feed and interacting with the public through the Neighbors Portal;
- Ensuring members are appropriately trained for their access level;
- Periodically auditing the Neighbors Portal for compliance with this policy; and
- Monitoring the program's results, reporting those results to command staff and implementing changes.

#### CRIME PREVENTION COORDINATOR

A Crime Prevention Coordinator shall be designated by each Station's Unit Commander and will be responsible for:

- Being the primary point of contact on behalf of the stations for alerts and comments using the Neighbors Portal;
- Posting crime specific warnings and requests; and
- Providing information about the program during community meetings and events.

#### GENERAL OPERATIONS

The Department recognizes the value of the information shared by the community through the Neighbors Portal. Patrol personnel are encouraged to monitor the feed themselves for information regarding public safety, criminal activity, and the identification of unknown suspects.

Specific station personnel should be designated to receive alerts when a community member makes a post regarding an area station personnel are working.

Supervisors should share the Neighbors Portal information at shift briefings in furtherance of the Department's law enforcement mission. This information may be used to alert personnel regarding (but not limited to) officer's safety information, criminal activity, events affecting public safety, and the identification of suspects.

Department members may access the Neighbors Portal from a Department computing device in compliance with this directive and related policies.

Department members who observe reports of obvious criminal activity in a Neighbors Portal shall check the comment section to determine if the Department is aware of the incident. If it appears the Department has

not been made aware of the incident, the Department member shall alert their supervisor.

## **INVESTIGATIONS**

The Neighbors Portal will only allow investigators to request videos from “Ring” device owners within a specified area. Other types of video can be requested through the Crime Prevention Coordinator.

All video requests shall adhere to strict guidelines. When an investigator determines a “Ring video request” is appropriate for a given case, the investigator shall seek approval from their supervisor. The supervisor will then initiate the search request. If a supervisor is unavailable and the request is urgent, any supervisor may authorize the video request and seek a designated member with privileges to complete the video request. Investigators should keep the following things in mind:

- Investigators should attempt to narrow the scope of the video request to an appropriate date, time frame and geographical area to avoid an overly broad request;
- Device locations are not at “exact” addresses or locations to protect an owner’s privacy; and
- Investigators shall not use the video request feature as a substitute for a neighborhood canvas.

## **EVIDENTIARY CONSIDERATIONS**

All media obtained from the Neighbors Portal or through a video request shall be preserved and maintained in accordance with established record retention and evidence storage policies. Media obtained through a video request remains in the case management area of the Neighbors Portal and is stored in the cloud for a short period of time (currently 30 days). Investigators or analysts who view a video and make the determination that the video is of evidentiary value shall download the video, begin the chain of custody and preserve it according to the Department’s evidence storage policy.

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