15-28 - Clearing Vehicles with High-Risk Encounters

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services, (323) 890-5411

CLEARING VEHICLES WITH HIGH-RISK ENCOUNTERS

Scenario: Deputies in a marked patrol vehicle observe another vehicle driven by a suspect with a gun. The deputies conduct a traffic stop where the driver jumps out of the stopped vehicle, points a gun at them, and flees on foot from the vehicle. The deputies are focused on the armed suspect as he runs away. As the deputies begin their foot pursuit, they attempt to look inside the stopped vehicle as they pass by it; however, the vehicle has dark "limo" tint, and the deputies are unable to see inside.

Issue: What are some of the difficult decisions to be made in this scenario?

- What type of suspect is being chased?
- Should the stopped vehicle be cleared in the event there are other suspects inside?
- Should consideration be given to cancelling the foot pursuit and attempt to set up a containment?
- What if the armed suspect, desperate to escape capture, was heading towards a busy shopping area with several open businesses or crowded restaurants with patrons? Does this pose a potential for a hostage or barricaded suspect situation?
- What if the suspect is a parolee and a known gang member with a history of numerous known violent felony arrests?

This scenario is situationally driven and will cause the deputy to constantly reassess. If the vehicle is in close proximity to the deputies, it may pose a danger if the occupancy is unknown. In the above scenario, strong consideration should be given to clearing the vehicle before running past it. This can be done by deputies positioned back-to-back, with one deputy looking into the vehicle while the other deputy blocks for him and tries to keep the fleeing armed suspect in view. This also prevents being outmaneuvered by the suspect. If feasible, the deputy watching the fleeing suspect should be broadcasting radio traffic. This should include the following:

- Unit identifier or name of deputy
- Suspect location and direction
- Reason for the foot pursuit
- Suspect description
- Whether or not suspect is armed, if known

Once the vehicle is cleared and deputies still have visual on the armed suspect, a determination should be made to either continue the foot pursuit or stop and set up a containment. If visual confirmation is compromised (i.e., lose sight of the suspect), do not continue to pursue and set up a containment.

This Newsletter was authored with the assistance of the Tactics and Survival Unit.

Information regarding the content of this newsletter may be directed to Field Operations Support Services at (323) 890-5411.

References

Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) Sections:

5-09/220.50 Foot Pursuits

3-10/150.00 Tactical Incidents