15-14 - Shooting at Vehicle Tires

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services, (323) 890-5411

SHOOTING AT VEHICLE TIRES

Shooting at a vehicle is inherently dangerous and almost always ineffective. Shooting at the tires of a vehicle is even more hazardous and will more than likely not accomplish the deputy's goal – to stop the vehicle. In addition, shooting at the tires of a vehicle increases the risk of injury to the deputy, public, and occupants of the vehicle.

Tires, while likely to be damaged from gunfire, would not make the vehicle inoperable or immobile. If the tires were damaged and suddenly lost air pressure, it would make the vehicle unstable and far more difficult to control at any speed, making the out-of-control vehicle into a multi-ton projectile dangerous to the deputy, other vehicles, pedestrians, buildings, and occupants within the vehicle.

Manual of Policy and Procedures section 3-10/220.00, Use of Firearms Against Vehicles and/or Occupants of Vehicles, states that a Department member who feels compelled to fire at the tires of a vehicle shall evaluate the potential dangers of the out-of-control vehicle and use sound tactical principles which include:

- Cover and/or tactical relocation;
- Safe distance;
- Incident command and tactical leadership;
- Coordinated personnel placement;
- Tactical approach;
- Regard for viable target acquisition;
- Due regard for background, including the location, other traffic, and innocent persons;
- Due regard for crossfire;
- Controlled fire and management of ammunition.

Deputies should consider the use of spike strips, which is a sound tactical principle, wherein air pressure is slowly released from the tires. This lessens the chance of having an out-of-control vehicle.

Information regarding the content of this newsletter may be directed to Field Operations Support Services.