21-13 - Reaching Into Vehicles

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services

Reaching Into Vehicles

The dangers of reaching into an occupied vehicle often outweigh the potential benefit. As a general guideline, reaching into occupied vehicles is inherently dangerous and discouraged, and may present the following tactical disadvantages:

- Exposes the deputy's hand(s); or
- Risk of being pulled into or entangled with a vehicle could cause great bodily injury, including death, by being dragged, run over, or crushed between the vehicle and a fixed object.

Tactical Considerations

Upon contacting a driver during a vehicle stop or other investigation, deputies should continually maintain a position of advantage. Tactics for doing so may include:

- Requesting backup unit(s);
- Using appropriate lighting equipment;
- Using direct and clear verbal commands such as "turn off the car," "put your hands on the steering wheel/dashboard," and/or "passengers keep your hands visible";
- Ensuring the engine is off;
- Avoid crossing into the vehicle's door frame or window plane;
- Maintain balance and gun-side awareness;
- Continuously assess the actions of the driver/occupant(s); and
- Disengaging to employ other tactical options.

There are situations when reaching into an occupied vehicle may be necessary. Examples may include:

- A vehicle was involved in a collision and it is necessary to turn off the engine or to render aid to unconscious or incapacitated occupants; or
- The potential risk of the situation to deputies or the public outweighs the risk of reaching into an occupied vehicle.

Take a moment to view the attached tactical video debrief and discuss with your partners and sergeants.

If you have any questions, please call or email Field Operations Support Services Unit at [REDACTED TEXT]

ATTACHMENTS

LASD Video Hub: Tactical Video Debrief 101, Reaching Into Vehicles