

21-20 - The Use of Cover

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services



THE USE OF COVER

PURPOSE

The purpose of this newsletter is to remind Department personnel of the considerations for the use of cover during tactical incidents.

BACKGROUND

An analysis of recent Department shootings has revealed personnel tend to leave adequate positions of cover without weighing the tactical advantage gained from that movement. Movement from cover without any tactical advantages should only be considered in extreme circumstances.

BASICS OF COVER

Cover is defined as anything which provides protection from bullets or other projectiles fired or thrown. Concealment is anything which conceals a person from view. Cover is fluid and may change or be defeated. Personnel should continuously evaluate their cover by incorporating, but not limiting, themselves to the following considerations:

- Weapons caliber being used by the suspect;
- Construction of the cover being used;
- Mobility/tactics of the suspect; and
- How the cover is utilized.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Weapons Training Unit (WTU) and Tactics and Survival Unit (TAS) teach four concepts related to cover.

1. Do Not Present Yourself Unless You're Ready to Defend Yourself - Movement from cover can potentially expose personnel to a threat. Deputies should be prepared to employ the appropriate level of force before leaving cover.
2. Do Not Crowd or Extend Past Cover - Crowding cover may be a natural reaction in high-stress situations. Personnel should create distance between themselves and cover. This technique can provide a better field of view and less exposure.
3. Maintain Visual Contact of Your Suspect and Their Location - Knowledge of a suspect's location is

critical as it allows personnel to react to a suspect's actions. Personnel may outmaneuver a suspect by maintaining cover between them or moving to a more advantageous position.

4. If Visual Contact with a Suspect is lost, Change Positions - If personnel lose sight of their suspect, they should avoid exposing themselves in the same location where the suspect last saw them. This can be accomplished by changing cover locations or positions behind a current piece of cover. A change in position behind cover can be a simple elevation change, i.e., standing if a person was kneeling or kneeling if a person was standing. An example of changing cover locations would be moving to a parked vehicle directly adjacent to a current piece of cover.

No tactic is perfect. All tactics have advantages and drawbacks.

For further information regarding the use of cover and concealment, please refer to our Tactical Incident Policy (MPP 3-10/150.00, Tactical Incidents).

For questions regarding the content of this newsletter, contact Tactics and Survival, at [REDACTED TEXT]

If you require further information, contact Field Operations Support Services Unit at

[REDACTED TEXT]
