21-18 - Flash Mob/Smash and Grab Robbery or Theft

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services

FLASH MOB/SMASH-AND-GRAB ROBBERY OR THEFT

A flash mob/smash-and-grab robbery or theft is an organized form of retail crime in which a large group of participants enter a retail shop or convenience store, en masse, and steal goods and other items. Typically, store workers and security guards quickly become overwhelmed by the large number of participants.

Criteria for identifying this type of crime may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Extreme act(s) of violence;
- Significant loss – over $20,000;
- Appear to be part of a series (two or more incidents in Sheriff's Department jurisdiction which are apparently committed by the same suspects);
- Noteworthy media event;
- Workable, actionable information (license plate, known suspect(s), etc.); and/or
- Six or more suspects.

Notifications

All flash mob/smash and grab crimes are documented on a spreadsheet by crime analysts assigned to the Sheriff's Information Bureau (SIB) Operations Center; therefore, it is essential to notify SIB of these crimes. If one or more of the above criteria exists, request SIB notify Major Crimes Bureau (MCB) to consult with MCB Metro detectives. MCB detectives are available 24 hours a day for consultation; they will determine if they will assume the investigation after reviewing the information.

REMINDERS

Desk Personnel

- All persons working the desk should actively communicate when receiving calls such as major crimes in progress, Code-3 responses, critical missing, or noteworthy/unusual incidents, etc.;

- Priority incidents and other situations of interest to the watch commander and other station personnel should be announced over the public address (P.A.) system. If the dispatcher is too busy, they should request the watch deputy make the announcement (*Station Desk Manual*);
    - NOTE: Stations that do not have a night detective can contact Operation Safe Streets Bureau (OSS).
- It is the responsibility of the station dispatcher to monitor broadcasts and, if necessary, copy down the information. If the field unit requests Los Angeles Police Department or California Highway Patrol to be notified, Sheriff's Communication Center has the direct line to these agencies and will notify them. The dispatcher or complaint person will notify other agencies by telephone (*Desk Manual*); and
- The watch deputy has the ultimate responsibility for notifying the watch sergeant and watch commander of certain situations (*Station Desk Manual*).

Patrol Units

- Confirm if a crime occurred, regardless of retailers being non-desirous. Once determined it was a flash mob/smash-and-grab incident, notify SIB as soon as possible;
- Broadcast pertinent information immediately for desk personnel and supervisors to make their necessary notifications;
- Assist witnesses in connecting them with the "Citizens Link" to provide pictures and videos they may have; and
- Ascertain if the stolen product has a tracking device. If so, have desk personnel track the items and coordinate a response.

Supervisors

Situations involving noteworthy or unusual incidents that generate media attention or require notification to a specialized unit should be referred to SIB (FOD 86-011, MPP section 2-11/040.10, and 4-01/100.25).

If you require further information, contact Field Operations Support Services Unit at [REDACTED TEXT]

ATTACHMENTS

Station Desk Manual

REFERENCES

Manual of Policy and Procedures section 2-05/030.00 – Fraud and Cyber Crimes Bureau

Manual of Policy and Procedures section 2-05/090.00 – Major Crimes Bureau

Manual of Policy and Procedures section 2-11/040.10 – Department Operations Center

Manual of Policy and Procedures section 4-01/090.05 – Cases of Major Importance

Manual of Policy and Procedures section 4-01/100.25 – Important Cases and Incidents

Field Operations Directive 86-011 – Notification and Reporting of Significant Incidents

Field Operations Directive 12-006 – Cybercrime, Cyber-Related Crime, and Cyber-Related Incidents