



TRAINING BULLETIN

Los Angeles Police Department

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THREE-OFFICER UNIT TACTICS

Generally, uniformed officers deployed to field assignments work as two-officer units. A two-officer unit allows officers to deploy a basic “contact and cover” technique to maximize officer safety. Occasionally, because of deployment, special events, unusual occurrences or specialized details, three officers may be assigned to a car with approval from the commanding officer or their designee, creating a “three-officer unit.” When assigned to a three-officer unit, officers must consider maximizing resources to deploy safely during every incident. Generally, three-officer uniform deployment will be approved for specialized details rather than patrol. The purpose of this Bulletin is to provide an overview of tactics specific to three-officer deployment.

Planning

At the beginning of each watch or assignment, partner officers should discuss current community concerns and tactical issues in preparation for their assignment or specific mission. The discussions should include topics such as contact, cover, communication and each officer’s responsibilities during pedestrian stops, vehicle pullovers, and foot pursuits. Officers should understand that their responsibilities may shift during dynamic situations and that all three officers must be flexible and adapt as needed.

Pedestrian Stop/Vehicle Stop

A three-officer unit should maintain the contact and cover concept during pedestrian and vehicle stops, utilizing one contact officer and two cover officers. This practice avoids forcing one cover officer to divide his/her attention between two contact officers. The importance of cover officers cannot be overstated and it is of importance to preserve the integrity of utilizing **one** contact officer whenever feasible during pedestrian stops, even when assigned to a three-officer unit. One cover officer should act as the communication officer to provide timely updates to Communications Division and responding units.

Foot Pursuit

When officers are deployed three in a unit, all Department operational rules and tactical guidelines remain in effect as they would for a two-person unit, such as avoiding separation (splitting up) between officers, maintaining adequate communication between officers, and preserving the ability for all officers in the unit to render aid to

each other. Officers that are deployed three in a unit shall be held accountable to these tactical guidelines. A three-officer unit involved in a foot pursuit should follow the same tactical concepts as a two-officer unit. Additionally, having a third officer in the unit does not change the tactical consideration of requesting back-up or help, or consideration of containment versus apprehension modes. The police vehicle should not be used to participate in the foot pursuit by attempting to outflank the suspect or otherwise cut off his/her avenue of escape.

CONCLUSION

When assigned to a three-officer unit, officers must consider how to maximize resources while still using basic contact and cover techniques to ensure officer safety. If officers maintain flexibility in roles and responsibilities while maintaining contact and cover techniques, they can safely and effectively deploy as a three-officer unit.

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