

LAPD Sept. Update

Editor's Note: LAPD Chief William Bratton delivered his e-mail monthly update for September. His message is below.

Now that we are more than half way through the year, I want to take this opportunity to update you on where the Department is going, and to touch on several current issues that should be of interest to you.

At the beginning of the year when the Department set its annual crime reduction goals, I stated that we would look at them at mid-year, assess our progress, and revise the goals based on unmet challenges. After reviewing the progress made by the men and women of this Department during the first half of the year, it is my belief that our goal projection from the first of the year is on target, making any further revisions at mid-year unnecessary. After speaking with Assistant Chief George Gascon, Director of the Office of Operations, we both realized that we went into this year setting a "stretch" goal for crime reduction. Although there are some areas that will need special attention, both Assistant Chief Gascon and I believe that at this time, the trends indicate that the Department is on the right track. We will again address the crime goals at the last quarter of the year and go from there.

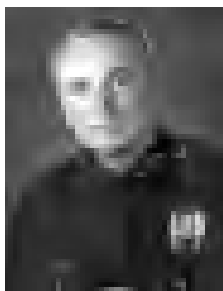
Your police department is continuing to do more with less. As officers work to reduce crime and fear in the City, they are doing it with less backup, with fewer sworn officers. Currently there are 9,154 sworn personnel. That's down 1.3 percent from this time a year ago. That shortage is compounded by the more than 500 civilian vacancies. What is clear is that our officers are motivated and dedicated to their mission. Arrests numbers are a good indicator. Over the past two years, arrests have increased by 19 percent.

Half-Cent Sales Tax

I still have a responsibility to fight for as many police officers as budgets will allow. Recognizing the critical need for more resources, the Mayor, Police Commission and I will continue to try to find additional revenue sources. In that regard, the best opportunity on the horizon to help us beef up the ranks, reduce crime and improve officer safety is the proposed half-cent sales tax measure for Los Angeles County. The Department stands to gain approximately \$164 million, money that would be spent to increase the Department's sworn strength. Imagine an increase of 1,200 to 1,500 officers over a four-year hiring-up period, increased overtime, improved technology and how that would impact crime in this City. The Department could reduce crime, particularly gang-related crime, by as much as 50 percent. It is my belief that this increased sales tax initiative would provide the tipping point that will make Los Angeles the safest big city in America. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has agreed to put this initiative on the November 2 ballot, after making adjustments to the percentages of funds that would go to other County justice agencies, including the District Attorney, Public Defender, and the Probation Department. You will be hearing more about the initiative in the coming months.

Complaint Process

Regarding the complaint process, due to a recent change in the California Penal Code, it's required that persons filing complaints be advised of their right to file a complaint against an officer,



LAPD Chief William Bratton

and that knowingly filing a false complaint can result in a misdemeanor violation. Therefore, Department employees taking complaints must assure that complainants are asked to sign a Complaint Advisory form, stating that they understand our policy

on accepting complaints, and that the filing of false complaints can be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

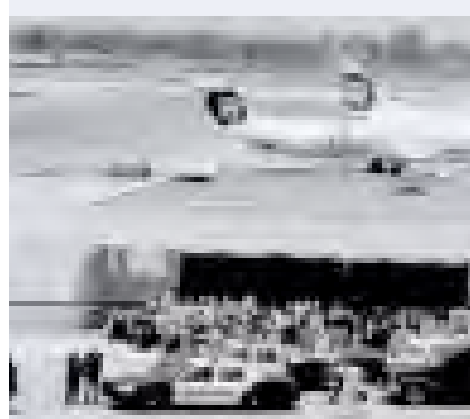
Flashlight Flashpoint

Finally, in addressing the issue of flashlights: I will be limiting the use of the large metal variety in favor of smaller, custom-designed models. I'm doing this with the patrol officer in mind, since the larger lights have been tainted by recent use of force incidents. Now, every time officers use a metal flashlight as an impact device, they will face intense public and media scrutiny. Officers have a tough enough job to do without that additional pressure. This action protects the public and officers. It ensures the public that the Department is responsive to their concerns. The new flashlights will be lighter, less bulky, easier to carry, and will provide adequate illumination for officers to perform their duties. A special task force, which includes patrol officers, has been formed to design this "LAPD customized" flashlight. The design and acquisition of the new flashlights will take time. In the meantime, the current flashlights will continue to be authorized for use.

In Conclusion

My command staff and I are working hard looking for opportunities, programs and products that will help officers do their job consistently, compassionately and constitutionally. Thanks to the commitment of all the sworn and civilian members of this great Department, a sizable reduction in the level of crime has occurred in this City. We are making significant progress toward our goal and Mayor Hahn's goal of making Los Angeles the safest big city in America.

Newsbrief



LAX Police Merger

On Aug. 17, Councilmember Jack Weiss issued the following statement in response to LAPD Chief William Bratton's declaration of support for Weiss' proposal to merge the airport's police force into the LAPD: "This is a counterterrorism no brainer, and Chief Bratton's support is a significant milestone," said Weiss. "LAX is the City's top terrorist target and must be protected with an elite security force. The LAPD, under Chief Bratton's leadership, can do the best job of identifying threats and protecting passengers."

Weiss has introduced several measures to improve security at LAX. Central to this goal is streamlining the chain of command and ensuring that all officers have the same protocols and training to function as a team in a crisis. Past incidents, such as the boarding of a suspected hijacked Singapore Airlines flight in May, have highlighted the need to improve the airport's emergency response capabilities. Consolidating the police forces would require a change to the City's charter, which could be placed on the ballot as early as this spring.



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