



Office of Inspector General County of Los Angeles

Reform and Oversight Efforts: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

April to June
2021

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the Office of Inspector General’s regular monitoring, auditing, and review of activities related to the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department that occurred from April 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021.¹

MONITORING SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT’S OPERATIONS

Service Comment Reports

Under Sheriff’s Department policies, the Sheriff’s Department accepts and reviews comments from members of the public about departmental service or employee performance.² The Sheriff’s Department categorizes these comments into three categories:

- External Commendation: an external communication of appreciation for and/or approval of service provided by LASD members;
- Service Complaint: an external communication of dissatisfaction with LASD service, procedure or practice, not involving employee misconduct; and
- Personnel Complaint: an external allegation of misconduct, either a violation of law or LASD policy, against any member of LASD.³

The following chart lists the number and types of comments reported for each station or unit.⁴

¹ The report will note if the data reflects something other than what was gathered between April 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021.

² See [Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, Manual of Policy and Procedures, 3-04/010.00, “Department Service Reviews.”](#)

³ It is possible for an employee to get a Service Complaint and Personnel Complaint based on the same incident in question.

⁴ This data was provided by the Sheriff’s Department from its Performance Recording and Monitoring System on July 6, 2021 and reflects the data provided as of that date.

INVESTIGATING BUREAU/STATION/FACILITY	COMMENDATIONS	PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS	SERVICE COMPLAINTS
ADM : CENTRAL PATROL ADM HQ	1	0	0
ADM : COURT SERVICES DIV HQ	0	1	0
ADM : CUSTODY DIV HQ	0	1	0
ADM : NORTH PATROL ADM HQ	0	2	0
ADM : SOUTH PATROL ADM HQ	0	1	1
AER : AERO BUREAU	2	0	0
ALD : ALTADENA STN	4	2	0
AVA : AVALON STN	1	0	0
CCS : COMMUNITY COLLEGE BUREAU	1	1	0
CEN : CENTURY STN	9	7	1
CER : CERRITOS STN	8	5	5
CMB : CIVIL MANAGEMENT BUREAU	3	3	1
CNT : COURT SERVICES CENTRAL	1	0	0
COM : COMPTON STN	1	4	2
CPB : COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP BUREAU	2	1	1
CRD : CENTURY REG DETEN FAC	1	2	0
CRV : CRESCENTA VALLEY STN	4	2	0
CSB : COUNTY SERVICES BUREAU	4	5	0
CSN : CARSON STN	5	8	2
CSS : CUSTODY SUPPORT SERVICES	0	0	1
ELA : EAST LA STN	11	5	0
EOB : EMERGENCY OPER BUREAU	3	2	1
EST : COURT SERVICES EAST	1	5	1
FCC : FRAUD & CYBER CRIMES BUREAU	4	1	0
HOM : HOMICIDE BUREAU	0	0	2
IAB : INTERNAL AFFAIRS BUREAU	0	0	1
IND : INDUSTRY STN	4	7	2
IRC : INMATE RECEPTION CENTER	1	3	0
ISB : INMATE SERVICES BUREAU	1	0	0
LCS : LANCASTER STN	18	17	6
LKD : LAKEWOOD STN	10	3	2

INVESTIGATING BUREAU/STATION/FACILITY	COMMENDATIONS	PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS	SERVICE COMPLAINTS
LMT : LOMITA STN	8	1	0
MAR : MARINA DEL REY STN	7	2	1
MCB : MAJOR CRIMES BUREAU	0	1	0
MCJ : MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL	1	2	2
MLH : MALIBU/LOST HILLS STN	8	14	7
MTL : METROLINK	0	1	0
NAR : NARCOTICS BUREAU	3	0	0
NCF : NORTH CO. CORRECTL FAC	1	2	0
NWK : NORWALK REGIONAL STN	7	5	1
OSS : OPERATION SAFE STREETS BUREAU	1	1	1
PAD : PARKS & COUNTY SRVS ADM HQ	0	1	0
PER : PERSONNEL ADMIN	1	0	0
PLM : PALMDALE STN	14	18	6
PRV : PICO RIVERA STN	5	0	1
SCV : SANTA CLARITA VALLEY STN	27	9	1
SDM : SAN DIMAS STN	12	3	0
SEB : SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT BUR	0	2	1
SHR : OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF	1	3	1
SIB : SHERIFF INFORMATION BUREAU	0	2	0
SLA : SOUTH LOS ANGELES STATION	6	10	3
SSB : SCIENTIFIC SERV BUREAU	3	0	0
SVB : SPECIAL VICTIMS BUREAU	4	5	1
TB : TRAINING BUREAU	1	0	0
TEM : TEMPLE CITY STN	17	6	2
TSB : TRANSIT SERVICES BUREAU	1	0	0
TT : TWIN TOWERS	2	1	0
WAL : WALNUT/SAN DIMAS STN	10	7	7
WHD : WEST HOLLYWOOD STN	17	9	1
WST : COURT SERVICES WEST	1	3	0
Total :	258	196	65

Handling of Comments Regarding Department Operations and Jails

The Office of Inspector General received eighty-three new complaints in the second quarter of 2021 from members of the public, prisoners, prisoners' family members and friends, community organizations, and County agencies. Each complaint was reviewed by Office of Inspector General staff. Forty-seven of these complaints were related to conditions of confinement within the Sheriff's Department's custody facilities, as shown below:

Complaint/ Incident Classification	Totals
Personnel Issue	16
Mental	6
Visiting	4
Medical	3
Classification	2
Food	2
Living Condition	2
Mail	2
Property	1
Telephone Issue	1
Other	8
Total	47

Thirty-one complaints were related to civilian contacts with Sheriff's Department personnel by persons who were not in custody.

Complaint/ Incident Classification	Totals
Improper Search, Detention, Arrest	5
Discourtesy	5
Off Duty Conduct	4
Neglect of Duty	3
Improper Tactics	3
Harassment	3
Service	3
Policy Procedures	1
Response Time	1
Criminal Conduct	1
Other	2
Total	31

Five complaints were not about the Sheriff's Department or Sheriff's Department personnel and were referred to the appropriate agency or the complainant was directed to seek legal advice.

Taser Use in Custody

The Office of Inspector General compiled the number of times the Sheriff's Department has deployed a Taser in custodial settings from January 2018, through June 2021. The numbers below were gathered from the Sheriff's Department's *Monthly Force Synopsis*, which the Sheriff's Department produces and provides to the Office of Inspector General each month.⁵

Month	Number of Taser Deployments
January 2018	5
February 2018	2
March 2018	7
April 2018	7
May 2018	0
June 2018	4
July 2018	6
August 2018	7
September 2018	3
October 2018	5
November 2018	3
December 2018	1
January 2019	9
February 2019	9
March 2019	5
April 2019	4
May 2019	1
June 2019	2
July 2019	6
August 2019	9
September 2019	6
October 2019	3
November 2019	6
December 2019	5
January 2020	5
February 2020	3
March 2020	3
April 2020	4
May 2020	3
June 2020	5

⁵ The Office of Inspector General is not opining on whether the use of the Taser in each of these incidents was permissible under the Sheriff's Department's policies and/or if the Taser was deployed lawfully.

Month	Number of Taser Deployments
July 2020	1
August 2020	3
September 2020	4
October 2020	3
November 2020	3
December 2020	6
January 2021	4
February 2021	8
March 2021	3
April 2021	5
May 2021	3
June 2021	11

Use-of-Force Incidents in Custody Division

The Office of Inspector General monitors the Sheriff's Department's staff-on-prisoner use of force incidents, prisoner-on-prisoner violence, and assaults by prisoners on Sheriff's Department personnel. The Sheriff's Department reports the following numbers for the uses of force within its Custody Division. The Sheriff's Department is still verifying the accuracy of the reporting of incidents that occurred subsequent to January 2021.

Prisoner-on-staff Assaults:

1 st Quarter of 2018	144
2 nd Quarter of 2018	173
3 rd Quarter of 2018	131
4 th Quarter of 2018	115
1 st Quarter of 2019	122
2 nd Quarter of 2019	132
3 rd Quarter of 2019	164
4 th Quarter of 2019	136
1 st Quarter of 2020	131
2 nd Quarter of 2020	91
3 rd Quarter of 2020	111
4 th Quarter of 2020	140

Prisoner-on-prisoner Assaults:

1 st Quarter of 2018	871
2 nd Quarter of 2018	905
3 rd Quarter of 2018	988
4 th Quarter of 2018	881
1 st Quarter of 2019	769
2 nd Quarter of 2019	794
3 rd Quarter of 2019	858
4 th Quarter of 2019	709
1 st Quarter of 2020	717
2 nd Quarter of 2020	496
3 rd Quarter of 2020	560
4 th Quarter of 2020	753

Use-of-force Incidents:

1 st Quarter of 2018	546
2 nd Quarter of 2018	592
3 rd Quarter of 2018	530
4 th Quarter of 2018	452
1 st Quarter of 2019	501
2 nd Quarter of 2019	478
3 rd Quarter of 2019	525
4 th Quarter of 2019	431
1 st Quarter of 2020	386
2 nd Quarter of 2020	274
3 rd Quarter of 2020	333
4 th Quarter of 2020	390

The Sheriff's Department's Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems

The Sheriff's Department reports it deployed its Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) five times between April 1, 2021, and May 31, 2021. The UAS was deployed on April 12, 2021, to assist Lancaster Station in responding to a call of a hostage situation inside of a large warehouse. The UAS was flown outside of and in the large building to search for the outstanding suspects. After the use of the UAS, deputies conducted a physical search of the location. Neither the search by the UAS or the physical search yielded any suspects.

On May 7, 2021, the Sheriff's Department's bomb technicians responded to Lancaster Station to assist with the disposal of degrading dynamite. Due to the volatile state of the explosive, the dynamite was remotely moved to an area safe for disposal. The UAS was used for the bomb technicians to safely and remotely observe the movement of the dynamite to an area safe for disposal.

On May 13, 2021, the UAS was deployed to assist the Industry Station Operations Safe Street unit with a barricaded suspect situation (see below in *Deputy-Involved Shooting* for further information on this incident). The UAS was used after a deputy involved shooting, to search the premises for other possible suspects. The UAS yielded no outstanding suspects and allowed deputies to enter the location safely.

On May 15, 2021, the UAS was deployed to assist Los Angeles City Fire, Los Angeles Police Department, and the State Parks Department to find an arsonist who was setting fires in remote areas of the Topanga State Park. The area the arsonist was last seen was cleared by the UAS, but due to increased danger from the fires, the search for the suspect was cancelled.

On May 27, 2021, the UAS was deployed to assist Long Beach Police Department to search for a burglary suspect in a home, which was tented for fumigation. The UAS was used to see within the residence prior to law enforcement personnel entering the home. Neither the UAS nor the subsequent search by law enforcement personnel found any suspects.

Deputy-Involved Shootings

The Office of Inspector General reports on all deputy-involved shootings in which a deputy intentionally fired a firearm at a human or intentionally or unintentionally fired a firearm and a human was injured or killed as a result. This quarter there were seven incidents in which people were shot or shot at by Sheriff's Department personnel. Office of Inspector General staff responded to each of these deputy-involved shootings. Four people were struck by deputies' gunfire, two fatally.

The information in the following shooting summaries is based on information provided by the Sheriff's Department and is preliminary in nature. While the Office of Inspector General receives information at the walk-through at the scene of the shooting, preliminary memoranda with summaries, and by attending the Sheriff's Department Critical Incident Reviews, the statements of the deputies and witnesses are not provided until the investigation is complete. The Sheriff's Department does not permit Office of Inspector General staff to monitor the on-going investigations of deputy-involved shootings and does not comply with lawful requests for documentation of these investigations.

Norwalk: The Sheriff's Department reported that on April 9, 2021, at approximately 5:39 p.m., Norwalk Sheriff's Station deputies responded to an attempted suicide call. The call indicated a white man was inside the location under the influence of narcotics, armed with a knife, and was threatening suicide. Deputies arrived on scene, surrounded the location, and used their public address system to direct the man to exit the location. The man exited the residence holding a shotgun, which he put underneath his chin and in his mouth after refusing to comply with orders to drop the gun. The man entered and exited the house several times, all while holding the shotgun, ignoring continual orders to drop it.

When the man exited the house and pointed the shotgun toward two deputies, each deputy fired one shot at the man. The man dropped the shotgun and re-entered the residence but eventually complied with the deputies' orders to exit the house and surrender.

The man sustained a gunshot wound to the upper torso. He was transported to the hospital, where he was listed in stable condition. The shotgun, loaded with six live rounds, was recovered at the scene. At the time of this incident, body-worn cameras were not yet deployed at the Norwalk station.

Areas for Further Inquiry

The Sheriff's Department reported that a Mental Evaluation Team (MET) was requested but arrived approximately one to two minutes following the deputy-involved shooting. Should the deputies on scene have waited for the MET before ordering the man out of the home using the PA system? Would keeping the suspect in the house until MET arrived have been a better tactic given MET's expertise in negotiating with people experiencing mental health issues?

Lomita: The Sheriff's Department reported that on April 22, 2021, at approximately 3:11 p.m., a deputy responded to a location regarding a suspected elder abuse call for service. While in the parking lot, he heard gunfire and saw a Lexus sedan leaving the location. The Lexus sedan collided into a parked vehicle, at which point the deputy unholstered his weapon and pointed it at the Lexus. The deputy ordered the vehicle to stop, which the driver briefly did but then accelerated his vehicle colliding with the deputy's patrol vehicle. The force of the impact caused the patrol vehicle to shift in the direction of the deputy, and the deputy fired his weapon several times as the driver in the Lexus fled. The Sheriff's Department is investigating how many times the deputy fired at the vehicle.

Other patrol units located the Lexus sedan approximately a half mile south of the location, observed a firearm being thrown from the car, and saw it collide with a civilian vehicle. The deputies initiated a pursuit and the driver eventually stopped.

The male Black driver and the male Asian passenger were taken into custody. Neither of them sustained any gunshot wounds. During a search of the area, two semi-automatic firearms were recovered near to where the deputies saw a gun being thrown from the car in the area of the collision with the civilian vehicle. The Lexus was determined to be stolen and associated with an armed robbery and assault that occurred on April 21, 2021.

The shooting was only partially captured by the deputy's body-worn camera as the deputy did not turn on his body-worn camera at the beginning of this incident. Portions of the video were shown at the Sheriff's Department's Critical Incident Review.

Areas for Further Inquiry

Did the deputy's position at the time of the shooting put him in danger? If the deputy placed himself in a position that increased the risk of harm to him, did that limit his tactical options? Was shooting at a moving vehicle under the circumstances a violation of Sheriff's Department policy?

Century: The Sheriff's Department reported that on April 23, 2021, Century Station dispatched units to a location four times during the same day based upon multiple calls that a Hispanic man had overdosed or him wanting to commit suicide.

On the first call for service, at 3:54 a.m., deputies and Los Angeles County Fire located the man and transported him to the hospital for a possible overdose. The man was treated and released.

At 5:10 p.m., deputies and Los Angeles County Fire responded to reports of the man being suicidal. Fire arrived first and transported the male before deputies arrived. Midway through the transport to the hospital, the man fought with the ambulance crew and attempted to stab them with a pair of scissors before he escaped and fled on foot. This generated a third call for service at 5:50 p.m. When deputies arrived, the ambulance and the man were gone. The final call for service generated at 6:10 p.m., was for the man being back in the home and armed with a knife.

Deputies and Los Angeles County Fire arrived within minutes of the fourth call and found the man inside the house, armed with two knives. Deputies requested a unit from the Mental Evaluation Team (MET). A MET unit arrived with a team comprised of one deputy and two clinicians. For two hours the team negotiated with the man to surrender, during which time the man had two knives in his hands and feigned charging at the team.

Eventually, the man ran out the back door and circled into the front yard where he confronted deputies. The Sheriff's Department reports the male charged forward while waving the knives wildly. A deputy fired a less lethal 40mm Arwen round, striking a trash can the man used as a shield. The man continued advancing forward and two deputies fired Tasers, both of which missed. The man charged at the deputies, waving both knives in a slashing motion; one deputy fired nine rounds toward the man, and another fired one round.

Los Angeles County Fire paramedics were on scene and treated the man immediately. He was transported to a hospital, where he remains in critical condition.

The negotiations with the man, and the shooting, were captured on body-worn cameras worn by several deputies at the scene. At the Critical Incident Review, the Sheriff's Department showed portions of the body-worn camera video.

Areas for Further Inquiry

Were proper containment tactics used to maximize the availability of less-lethal options? Was there a delay in the deputy response that prevented them from assisting L.A. County Fire during the 5:10 p.m., call for service?

Lancaster: The Sheriff's Department reported that on April 29, 2021, at approximately 8:39 a.m., Lancaster Sheriff's Station deputies responded to an assault with a deadly weapon call. The call indicated a Hispanic man was pointing a rifle at vehicles in the area; while en route, the call was updated to indicate that the man was shooting at vehicles.

When the deputies arrived, they contacted multiple victims who described the man, and reported that he was armed with a rifle or shotgun and was shooting at vehicles. Deputies established a containment and requested assistance from the Special Enforcement Bureau.

During the containment, a deputy saw a man emerge from a structure at the location, holding what appeared to be a rifle, walking toward a group of deputies. The deputy commanded him to drop the weapon. When the man did not comply, the deputy shot three times. The man was struck by gunfire in the upper torso. Members of the Special Enforcement Bureau, along with Emergency Services Detail paramedics, began lifesaving measures but he was pronounced dead at the scene.

Detectives recovered an object at the scene which resembled a barrel of a rifle, but upon further examination confirmed it was not a firearm, as it did not appear capable of firing a projectile.

There was no body-worn camera video of this incident as the deputy was part of a special unit that is not equipped with body-worn cameras.

Lancaster: The Sheriff's Department reported that on May 13, 2021, at approximately 5:45 p.m., Lancaster Sheriff's Station deputies received a call regarding a possible kidnapping. The informant stated her daughter had been kidnapped by her boyfriend, who had a shotgun and that she was following the boyfriend's vehicle. Deputies located the vehicle and attempted to stop the vehicle and a pursuit ensued after the male Black driver refused to stop.

The pursuit lasted approximately 60 minutes, on both freeway and surface streets in Los Angeles and Kern counties. During the pursuit Lancaster Station established contact with the victim and confirmed that she had been kidnapped and the driver was armed with a shotgun.

The pursuit terminated at an apartment complex. The man ran from the vehicle holding a black bag and the victim exited the vehicle and laid down on the ground. Deputies arrived on-scene and pursued the male on foot. The man ran into an apartment but exited onto the apartment balcony, holding a sawed-off shotgun, at which point a deputy fired his weapon four times at the man. The man retreated into the apartment. Special Enforcement Bureau and Crisis Negotiation Teams responded, and the man surrendered after approximately six hours. A sawed-off shotgun was recovered at the scene.

The shooting was captured on the body-worn cameras worn by several deputies at the scene. At the Critical Incident Review, the Sheriff's Department showed portions of this captured video.

Industry: The Sheriff's Department reported that on May 13, 2021, at approximately 6:21 p.m., Industry Station's Operation Safe Streets (OSS) Bureau personnel executed a pre-planned search warrant for a felon with a firearm residing in an apartment building. The warrant team consisted of Los Angeles County District Attorney (LADA) investigators, OSS personnel and Industry Station personnel. The apartment building was a two-story, multi-unit apartment complex inhabited by numerous unrelated people. The target location of the search warrant was on the upper level and to the back of the building.

Industry Station OSS deputies approached the target location and gave "knock and notice." LADA investigators were positioned at the rear and along the east driveway at the bottom of the building. Shortly after the "knock and notice" announcements commenced, LADA investigators observed a Hispanic man open the apartment

window holding a gun. The LADA investigators, who were positioned right below this window, began shooting.

The Sheriff's Department reported the OSS entry team heard a volley of gunfire and believed that one or more suspects were firing at the LADA investigators. The OSS team reported that they tactically retreated for cover and containment. An OSS lieutenant saw the suspect point an assault rifle at him, causing him to shoot at the suspect. Two detectives on the OSS team also saw the suspect pointing an assault rifle at the lieutenant and shot as well. None of the OSS team members had body-worn cameras and the incident is not captured from their perspective.

An Industry station deputy, who was equipped with a body-worn camera, heard gunshots and also began firing in the direction of the gunfire. The Industry station deputy was equipped with a body-worn camera but did not activate it until after he began shooting.

The Sheriff's Department has not provided the detail as to the number of shots fired by their deputies. All law enforcement personnel retreated from the location and Special Enforcement Bureau personnel responded to the scene. The UAS was deployed to assist with clearing the apartment of any suspects. Two Hispanic men were taken into custody. In the apartment, deputies found an AR-15 assault rifle and a large amount of narcotics. Preliminary evidence suggests that none of the suspects fired any shots at the deputies.

Of the law enforcement present, only Industry Station deputies have body-worn cameras; OSS does not. At the Critical Incident Review, the Sheriff's Department showed portions of the body-worn camera video captured by the Industry Station deputy.

Areas for Further Inquiry

Was the search warrant plan complete and was it briefed prior to service of the warrant? Did the LASD personnel and LADA investigators share a common radio frequency in order to share their observations in real time? Did the location of the shooting and/or the number of shots fired put members of the public at risk? If so, was that tactically sound under the circumstances?

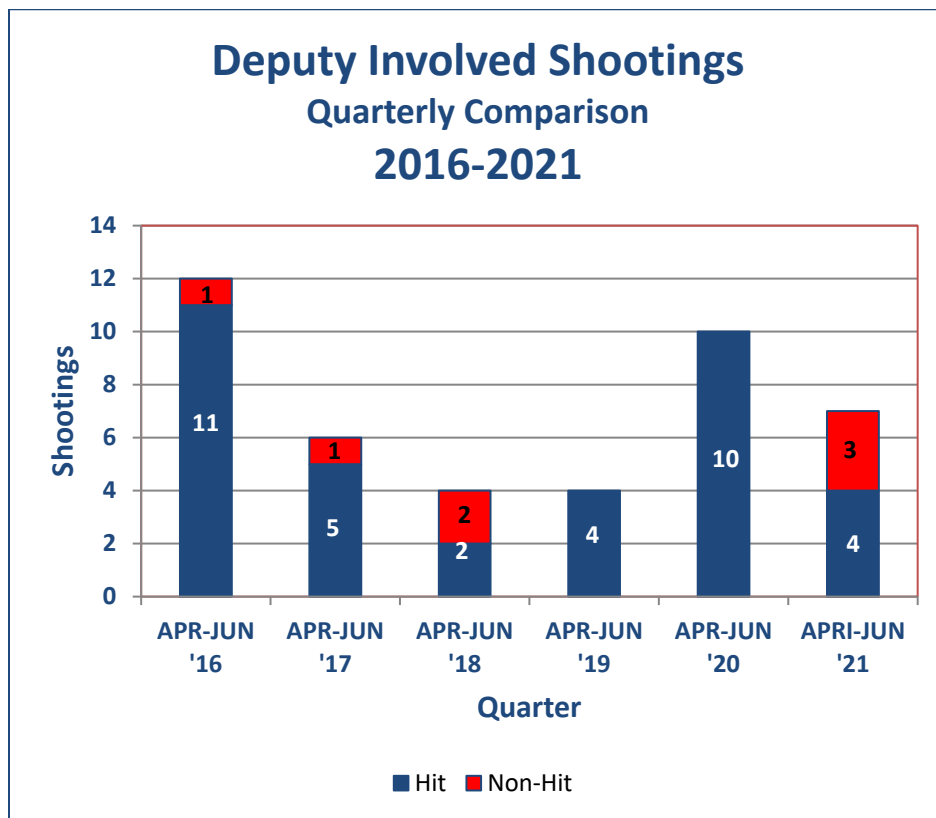
Norwalk: The Sheriff's Department reported that on June 23, 2021, at approximately 9:52 a.m., Norwalk station deputies conducted a traffic stop on a suspicious box type truck. This truck was seen by a Los Angeles Police Department helicopter, who's crew notified the Sheriff's Department. The male Black driver initially slowed down, but instead continued driving. As the deputies followed, the vehicle eventually was forced to stop due to traffic. Deputies approached the

vehicle, at which time the male pointed what the deputies believed to be a firearm at them. One deputy shot 4 times, one deputy shot 10 times, and another shot 19 times for a total of 33 bullets; the man died of his injuries. The object the male pointed was recovered at the scene and determined to be a lighter with a handle in the shape of a firearm. At the time of this incident, body-worn cameras were not yet deployed at the Norwalk station.

Areas for Further Inquiry

Why was not a high-risk stop conducted? Did the location of the shooting and/or the number of shots fired put members of the public and deputies at risk? If so, was that tactically sound under the circumstances?

Comparison to Prior Years



District Attorney Review of Deputy-Involved Shootings

The Sheriff’s Department’s Homicide Bureau investigates all deputy-involved shootings in which a person is hit by a bullet. The Homicide Bureau submits the completed criminal investigation of each deputy-involved shooting in which a person has been hit by a bullet and which occurred in the County of Los Angeles to

the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (LADA) for review and possible filing of criminal charges.

Between April 1, 2021, and June 30, 2021, the LADA did not issue any findings on deputy-involved shooting cases involving the Sheriff's Department's employees.

Homicide Bureau's Investigation of Deputy-Involved Shootings

For the present quarter, the Homicide Bureau reports that nine shooting cases involving Sheriff's Department personnel are open and under investigation. The oldest case the Homicide Bureau is still actively investigating is an October 16, 2020, shooting which occurred in the jurisdiction of the Century station. For further information as to that shooting, please refer to the Office of Inspector General's *Reform and Oversight Effort: Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, October to December 2020* report.⁶ The oldest case that the Bureau has open is a 2016 shooting in Compton, which has been sent to the LADA's office and awaiting a filing decision.

This quarter, the Sheriff's Department reported it sent 10 cases involving deputy-involved shootings to the LADA and one to Kern County District Attorney's Office for filing consideration.

Internal Criminal Investigations Bureau

The Sheriff's Department's Internal Criminal Investigations Bureau (ICIB) reports directly to the Division Chief and the Commander of the Professional Standards Division. ICIB investigates allegations of criminal misconduct committed by Sheriff's Department personnel in Los Angeles County (misconduct alleged to have occurred in other counties is investigated by the law enforcement agencies in the jurisdictions where the crimes are alleged to have occurred).

As of June 30, 2021, the Sheriff's Department reports ICIB has 70 active cases. This quarter, the Sheriff's Department reports sending three cases to the LADA for filing consideration. The LADA is still reviewing 45 cases for filing. The oldest open case which ICIB has submitted to the LADA for filing consideration is a 2017 case, which was presented to the LADA in 2018 and is still being reviewed.

⁶ <https://oig.lacounty.gov/Portals/OIG/Reports/4thQuarter2020%20ReformAndOversightReport.pdf>

Internal Affairs Bureau

The Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) conducts administrative investigations of Department policy violations by Sheriff's Department employees. It is also responsible for responding to and investigating deputy-involved shootings and significant use-of-force cases. If the LADA declines to file a criminal action against the deputies involved in a shooting, IAB completes a force review to determine whether Sheriff's Department personnel violated any policies during the incident.

Administrative investigations are also conducted at the unit level. The subject's unit and IAB determine whether an investigation is investigated by IAB or remains a unit-level investigation based on the severity of the alleged policy violation.

This quarter, the Sheriff's Department reported opening 120 new administrative investigations. Of these 120 cases, 38 were assigned to IAB, 56 were designated as unit-level investigations, and 26 were entered as criminal monitors. In the same period, IAB reports that 94 cases were closed by IAB or at the unit level. There are 398 pending administrative investigations. Of those 398 investigations, 261 are assigned to IAB and the remaining 137 are pending unit-level investigations.

Civil Service Commission Dispositions

There were six final decisions issued by the Civil Service Commission this quarter. Of those six, two reduced the Sheriff's Department's discipline from discharge to thirty days and the other four upheld the discipline.

The Use of Projectiles During Protests

On August 27, 2020, several complainants sued the Sheriff's Department and Los Angeles County in federal court, for violating their First, Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment rights under the United States Constitution. This civil lawsuit is based on the Sheriff's Department's response to several protests that occurred during the summer of 2020. The lawsuit included allegations involving the use of projectiles to disperse civilians who had gathered to protest police uses of force. Videos of the Sheriff's Department's response to protests circulated online for months before this lawsuit was filed. On June 3, 2020, the popular website, TMZ, published a video of Sheriff's Department deputies firing less lethal rubber bullets in a "drive-by style" at several teenagers.⁷ The same website published another video on September 6, 2020, of the Sheriff's Department's response to protests over the shooting death of

⁷ TMZ, "L.A. Sheriff's Dept. Roll Up on Kids Drive-by Style...Firing Rubber Bullets!!!", "TMZ, June 3, 2020. <https://www.tMZ.com/2020/06/03/la-sheriffs-deputies-drive-by-rubber-bullets-protesters/>.

Dijon Kizzee. The website described the scene as a war zone where deputies fired rubber bullets and pepper spray into the crowds in a haphazard manner.⁸ On June 21, 2020, videos of the Sheriff's Department's response to protests over the killing of Andres Guardado were published, showing deputies firing projectiles at a group of protesters in Compton.⁹

On August 27, 2020, 13 plaintiffs sought an injunction against the Sheriff's Department, barring deputies from using projectiles at protests. On May 28, 2021, U.S. District Court Judge Dolly M. Gee, found the plaintiffs "had submitted 'overwhelming evidence' showing that at five demonstrations in August and September [of 2020], deputies used force on protesters, legal observers and journalists 'who were not committing any crime,' with the exception of not following dispersal orders on two occasions."¹⁰ The judge issued a preliminary injunction ordering the Sheriff's Department to stop "indiscriminately using weapons including foam rounds, pepper balls, tear gas canisters, flash-bang grenades and stinger grenades against people peacefully attending a protest or gathering."¹¹ The order, which went into effect on August 1, 2021, states:

1. The Los Angeles Sheriffs' Department is hereby enjoined from using less-lethal weapons, including foam rounds, pepper balls, tear gas canisters, flash bang grenades, and stinger grenades, against any persons peacefully attending a protest, march, or other lawful gathering unless reasonable, proportional, and targeted action is necessary to protect against a specific imminent threat of physical harm to officers or identifiable others, to respond to specific acts of violence or destruction of property, or to enforce a declaration of unlawful assembly and dispersal order pursuant to California Penal Code section 409.1

a. If reasonable, proportional, and targeted use of less-lethal projectiles or chemical agents is necessary, foam rounds and any projectile designed to be target-specific shall be aimed at individuals causing the actual or

⁸ TMZ, "Dijon Kizzee Shooting Cops Fire Rubber Bullets, Pepper Spray...Resembles a War Zone," TMZ, September 6, 2020. <https://www.tMZ.com/2020/09/06/dijon-kizzee-protest-rubber-bullets-bicycle-los-angeles/>.

⁹ L.A Taco, Twitter Post, June 21, 2020, 6:20 p.m. L.A. Taco on Twitter: "Sheriffs have fired rubber bullets, tear gas, and flash bangs at protesters for Andrés Guardado," <https://twitter.com/LATACO/status/1274874827786997761>; and L.A Taco, Twitter Post, June 21, 2020, 6:48 p.m. L.A. Taco on Twitter: "Sheriffs at the other end are firing indiscriminately at protesters from afar and arresting a few protesters sitting peacefully in front of them," <https://twitter.com/LATACO/status/1274881935664267264>.

¹⁰ Miller, Leila, "Preliminary injunction granted restricting L.A. County Sheriff's Department use of force at protests," Los Angeles Times, June 12, 2021. [Limits on L.A. County Sheriff's Department use of force at protests - Los Angeles Times \(latimes.com\)](https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/story/2021-06-12/limits-on-l-a-county-sheriff-s-department-use-of-force-at-protests).

¹¹ Ibid.

imminent threats of harm, violence, or destruction of property and shall not be indiscriminately fired.

- b. Flash bang grenades, tear gas canisters, and other less-lethal means designed to be non-target-specific may be used in the manner they were designed to be used and shall not be deliberately aimed to strike individuals.

1. When individuals try to remove, surpass, or defeat a protective police barrier, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department may consider such actions a threat to officers.

2. Whenever feasible, Los Angeles Sheriffs' Department officers shall issue warnings and/or declare unlawful assembly before the reasonable, proportional, and targeted use of less-lethal projectiles or chemical agents.

- a. Warnings must be given and repeated by means reasonably calculated to ensure that the warnings are heard.
- b. When warnings are given, reasonable time shall be given to comply.¹²

The Office of Inspector General reached out to the Sheriff's Department to inquire as to the Sheriff's Department's plan to amend its policies to comply with this injunction and received the following information. On July 22, 2021, the Sheriff's Department issued a Field Operation Support Services newsletter to all employees which notified them of Judge Gee's orders. The newsletter ordered all deputies who respond to civil disobedience and are asked to deploy less lethal weapons to have read the order and understood what is allowed and what is required of them when using force in future protests. The newsletter is not policy. Upon inquiry, the Sheriff's Department offered an explanation that implementing a change in policy is a lengthy process and that a newsletter was sent for the sake of expediency. The Sheriff's Department stated it elected not to alter the policy based upon a preliminary injunction and will do so if necessary after the litigation is final. In addition to being a legal directive, the court's order represents best practices regarding less lethal use of force when responding to protests and the Sheriff's Department should endeavor to follow it when responding to future protests.

The Sheriff's Department has not set forth any guidelines for violating the directives in the newsletter. The judge in her order remarked on the lack of discipline or

¹² See FOSS Newsletter, "21-11 - Berg vs. County of Los Angeles: Preliminary Injunction Regarding the Use of Less-Lethal Munitions During Civil Disorder," issued July 22, 2021.
<http://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/15183/Content/18841?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=berg>.

action taken by the Sheriff's Department to redress its deputies for their actions in the above mentioned protests; "indicating that the alleged unreasonable use of force had been officially sanctioned"¹³ As has been stated previously in Office of Inspector General reports, the Sheriff's Department must not only draft policies that deputies are mandated to follow, it must also update its Guidelines for Discipline to specify the range of punishment, implement review processes for discipline that are evidence based, and impose punishment promptly for failure to follow its policies. Specifically regarding the use of less lethal force at protests, it is incumbent upon the Sheriff's Department to implement policies that comply with the judge's order and to be transparent with the Office of Inspector General and the public on its plans to hold deputies' accountable for their failure to abide by the court's order, including adopting a formal policy.

CUSTODY DIVISION

Handling of Grievances Filed by People in Custody

The Sheriff's Department is still in the process of establishing the use of tablets in its jail facilities to capture information related to requests and, eventually grievances, filed by people in custody. Currently, there are a total of 165 installed iPads. There are 31 iPads at Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF), 49 iPads at Men's Central Jail (MCJ), and 85 iPads at Twin Towers Correctional Facility (TTCF). The Sheriff's Department is reporting that all upgrades and connectivity issues have been resolved at CRDF and MCJ and the iPads are currently available for use. The Sheriff's Department reports that moving to Windows based tablets is under consideration in order to rectify compatibility issues and other connectivity concerns. The Sheriff's Department reports that people in custody have accessed the iPads to obtain information on 303,721 occasions between April 1, 2021, and June 30, 2021.

As reported in the Office of Inspector General's January 2018 *Reform and Oversight Efforts: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department* report, the Sheriff's Department implemented a policy restricting the filing of duplicate and excessive grievances filed by people in custody.¹⁴ The Sheriff's Department reports that between April 1, 2021, and June 30, 2021, 17 people in custody were restricted from filing 125 grievances under this policy.

¹³ Miller, Leila, "Preliminary injunction granted restricting L.A. County Sheriff's Department use of force at protests," Los Angeles Times, June 12, 2021. [Limits on L.A. County Sheriff's Department use of force at protests - Los Angeles Times \(latimes.com\)](https://www.latimes.com).

¹⁴ [See Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Custody Division Manual, 8-04/050.00, Duplicate or Excessive Filings of Grievances and Appeals, and Restrictions of Filing Privileges.](#)

In-Custody Deaths

Between April 1, 2021, and June 30, 2021, ten individuals died while under the care and custody of the Sheriff's Department. Of these ten decedents, one died at CRDF, three died at TTCF, three died at MCJ, and three died at North County Correctional Facility (NCCF).

Office of Inspector General staff attended the Custody Services Division Administrative Death Reviews for each of the ten in-custody deaths.

The following summaries, arranged in chronological order, provide brief descriptions of each in-custody death:

On April 1, 2021, an individual at MCJ was reportedly discovered unresponsive in a cell by deputies. Emergency aid was rendered, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

On April 11, 2021, an individual at TTCF was reportedly discovered unresponsive during a Title-15 safety check. Emergency aid was rendered, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

On May 17, 2021, an individual was reportedly discovered by deputies in a cell at TTCF during what was described as a suicide attempt. Deputies and medical personnel rendered emergency aid, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

On May 20, 2021, an individual was reportedly discovered by deputies in a cell at CRDF during what was later described as a suicide attempt. Deputies and medical personnel rendered emergency aid, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

On May 22, 2021, an individual at TTCF was reportedly discovered unresponsive during a Title-15 safety check. Emergency aid was rendered, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

On May 29, 2021, deputies were alerted to an unresponsive individual at NCCF. Deputies and medical personnel rendered emergency aid, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

On June 2, 2021, deputies were alerted to an unresponsive individual at MCJ. Deputies and medical personnel rendered emergency aid, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

On June 13, 2021, deputies were alerted to an individual at NCCF having a medical emergency. Deputies and medical personnel rendered emergency aid, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

On June 25, 2021, an individual at MCJ was reportedly discovered unresponsive during a Title-15 safety check. Emergency aid was rendered, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

On June 27, 2021, deputies were alerted to an unresponsive individual at NCCF. Deputies and medical personnel rendered emergency aid, paramedics were called, but the individual was pronounced dead at the scene.

Other Deaths

Between April 1, 2021, and June 30, 2021, two individuals died under circumstances which do not fit within the current categorical definition of in-custody deaths but were under the care and custody of the Sheriff's Department when the condition which resulted in their deaths first became apparent.

Office of Inspector General staff attended the Critical Incident Review for each of these deaths.

The following summaries provide a brief description of the circumstances surrounding these deaths:

On May 18, 2021, Central Division Enforcement Team deputies conducted a traffic stop, and after a short foot pursuit the deputies, along with deputies from Compton Station, arrested the driver of the vehicle following a use of force. The individual experienced a medical emergency and was transported to Saint Francis Medical Center. The individual died within an hour of arriving at the hospital.

On June 2, 2021, deputies from Palmdale Station responded to a call for service and subsequently arrested an individual at the location. The individual experienced a medical emergency. Deputies rendered emergency aid, paramedics were called, and the individual was transported to Palmdale Regional Medical Center. The individual died within an hour of arriving at the hospital.

Disclosure of Information During Administrative Death Reviews

Following each death that occurs in a custody environment, Custody Services Division (CSD) conducts Administrative Death Reviews (Death Review) within 72 hours and again at approximately 7 and 30 days from the dates of individuals' deaths. The purpose of Death Review is to identify any lapses in care or any conditions or systemic issues that may have contributed to the passing of a person in custody. The reviews occur in confidential meetings that include CSD and Correctional Health Services (CHS) leadership and staff and the Homicide Bureau lieutenant (Homicide) assigned to the case. County Counsel representatives are present as well as plaintiffs' class counsel and the court appointed monitor for *United States v. County of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County Sheriff*.¹⁵ Office of Inspector General personnel regularly respond to the scenes of deaths in custody and are present for every Death Review.

Death Reviews systematically examine the adequacy of medical and mental health services a decedent received while in custody, the circumstances and jail conditions leading up to each death, and the conduct of CSD and CHS personnel before, during, and after each death. Attendees review available CCTV footage and CSD and CHS prepare thorough summaries that include decedents' medical and mental health histories, medication regimens, clinical contacts and care, as well as housing information. Security classification and disciplinary history from intake to date of death is also addressed during the review.

When practiced as designed, this critical incident review method supports thorough, self-critical, and transparent analysis oriented to identifying and correcting deficiencies. In Death Reviews, CSD and CHS executives often identify and implement necessary improvements to policies, protocols, and training designed to prevent future deaths. Executives also frequently identify persistent deficiencies and lapses in care and conditions that are present during or contribute to repeated custody deaths.

As part of each Death Review analysis, Homicide provides observations from the scene of each death, preliminary autopsy findings, and details learned within the first seven days of an investigation. The information provided by Homicide is often critical for CSD and CHS executives in identifying deficiencies and guiding the analysis toward appropriate corrective action. For example, information about the

¹⁵ On September 3, 2015, the U.S. District Court for the Central of California approved a stipulated agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and the Sheriff's Department requiring, in part, adequate mental health care and related services. An independent monitor assesses and reports on implementation progress. See *United States v. County of Los Angeles*, Case No. 2:15-cv05903-DDP (C.D. Cal. 2015).

specific positioning of a decedent's body, injuries sustained by a decedent, statements of witness personnel or people in custody, the condition of a decedent's cell, among other observations, can only be ascertained at the scene of a death. It is not typically included in Death Review summaries or captured via CCTV and is only learned by some attendees when disclosed by Homicide.

What information to disclose and when to disclose it requires balancing the sharing of information sufficient to conduct a thorough analysis with the similarly important goal of maintaining investigative integrity. For example, homicides or drug overdoses may require the cooperation of confidential informants, often people in custody, whose safety must be prioritized at all times. Some details learned through confidential informants may be appropriately withheld from a Death Review. Although attendance at all Death Reviews is carefully tracked and attendees either respond to a virtual roll call or sign in when attending in person, and all attendees are strictly admonished to the confidential nature of the discussions, Homicide may appropriately limit the disclosure of some investigative details. At times, however, Homicide's approach to disclosure of details is more conservative than necessary and may impede the Death Review analysis and hinder the greater goal of correcting deficiencies and preventing future tragedies. The Office of Inspector General has consistently recommended that Homicide, CSD and CHS ensure the disclosure of all details necessary to inform a critical self-analysis and only withhold details the disclosure of which would jeopardize an active death investigation.

In 2021, Office of Inspector General personnel have noted two Death Reviews during which important information about the deaths of people in custody may not have been disclosed absent direct inquiry by Office of Inspector General or CHS personnel. In one instance, Homicide failed to note that a decedent had a large foreign object lodged in the decedent's throat and mouth. In a second case, Homicide failed to disclose the presence of injuries sustained by a decedent that were clearly visible on the decedent's body at the scene of the death. It was later revealed that this decedent had banged their head against the cell wall more than 60 times, resulting in a skull fracture and other severe injuries. In both instances, Office of Inspector General personnel responded to the scenes of the deaths and received briefings from Homicide on the above details in each case. Had the Office of Inspector General not responded to the death scenes, it is unclear whether specific details that were relevant to the work of the review committee would have been disclosed.

CSD and CHS executives often meet prior to initial Death Reviews and exchange relevant information. CHS executives have indicated that, at times, they do not receive information necessary for a thorough medical analysis. For example, CHS

executives report that they were unaware of the head injuries in the above case until they were acknowledged by Homicide upon direct inquiry during the Death Review.

The Office of Inspector General regularly responds to custody deaths and is typically provided thorough and transparent briefings from Homicide. Similarly, CSD and CHS executives regularly share confidential and unfavorable details about CSD and CHS issues and investigations with Office of Inspector General personnel, making it unlikely that Homicide, CSD, or CHS are intentionally withholding information about custody deaths from the Office of Inspector General. However, important details have sometimes been withheld during Death Reviews and from other attendees, which impedes executives' ability to correct deficiencies and ensure personnel accountability where necessary.

It is also important to emphasize that this report section focuses solely on disclosure of information during Death Reviews and reserves discussion of other areas for improvement in the Death Review analysis. It also reserves discussion of the greater systemic deficiencies that remain unresolved and continue to expose people in custody to mental and emotional suffering, inadequate care, and risk to their personal safety. The circumstances surrounding the deaths of the people in custody described above highlight some of these deficiencies.

The Office of Inspector General again recommends that Homicide treat Death Reviews as confidential discussions and disclose all facts and details necessary to support a thorough critical incident analysis. The Office of Inspector General also recommends that CHS executives receive the same information as CSD executives prior to each Death Review, that the CHS Medical Director or designee resume attendance at all autopsies performed on those who died in custody, and that the Medical Examiner-Coroner provide adequate notice of scheduled autopsies in order to facilitate attendance. Finally, the Office of Inspector General recommends that CSD and CHS executives consistently ensure transparency during all Death Reviews.

Since the drafting of this report section, Office of Inspector General personnel spoke with CSD and CHS executives as well as the unit commander of the Sheriff's Department Homicide Bureau. The unit commander recently assumed leadership in March 2021 and communicated an appreciation for and commitment to transparency. The unit commander agreed that instances in which information about deaths of people in custody is appropriately withheld should be infrequent and agreed to ensure the disclosure of all details that may support a rigorous critical incident review going forward. Similarly, CSD executives have agreed to communicate with Homicide and CHS to ensure that CHS executives are

appropriately briefed and CSD and CHS have committed to working to ensure transparency at Death Reviews. Finally, CHS has indicated that it will resume attendance at all autopsies performed during regular business hours. The Medical Examiner-Coroner has committed to ensuring timely notification of all autopsies performed on people who die in custody whenever possible and to notify both Homicide and CHS directly.

Custody Deaths by Overdose of Fentanyl or Other Narcotics

Of 25 total in-custody deaths that occurred between January 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021, (compared to 15 deaths in the first half of 2020), at least six are suspected fentanyl or other drug overdose related (compared to three total overdose deaths in 2020). Between January 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021, the Office of Inspector General received notice of nearly 100 CSD memoranda detailing the administration of NARCAN by Sheriff's Department personnel to people in custody for suspected overdoses.¹⁶ NARCAN is also administered by medical personnel and documented in the electronic medical record.

CSD indicates that due to the low cost and potency of fentanyl, it is often mixed with more commonly known narcotics such as heroin and methamphetamine, which increases the likelihood of fatal interactions. CSD reports that it is pursuing several interventions in efforts to curb fentanyl use in the jails.

CSD reports that beginning in March 2019, all CSD personnel were directed to begin holstering canisters of NARCAN. CSD reports that it has also made NARCAN available for direct access by people in custody in all dormitories at NCCF and Pitchess Detention Center (PDC) North and PDC South as well as in MCJ modules 5000 and 9000. CSD reports that by the end of July 2021, NARCAN will also be available for direct access by people in custody in 12 MCJ dayrooms.

English and Spanish language signage has been posted throughout the jails and CSD reports it is conducting additional town hall meetings to warn people in custody of the dangers of ingesting even small amounts of fentanyl. Custody Training and Standards Bureau is currently working on a video segment to warn people in custody of fentanyl hidden within and disguised as other narcotics, which will be presented to all people in custody as part of the intake process.

CSD reports that it is installing additional CCTV cameras, increasing deployment of narcotics K-9s, and pursuing other advanced technologies that will aide in detecting

¹⁶ NARCAN is a medication used for the emergency treatment of opioid overdose.

and curtailing the introduction of fentanyl into the jail system. The Office of Inspector General will continue to monitor CSD's narcotics interdiction efforts.

Office of Inspector General Site Visits

The Office of Inspector General normally conducts site visits and inspections at Sheriff's Department custodial facilities to identify matters requiring attention. Since the Los Angeles County Safer at Home Order issued on March 19, 2020, the Office of Inspector General has limited site visits. In the second quarter of 2021, Office of Inspector General personnel completed 45 site visits inside the Inmate Reception Center (IRC), MCJ, NCCF, PDC North, and TTCF. Office of Inspector General staff have been closely monitoring the Sheriff's Department and CHS's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and following up on concerns raised by the public. As part of the Office of Inspector General's jail monitoring, Office of Inspector General staff attended 79 Custody Services Division executive and administrative meetings and met with division executives for 104 monitoring hours related to COVID-19, uses of force, in-custody deaths, as well as general conditions.

CITIZENS' COMMISSION ON JAIL VIOLENCE UPDATES

CCJV Recommendation 3.12: The Department should purchase additional body scanners

The Sheriff's Department continues to operate body scanners at MCJ, CRDF, PDC North, PDC South, NCCF, and IRC.

According to the Sheriff's Department's records, from April 1, 2021, to June 30, 2021, four persons in custody refused to go through the body scanners across all applicable facilities. As previously reported, the Sheriff's Department reported that it no longer records the reasons for such refusals because the data did not contribute significant feedback towards the goal of reducing strip searches since the primary reason for refusals is jail politics.