



Kern County Sheriff's Office **Policies and Procedures**

TITLE: SHERIFF'S OFFICE WATCH LIEUTENANT / COMMANDER		NO: B-310	
APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner			
EFFECTIVE: April 1, 1998	REVIEWED: 05/02/2025	REVISED: 05/02/2025	UPDATED: 05/02/2025

POLICY

The Watch Lieutenant Section is comprised of a designated group of Sheriff's Lieutenants. Their primary responsibilities are to provide continuity of command and oversee the operation of the Sheriff's Office during non-business hours.

DIRECTIVE A

The Metropolitan Patrol Division Commander or their designee shall be responsible for coordinating the Watch Lieutenants and their schedules.

DIRECTIVE B

1. The Watch Lieutenants operate under the following conditions:
 - a. The Watch Lieutenant Section is responsible for overseeing Sheriff's Office operations after normal business hours. This period of responsibility is generally from 1700 hours until 0800 hours Monday – Friday, and 24-hour coverage Saturday and Sunday.
 - b. These shifts are covered by the lieutenant(s) permanently assigned to the Watch Lieutenant Section. The shifts which the assigned Watch Lieutenants are unavailable to work (vacation, comp time off, sick leave, etc.) shall be assigned on a rotational basis to the remaining Sheriff's Office commanders and lieutenants to ensure 24 hour coverage. The shifts are assigned via a bid, based on rank and seniority. The Metropolitan Patrol Commander is responsible for developing the shift coverage schedule.
 - c. To facilitate unforeseen commitments and/or scheduling conflicts, shift trades and modifications between assigned Watch Lieutenants are permitted. The assigned lieutenant seeking the trade is responsible for ensuring that proper coverage is arranged. All such trades require the approval of the Metropolitan Patrol Commander.
2. Watch Lieutenants / Commanders shall be in uniform unless prior authorization is received from the Metropolitan Patrol Commander.

DIRECTIVE C – GENERAL DUTIES

1. The Watch Lieutenant / Commander shall:
 - a. Upon starting the duty shift, contact the Communications Section Shift Supervisor,

the on-duty Watch Lieutenant / Commander, or the on-duty sergeants to be briefed as to any unusual or significant activities (vehicle pursuits, airplane crashes, homicide and suspicious deaths, Search and Rescue Unit call outs, County property damage, significant staffing shortages) that have occurred, or are occurring, which might impact the Sheriff's Office operation during his/her watch.

- b. Maintain the Watch Lieutenant Log, which shall contain any unusual, significant, or noteworthy events that occur during the shift.
 - i. Incidents involving employees will not be logged.
 - 1. Incidents involving employees will be documented according to current policy or directives.
 - c. Inspect Sheriff's Office operations such as the jails, substations, and any other operations that are functioning during the shift to ensure that Sheriff's Office policies and procedures are being followed.
 - d. Respond to major crime scenes, disasters, or other significant events while on duty and assume command of major incidents, when appropriate.
 - e. Serve as the liaison with the news media and ensure that media relations are handled appropriately.
 - i. The Watch Lieutenant Section is assigned a Public Information Officer (PIO) phone. The on duty Watch Lieutenant / Commander is responsible for answering media inquiries made to the PIO phone.
 - f. Ensure that complaints regarding Sheriff's Office employees are handled appropriately and resolved if possible.
 - i. The Watch Lieutenant / Commander should handle all complaints alleging misconduct, consistent with established Sheriff's Office policies and procedures.
 - ii. Notify the affected division commander, by whatever methods are appropriate, when violations of policies or procedures are observed.
 - iii. When the alleged violation is minor, a memorandum or electronic mail may be appropriate. Serious violations may warrant an immediate notification by telephone or in person. Additionally, it may be necessary to notify the affected bureau chief deputy.
 - iv. Take immediate action to enforce compliance with established policies and procedures.
 - g. Serve as liaison between the Sheriff's Office and allied agencies.
2. Additional Duties for Lieutenants Assigned to the Watch Lieutenant Section:
- a. The Watch Lieutenant will be responsible for reviewing Metropolitan Patrol Division use of force incidents which occur during his or her shift.
 - b. The Metropolitan Patrol Section Lieutenant will be responsible for reviewing use of force incidents which occur Monday through Friday from 0800 hours to 1700 hours.
 - c. The Use of Force reporting (Blue Team) will be sent to the lieutenant who is reviewing the incident.

B-0310-2

EFFECTIVE: April 1, 1998	REVIEWED: 05/02/2025	REVISED: 05/02/2025	UPDATED: 05/02/2025
------------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------

- i. The lieutenant will approve the entry, indicate whether it is within policy, and attach any supporting documents as needed.
3. The Substation Section Lieutenants will be responsible for reviewing all use of force incidents which occur in their section.
 - a. The Watch Lieutenant will be aware of any use of force incidents during his/her shift and will make any necessary notifications.
4. The Watch Lieutenant will be responsible for reviewing and tracking vehicle pursuits.
 - a. The Section Lieutenants will be the second reviewer and are responsible for reviewing vehicle pursuits which occur within their assigned section.
 - b. The Use of Force reporting (Blue Team) will be sent to the Watch Lieutenant who is reviewing the incident.
 - i. The lieutenant will approve the entry, indicate whether it is within policy, and attach any supporting documents as needed.
5. The Watch Lieutenants will be responsible for checking all substations' staffing levels on a daily basis to ensure each area has sufficient personnel on duty. Watch Lieutenants should make themselves aware of any planned operations taking place and ensure overtime usage is not being abused.
6. A complete list of Watch Lieutenant Section duties is contained in the Watch Lieutenant Manual.

B-0310-3

EFFECTIVE: April 1, 1998	REVIEWED: 05/02/2025	REVISED: 05/02/2025	UPDATED: 05/02/2025
------------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------