

Frequently-Asked Questions

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

1) What hours is a Sheriff's Station open?

A: Most stations are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week; however, administrative and detective personnel primarily work weekdays during normal business hours. For more information, [contact your local Sheriff's Station site](#).

2) How do I get to the Station?

A: [Find](#) your local Sheriff's office. There is a map link either on the station's main page, or on the left side.

3) What is the difference between a Sheriff's Deputy, Police Officer, Highway Patrol Officer and the State Police?

A: All four are peace officers and are authorized under the California penal code with identical police powers anywhere in California.

(a) A Deputy Sheriff works for the County Sheriff's Department. California is divided into counties. In Los Angeles County communities that have not incorporated into cities, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement and operates the county jails and courts. Dozens of cities in the Los Angeles County contract with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to provide law enforcement services in the City. Some independent cities maintain their own police department, many cities contract with the county for law enforcement, traffic and fire/paramedic services. This contract provides all services of a normal police department (including extra services such as SWAT teams, specialized detective units, air support and emergency services) at a substantial savings to the City.

(b) A Los Angeles Police Officer (LAPD) works for the City of Los Angeles. The LAPD is an independent police agency specifically within the City of Los Angeles.

(c) In state-operated facilities, state police and California Highway Patrol provide law enforcement functions. California Highway Patrol Officers provides traffic-related enforcement in various communities as well as on freeways.

4) Why do I have Sheriff's Deputies patrolling in my area instead of a Police Officer?

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5) How do get access to the list of convicted child molesters in my area?

A: Some stations have a computer in the front lobby that has this information. The computer is part of a statewide database and information system designed to keep resident's informed of such information. Citizens may access this information at any time.

Additional information regarding Megan's Law (sex offender registry) [can be viewed at a State of California site.](#)

6) What happens to someone when they get arrested?

A: Depending on the level of the crime, the person will either be held for court or released on a promise to appear.

7) What are the definitions of the different types of crimes?

A: There are 3 "grades of crime":

(a) LOW Grade Crime: On a misdemeanor arrest the suspect will be taken to the station and booked. This includes fingerprinting and identification checks. He or she (in many cases) will then be released on a promise to appear citation. The suspect may be held at the station until the Court Date if the circumstances dictate such action. If the offense is alcohol or drug related, the suspect will stay at the sheriff's station until he or she can safely care for himself or herself.

(b) High Grade Crime: On a felony charge the suspect will be taken to the station and held until his or her court date (Usually within two business days). They may also have the option of bailing out.

(c) Juvenile Crime: Juveniles who are detained are taken to a Station and held pending either a transport to Juvenile hall or release to their parent/guardian.

8) How can I have my fingerprints taken?

A: Fingerprints for job applications, court procedures, and children (kid print) are usually available at your local station. Please contact your local station for hours and fees.

9) How do I obtain a clearance letter?

A: You must bring photo-identification to the station with you to apply for a clearance letter, and also your original Social Security Card in many cases. The fee is typically around \$30.00, payable when you pick up the letter, but **may vary per station**. Some stations only offer travel letters, and not immigration letters.

10) How do I obtain a restraining order against someone?

A: These are orders from a judge, restricting specific contact between specific people. They can be applied for the court that has jurisdiction for your area.

Los Angeles Superior Court - Pomona
Address: 400 Civic Center Plaza
Pomona, California 91766
(909) 620-3023

In certain domestic violence situations, peace officers can obtain emergency protective orders (only valid until the victim can apply for a restraining order from the local court).

For more information and court locations, go to the [court location site](#).

11) How can I get a copy of a police report?

A: Depending on the nature of the report and any confidentiality issues involved, report copies are generally available through the station that took the report. There is a fee of \$23.00 each report. Reports take approximately one week to become available - traffic accident reports may take longer. If you do not have the report's file number, please be prepared to supply the date, time, location and name of the parties involved to assist us in locating the proper report.

12) If my car has been towed, how do I locate it?

A: If the Sheriff's Department stored or impounded your vehicle, you should call the station's 24-hour business line. Our personnel can provide you with that information. In most cases, you will be responsible for paying any towing and storage charges or fees directly to the towing company.

13) How do I get a citation signed off for proof of correction?

A: Bring the vehicle the citation and identification to the Sheriff's Station for inspection. There is a \$15.00 fee required. This service is also available at county court facilities.

14) How can I get a permit for overnight parking in our city?

A: Annual overnight parking permits can be purchased directly from City Hall. Single night passes can be purchased for \$2.00 per night, up to six nights, at the Sheriff's Station.

15) How can I find out the progress of an investigation or court case?

A: Call your local Sheriff's Station weekdays during business hours. If you do not have the report's file number, please be prepared to supply the date, time, location and name of the parties involved to assist us in locating the proper report.

16) How do I volunteer to help at my local Station?

A: The Sheriff's Department has a number of programs for people to become involved in your community. Please contact the community relation's officer at your local Sheriff's Station during business hours or call the Sheriff's Volunteer Program at (323) 526-5757.

17) What is a citizen's arrest?

A: You have the right to arrest another person for a criminal act they commit in your presence. Unless absolutely necessary, you should avoid taking direct action and call us to avoid being

injured or sued for false arrest. In some specific situations, limitations in the laws may make it necessary for a deputy sheriff to have you make a citizen's arrest. In this case, you must sign a private person's arrest form, but the deputy will physically take the person into custody and ensure that they are properly arraigned in court. You may be required to testify in court.

18) How do I find out the status of a person who has been arrested?

A: Call the jailer at your local Station or call the Inmate Information Line at (213) 473-6100. [Click here for the Inmate Information Center site.](#)

19) Who should I call to complain about (or compliment) a law enforcement officers?

A: All California police agencies have a procedure for investigating complaints about individual officers or Department procedures in general. For incidents involving Sheriff's Department personnel or procedures, you can call your local Station on-duty watch commander (24 hours) or contact Sheriff's Headquarters at (800) 698-8255.

For incidents involving other local law enforcement agencies, you should contact the agency in question directly.

20) What happens if I refuse to sign a traffic ticket I disagree with?

A: Signing a citation is merely your promise to appear in court for a violation. Your signature is not an admission of guilt. Only a judge can levy punishments. When a person refuses to sign a citation, a deputy is required to arrest and bring them directly before the magistrate having jurisdiction. This may involve being held at a local or central jail facility overnight or during the weekend until court is next in session.

21) When must a deputy read me my rights?

A: The Miranda decision requires officers to inform a person of their rights involving counsel and self-incrimination only in certain situations involving interrogation after arrest. Current case law (based on past court decisions) dictates specifically which situations require this advisement. Generally, only juvenile offenders are advised immediately when arrested.

22) How long will I have to wait for a patrol car to come to my call?

A: Calls for service are handled in order of priority based on the level of emergency each incident represents. Crimes in progress, rescues and felony crimes take precedence over non-violent crimes and report calls. Because emergency calls often require the coordinated efforts of many units, deputies may be delayed arriving to non-emergency calls. Desk personnel continually review the current calls for service and should advise you by telephone if a deputy expects a delay of more than thirty minutes. Please do not use the 911 telephone system for non-emergency situations.

23) Do I have to give my name when reporting a crime?

A: No, we will attempt to investigate an anonymous crime tip, however, court decisions impose limitations on investigations based solely on anonymous tips. We recognize that you may not want to be identified by the people you are reporting. If you have concerns, request that your information be kept confidential or that deputies not contact you when they respond.

24) Can a deputy sheriff give tickets on freeways?

A: Yes. California Peace officers have police powers throughout the state of California. While the California Highway Patrol generally patrols freeways, any deputy sheriff or city police officer can cite or arrest for a violation.

25) Often Misunderstood Terminology:

(a) Burglary vs. Robbery - These two theft crimes often get confused.

A person who breaks into a home, business or locked car to steal is committing burglary. A person who steals from another person directly by force (like a purse snatch) or fear (threats or by using a weapon) is committing a robbery.

(b) Trespassing vs. Loitering - Trespassing occurs when a person enters or remains on private property which has signs prohibiting entry or after they have been told to leave by the owner. Loitering involves remaining in a public place without business. This is most often a concern when people loiter about a public restroom to commit sex acts.

(c) Terrorist Threats - Terrorist threats is a very specific felony crime involving threats of death or great injury from a person capable of committing the threat. This is often confused with people who provoke fights or with threatening phone calls (some circumstances, these are misdemeanor crimes).

(d) Assault vs. Battery - The severity of the crime and punishment involved in assaults depends on many specific factors including whether the person actually struck another or just tried, whether a weapon was used, what kind of injury resulted (or would most likely result), and the relationship between the parties (assaulting someone in a domestic relationship, a small child, or an official such as police, fire, postal workers, etc. would be a more serious crime).

(e) File Number - This is the unique number assigned to a report taken by a deputy sheriff. A deputy taking a report will often leave a form with the person reporting the crime including this number. As we take many thousands of various reports each year, having this number on hand will make it much easier to reference your report.

(f) Call or Tag Numbers - Whenever a deputy handles a call or stops a car, even for a warning, the computerized dispatching system attaches a unique number to that incident.

(g) Racial Profiling - Peace officers are prohibited from detaining people based solely on their race. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department voluntarily collects and reports information about the makeup of the people or personnel they stop, issue citations to or arrest.

NOTICE: The above information is subject to change and corrections. It is not intended as a legal document, and provided merely as a courtesy.

