



Kern County

SHERIFF

Interoffice Memorandum

To: Sheriff Personnel
From: Chief Deputy Francis Moore
Date: August 19, 2010
Re: Fire Department's Request for Deputy to Stand-by with Non-Suspicious Deaths

The Kern County Fire Department and the Bakersfield City Fire Department routinely respond to medical aid calls. Occasionally, they find a deceased person at the scene. Many times the person has died as a result of non-suspicious or natural causes. The Fire Department's current policy is to call this Department and ask for a deputy to respond to their location. Once the deputy is on scene, Fire personnel clear, leaving the deputy to stand-by awaiting the arrival of either the Coroner Investigator, Public Administrator personnel or the body removal service. While this practice may create manpower shortages, resulting in fewer deputies being available to back on calls or respond to the public's needs, the Sheriff is also the Coroner and Public Administrator for the County of Kern. To help alleviate some of these staffing issues, our Volunteer Services Section is working with the Coroners office and the FOB to train CSU members to respond [when available] and relieve patrol staff so they can get back in the field.

Effective immediately, the following temporary procedures will be followed anytime Fire personnel request a deputy sheriff to stand-by with a deceased person:

Dispatcher:

- The dispatcher receiving the call will obtain a phone number for either the on-scene Battalion Chief or the Station Captain.
- The dispatcher receiving the information will immediately contact the area sergeant or commander if the sergeant is unavailable. The dispatcher will give our representative a summary of the call and the Fire Department's on-scene supervisor contact information.

Commander or Sergeant:

- The area sergeant or commander will call the on-scene Fire supervisor and inquire about the nature of the death. If it is clear the death is of a non-suspicious nature AND the assigned Coroner Investigator and Public Administrator personnel do not require a deputy to respond, the Fire supervisor will be told no deputy will be responding to the scene and request they stand by if possible.

- If it is unclear whether or not the death is suspicious OR if the Coroner Investigator or Public Administrator personnel request someone secure the scene, the area sergeant or commander will cause a deputy to be dispatched to the scene to secure it until the Coroner Investigator takes control and relieves the deputy(s).
- During non-business hours, the Watch Commander will be notified of Fires request if an area sergeant cannot be located. The Watch Commander will cause the above procedure to be followed.

If there is any chance the deceased person died of suspicious circumstances, the deputy will immediately notify their supervisor and start the appropriate investigative procedures.

It is our desire to work with Fire personnel whenever possible and we will continue to seek their assistance when practical. It is our responsibility to insure we have adequate staffing for officer safety and immediate response to the public's needs and we will do all we can to reach this goal. However, the Sheriff is also the Coroner and Public Administrator for the County of Kern; as his deputies we share in these duties as well and will meet the requirements as necessary.
