



# OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

JIM McDONNELL, SHERIFF



January 29, 2018

Dr. Angela M. Wolf  
Mr. Joseph Brann  
National Council on Crime and Delinquency  
1970 Broadway, Suite 500  
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Monitoring Team:

We have reviewed the Monitor's audit of the Watch Commander Service Comment Report (WCSCR) reviews for the Palmdale and Lancaster Stations. The Monitor's audit evaluated WCSCR's generated for both stations in the first quarter of 2016.

The Monitor's audit identified several issues in which we are in agreement; however, we do not agree with their assessments of the below listed items for the indicated reasons.

1. "None of the community complaints of discriminatory conduct were handled as an Administrative Investigation, in violation of Department policy" (p. 3).

*LASD Response:* The Department does not have such a policy that states complaints of discriminatory conduct shall be handled as administrative investigations.

2. "The Department needs to reconsider its practice of having Lieutenant Watch Commanders investigate minor allegations of misconduct, such as discourtesy, while field sergeants investigate higher-risk allegations of excessive or unnecessary use of force" (p. 10).

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3. *LASD Response:* The Department's current practice is for watch commanders to investigate public complaints, use of force incidents, and allegations resulting from a use of force. Field sergeants conduct the initial "fact finding" in use of force allegations in order to determine if there is merit to the allegation. The Watch Commander and Unit Commander then confer and determine if further investigation is needed.
4. "The Department should revise its Personnel Complaint classifications to comport with California law" (p. 13).

*LASD Response:* The Department has reported their citizen complaint statistics to the California Department of Justice (CADOJ) for several years, as required by California law. In our reports to CADOJ, the Department has explained our distinct and separate protocol for classifying the disposition for the complaints. CADOJ has accepted our explanations and has never indicated that we were violating California law.

5. "The Department should separate the investigation from the adjudication of critical events such as public complaints and uses of force" (p. 46).

*LASD Response:* The Department does separate investigations from adjudications in their review of public complaints and use of force incidents. Both public complaints and use of force incidents are investigated by either a sergeant or lieutenant. They are then adjudicated by the unit commander and area commander.

6. "The Department's Records Retention Schedule incorrectly describes the nature of a WCSCR and authorizes the destruction of those records after two years rather than five years as required by law" (p. 67).

*LASD Response:* The Department retains copies of public complaints indefinitely on computer servers and hard copies for the required five-year retention period as prescribed by law. The Department's retention policy and practice is to retain them indefinitely on our computer servers.

7. "The Chief of PSD informed us that the numbers reported by the Department only reflect complaints that have resulted in a formal internal (administrative) investigation" (p. 69).

*LASD Response:* The numbers we reported reflect all citizen complaints that were filed, not just those that resulted in an administrative investigation.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Captain Steven Sciacca or Lieutenant Eric Lasko at (323) 307-8358.

Sincerely,

JIM McDONNELL, SHERIFF



JOHN S. BENEDICT, CHIEF  
NORTH PATROL DIVISION