

Hanford Police Department

SYNOPSIS

This report contains an explanation of how the Hanford Police Department responds to 911 calls.

WHY THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATED

A Letter to the Editor, published in the Hanford Sentinel on November 27, 2009, complained about the slow response by the Hanford Police Department to a 911 call.

AUTHORITY

California Penal Code 925. The Grand Jury may at anytime investigate any city agency.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury interviewed the Hanford Chief of Police and a Captain who is in charge of operations. A printed complaint form, readily available to the public, and Procedure Policy were also reviewed by the Grand Jury. The Hanford Police Department representatives also brought in a tape of the actual 911 call in question, and it was played for the Grand Jury.

BACK GROUND AND FACTS

The Hanford Police representatives explained the actual staffing and deployment of the City Police at the particular time of this citizen's telephone call. They also explained that the dispatchers answer approximately 50,000 emergency 911 calls per year. Ninety-eight percent of the telephone calls are answered within 10 seconds. The normal length of time for an officer to arrive at the scene of an emergency is approximately 6 to 8 minutes depending on the priority. Response time is based on the gravity of each situation as explained below.

The Hanford Police Department uses the following Priority List for 911 calls:

- Priority 1 In progress
- Priority 2 It just occurred
- Priority 3 It happened a while ago

FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding 1 Based on the interviews, the Grand Jury understands why this 911 call was delayed. This 911 call was classified as a Priority 3 because “it happened a while ago” and officers were responding to higher priority calls.

Recommendation 1 None

COMMENTS

The Grand Jury understands the frustration of the citizen’s complaint. The Grand Jury would like to point out that the Chief of Police was also duly concerned and will take action to resolve this frustration. The Chief of Police states he would be instituting a policy where he would have his dispatcher call a citizen back and explain why there may be a possible delay. The Grand Jury agrees with this proactive proposal and hopes this policy is adopted as soon as possible. Complaints are not taken lightly and, as stated in the Hanford Police Department’s complaint form, “You will be notified by the Chief of Police of the disposition of our investigation.”

RESPONSE REQUIREMENT

Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05 require that specific responses to both the findings and recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Kings County.

City of Hanford Police Department (90 days from receipt of this report).

