

Breakdown of Public Safety Personnel Working in Bellflower

(Posted December 2016)

Questions periodically arise regarding how Public Safety and Sheriff Personnel are assigned and who is working where. Following is a description of the resources the City of Bellflower has and how they are used.

Along with approximately 40 other cities, Bellflower contracts with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement services. Our centralized dispatching system is based out of the Lakewood Sheriff Station and dispatches deputies for Bellflower, Lakewood, Paramount, Artesia and Hawaiian Gardens. Each city has its own dedicated number of Sheriff Personnel assigned to them, but technically, cities actually pay for minutes of service, not actual personnel. Bellflower, for instance, pays for 4,026,372 LASD minutes per year at a cost of \$9.59M. In addition, we have a robust overtime budget to direct extra resources to problems when and where they are occurring. The vast majority of all our Sheriff's minutes are worked by personnel assigned to Bellflower, but sometimes units are called in from other contract cities to assist us on a call/situation (and vice versa). That is one of the advantages of contracting in this region – an impressive amount of Sheriff's resources can flow to a high need in a very short amount of time. This does NOT mean that Bellflower has part-time deputies. Including sworn and non-sworn civilian personnel, we have over 50 people assigned to work in Bellflower.

Our assigned patrol personnel are split among 3 shifts, with a couple "overlap cars." Patrol deputies are the back bone of Bellflower's law enforcement presence as they respond to calls for service, take reports, and are usually the personnel with which most citizens come into contact. The total number of patrol deputies seen on the streets can fluctuate on a day to day basis due to over-time assignments, temporarily assigned deputies, number of extra deputy trainees, additional Sheriff's specialized units working in town, etc.

One of the most important aspects of our patrol team is managing how timely they respond to calls for service. Our response times are split into three categories. First, we have emergency responses, which include confirmed threats to safety, active crimes or serious injuries. Second, we have priority responses, which include unconfirmed threats to safety, active crimes or serious injuries. Finally, routine calls, which are usually report calls after a crime has been committed and no current threat exists.

A quick look at Bellflower's recent average response times will reveal:

Emergency Response – 2 minutes and 54 seconds
Priority Response – 7 minutes and 30 seconds
Routine Response – 43 minutes and 12 seconds

As a comparison, here are the recent average response times for the entire County:

Emergency Response – 4 minutes and 42 seconds

Priority Response – 12 minutes

Routine Response – 46 minutes and 10 seconds

Our Detective Bureau investigates crimes which occur in the City. The 6 detectives and detective sergeant handle all crimes, excluding homicides, some sex crimes and other limited matters which are handled by separate detective bureaus throughout the County. Our detectives handle the investigation of crimes, track down suspects, obtain witness testimony, and compile evidence for prosecution. An additional detective working at the Substation is also an auto theft specialist and handles primarily area cases related to auto theft.

The motor deputy assigned to Bellflower is an additional resource to our City. This deputy is deployed to address neighborhood complaints of speeding, stop sign running, and generally unsafe driving.

Finally, we have our special assignment officers (SAOs), which tend to be our “jack of all trades” personnel. There are 5 SAOs and 1 special assignment sergeant. They deal with transient complaints, serve warrants, perform stakeouts on drug complaints, work patrol saturation, DUI checkpoints, quad patrols of our parks, bike trail, and river bed, and handle various quality of life issues that arise. The SAO team does not have a set schedule and will often work nights and early mornings, depending on what is needed from the community.

Beyond our Sheriff’s deputies, we also utilize a dedicated deputy district attorney and a probation officer. Our DA focuses on monitoring serious arrested suspects and addressing quality of life issues (e.g. problem tenants). She has been very successful with helping resolve community conflicts and nuisance problems throughout the City. Our probation officer assists our Sheriff personnel by tracking probationers, helping with search warrants and taking individuals back to jail when they violate their probation.

Uniformed City employees are deployed to help our Sheriff personnel be more effective and to increase communication with our residents. These include 5 full-time community service officers (CSOs) and 7 part-time CSOs. Our part-time CSOs provide desk services at the Bellflower Sheriff Substation and parking enforcement activities. Our full time CSOs are dispatched out of the Lakewood Sheriff’s Station and handle routine report calls (such as stolen vehicles or home burglaries) in order to lighten the load on our patrol deputies, so they can continue with their regular patrols. Full-time CSOs are fingerprint certified by the Sheriff’s Department and respond to crime scenes when lifting fingerprints is appropriate. The Public Safety Department also handles all of our social media platforms. We have accounts on Facebook, Nextdoor and Nixle where we monitor the information being broadcasted and provide clarifying information only when we think it is genuinely needed.

Anyone wishing to discuss this material further should contact the Public Safety Department at 562-925-0124 and speak with a manager. Thanks.