



# SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTIVE



## 524.07 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC OBSERVING CRIMES IN PROGRESS 1-31-23

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Communications Directive is to establish procedures for Communications personnel in assisting members of the public who are observing crimes in progress.

### **POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Communications Division to assist in law enforcement's response to crimes in progress by obtaining pertinent information from members of the public who choose to continue to observe crimes in progress.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **A. GENERAL**

1. When it is appropriate, as indicated below, dispatchers should remain on the line with members of the public observing a crime in progress to assist responding officers. This is particularly helpful with high priority, quickly changing incidents, or moving calls for service.
  - a. Dispatchers shall use prudent judgment, using the same parameters listed in Communications Directive 500.03 (Criteria for Dispatch) to determine when it is appropriate to assist officers by staying on the line with a caller.
2. When callers ask if they should continue to observe an incident, communications personnel shall not provide direction. Instead, personnel shall advise the callers to use their own discretion.
3. If a caller in a moving vehicle of any kind chooses to continue to observe, dispatchers shall advise the caller that all applicable laws and/or the rules of the road must be followed.
4. Dispatchers shall be mindful of public safety. Callers should be encouraged to exercise caution when information received indicates that unsafe acts are being performed while the caller is observing a crime in progress.
5. Dispatchers shall remain on the line with the caller until:
  - a. The caller stops following the suspect(s), or they can no longer see the suspect(s).
  - b. Officers have contacted the caller.
  - c. The call is lost.
  - d. The call taker and/or the floor supervisor determines that the call volume and workload within the communication center prevent the dispatcher from remaining on the phone, or it is determined by either the dispatcher or a floor supervisor that no units will be available to respond in an immediate or reasonable time.
6. Upon receiving calls involving a caller following a suspect(s), dispatchers shall broadcast the information as a pending call.

#### **B. ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

1. The following questions may be helpful to responding units and sergeants when determining the most appropriate response to a call involving a moving vehicle.
  - a. What is the description of a vehicle if a caller is following a suspect?
  - b. Whether the caller thinks that the suspect knows they are being followed.
  - c. How many occupants are in the suspect vehicle?
  - d. What is the caller's speed?
  - e. What are the surrounding traffic conditions?
2. All questions should be phrased in a way that does not encourage the caller to perform unsafe acts to catch up to the suspect(s) or for continued observations of the suspect(s).