



# Training Bulletin

SANTA BARBARA POLICE DEPARTMENT



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LORI LUHNOW, Chief of Police

TRAINING BULLETIN

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## Crowd Control

### Introductory Training

The purpose of this training is to provide introductory instruction in the field of crowd control tactics and dynamics. The goal is to provide students with an introductory knowledge and skills required to manage and control crowds and demonstrators. At the onset of a riot or major demonstration, be aware that it will likely be chaotic. The role of law enforcement is to protect the safety of all involved in a lawful protest or demonstration, ensuring that their constitutional rights are protected. Situations that evolve into or become a riot must be dealt with in a way to protect the general safety and property of the community.

Although crowds tend to be categorized as either lawful or unlawful, they are often a blend of both, and the individuals involved can engage in various behaviors. In some cases, a small group of unruly protesters can stand out from the peaceful majority—often comprised of onlookers who just want to be there along with innocent bystanders accidentally caught in the melee. The goal for law enforcement should be to protect lawful activity while identifying and isolating unlawful behavior.

#### Definitions:

- **Protest:** An organized, public demonstration of disapproval about a situation, such as social injustice, a change in laws, a government policy, or an institutional action.
- **Unlawful Assembly:** A meeting of a set number of people as described by state law who intend either to commit a violent crime or to carry out an unlawful act that will constitute a breach of the peace. *\*Participants of unlawful assemblies must be given a dispersal order, which every member can hear, before the gathering can be declared unlawful.*
- **Civil Disobedience:** The refusal to obey civil laws in an effort to change governmental policy or legislation; characterized by using passive resistance or other nonviolent means.
- **Civil Disorder:** Any public disturbance involving *numerous people* who commit violent acts that cause immediate danger or injury to people or property.
- **Civil Disturbance:** *Group acts* of violence and disorder prejudicial to public law and order.
- **Riot:** An unlawful disturbance of the peace by an assembly of two or more people acting with a common purpose in a violent or tumultuous manner that threatens or terrorizes the public.

#### Common Protestor tactics and crowd psychology:

A protester tactic can be anything that impedes normal activity at a public place, often in violation of the law, thereby, creating civil disorder. Protestor Tactics can range from simply hanging large banners to performing counter intelligence of law enforcement tactics and field strength, identifying sensitive areas

and marking undercover law enforcement personnel. Protesters rely on tactics to make their presence known to occupy or block key areas, such as buildings and roadways. Tactics assist protesters during demonstrations by acting as force multipliers, by intimidating responders, and by garnering lasting media attention. Protestors will often try to bait Officers to overreact or act out of the scope of the law in order to garner public support for their cause. Officers should make an effort to react slowly and methodically during a peaceful or passive unlawful assembly, balancing the nature of the crime with the level of enforcement. Officers should make an effort to identify and take enforcement on agitators in the crowd as early and quick enforcement can keep the event peaceful.

Protestor actions can include, but are in no way limited to: Chaining themselves together, or to an object, rigging themselves to specialized devices so that law enforcement has to remove them, holding "sit in" demonstrations, blockades, human chains, etc.

### **Incident Management:**

Managers should attempt to contact the organizers of the protest or demonstration prior to the event to determine the scope, expectations and expected numbers of participants. This allows for law enforcement to properly facilitate the event, if lawful, and give clear boundaries to the organizers prior to and during the event. This also allows law enforcement managers to properly plan for staffing for the event. Contingency plans and pertinent intelligence should be discussed at the law enforcement briefing for the event.

### **Crowd Control Tactics:**

Officers will employ a variety of uniform tactics as a group to bring order and act as a force multiplier against a larger group. These tactics include formations which are directed by the platoon leader or the designated supervisor on scene. It is important to note that the first arriving Officers may not have a supervisor on scene for an extended period of time due to an actively evolving situation. Officers on scene will have to deploy reasonable crowd control tactics at their discretion. These tactics include:

1. Formations - Effective with even a limited number of Officers against a larger group or force. Formations are especially effective when Officers utilize them in a practiced and uniformed manner. They are primarily defensive movements, however offensive movements are also used and can be utilized to remove unlawful crowds from an area. Formations are called out by both hand signals and verbal commands.
2. Less Lethal munitions - Only to be used in a department approved manner.
3. Bicycle and motor teams - Used in conjunction with traditional formations as rolling barricades, defensive and offensive formations.
4. Arrest - Officers will form arrest teams and work in conjunction with squads to perform coordinated arrests and rescues. Arresting Officers should be selected prior to the arrest and should coordinate the arrest team. It may sound very basic, but they should be fully aware of the probable cause for the arrest. An arrest processing team should also be in place to process and transport arrestees.

### **Department Issued Equipment:**

The Santa Barbara Police Department issues ballistic helmets with clear face shields and gas masks for use during riots, unruly crowds or any other applicable situation. Officers will deploy with whichever department authorized baton, expandable or straight stick, they choose to carry for normal patrol duties. During a critical incident, Officers should be competent at responding to the designated area and deploying

their issued helmet and gas mask. SBPD has riot shields and riot batons which can be deployed when the incident commander feels it is advantageous to utilize them.

**SBPD Department Policy:**

**369.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The Constitution guarantees the right to protest in a peaceful manner. This right is highly protected by the courts, and officers responding to disturbance complaints during demonstrations must be cognizant of demonstrator's rights. Although protestors have the right to exercise free speech, no protestor has the right to unreasonably disturb the peace of another person. By following the below protocol, the Santa Barbara Police Department will ensure that the rights of all are respected and order is restored.

The courts view "freedom of speech" as a highly guarded right. The more your actions appear to reasonably respect the demonstrator's right to protest while you simultaneously attempt to restore the peace, the stronger your case will be to support your arrest (if necessary) for 415 PC.

***Applicable Penal Code sections***

**404.**

(a) Any use of force or violence, disturbing the public peace, or any threat to use force or violence, if accompanied by immediate power of execution, by two or more persons acting together, and without authority of law, is a riot.

**405.**

Every person who participates in any riot is punishable by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, or by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

**409.**

Every person remaining present at the place of any riot, rout, or unlawful assembly, after the same has been lawfully warned to disperse, except public officers and persons assisting them in attempting to disperse the same, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

**410.**

If a magistrate or officer, having notice of an unlawful or riotous assembly, mentioned in this Chapter, neglects to proceed to the place of assembly, or as near thereto as he can with safety, and to exercise the authority with which he is invested for suppressing the same and arresting the offenders, he is guilty of a misdemeanor.