

JULY ROLL CALL TRAINING

High-Risk Critical Task/ Off Duty Actions

The purpose of this month's Roll Call is to discuss proper procedure and special precautions that should be taken when encountering criminal activity while carrying a firearm in an off-duty status.

A member of the agency who becomes aware of an incident that poses a threat of serious bodily harm or death to some individual shall take "action" to minimize the risk of serious bodily harm or death. "Action" under this provision is fulfilled by reporting the incident and shall not require the deputy to place themselves in a position of peril. A deputy who is faced with such a circumstance should act in accordance with the guidelines as spelled out in sheriff's office policy.

A number of circumstances may impact your decision to get involved in any situation. First, you may be alone, with family members or other non-law enforcement personnel. Second, it is unlikely that you will have all the necessary law enforcement service equipment while off-duty, for example pepper spray, baton, handcuffs, or radio. It must be recognized that the force continuum, as well as threat assessment, is changed due to this lack of equipment. You may be faced with multiple suspects or unaware of hidden suspects. There may also be environmental factors working against you such as lack of cover, crowds of civilians, darkness, etc. Your intervention may actually spark an escalation of violence.

Question: When observing a crime while in an off-duty status your best course of action might be

- A. Charge into the event and make an arrest as soon as possible.
- B. Go to a safe location and call 911, then gather intelligence like a good witness until uniformed, on-duty law enforcement officers arrive.
- C. Pull your off-duty weapon and detain everyone until it can be sorted out by on-duty law enforcement officers when they arrive.

Answer: B, go to a safe location and call 911, then gather intelligence like a good witness until uniformed, on-duty law enforcement officers arrive. If you decide you must get involved what are some recommended safety procedures?

1. Instruct someone call 911, tell them to inform the 911 operator that there is an armed off-duty law enforcement officer on scene, and have the caller provide the 911 operator with your description.
2. When on-duty law enforcement officers arrive have your badge out and visible.
3. Verbally identify yourself as a law enforcement officer, not once and not in a normal tone of voice. Shout, "POLICE! DON'T SHOOT! OFF-DUTY OFFICER!"
4. Follow all commands issued by the responding law enforcement officers. Expect to be treated like a suspect until your law enforcement status is verified. The most important rule of all: If you have a gun in your hand, NEVER, EVER turn toward an on-duty law enforcement officer.