



ORANGE COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

# NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Affairs Director Carrie Braun

W: 714-647-7042 | C: 714-904-7042

## OCSD conducts evidence case review of more than 22,000 cases

**SANTA ANA, Ca. (Feb. 4, 2020)** – The Orange County Sheriff's Department is conducting an evidence case review of more than 22,000 cases. The case review, conducted collaboratively with the Orange County District Attorney's Office (OCDA), comes after two audits conducted from February 2018- February 2019 identified issues with deputies booking evidence outside of Department policy. Fifteen deputies were investigated by OCSD for evidence booking issues identified in the audits and referred to the OCDA for possible criminal prosecution.

Following the refusal of criminal charges, the Department conducted internal affairs investigations into policy violations by the deputies involved. To date, five have been terminated from employment, nine have been issued discipline including unpaid hours off, and one investigation is ongoing.

The ongoing case review began in December 2019 with more than 1,200 active criminal cases identified by the OCDA. During the review of active cases, two additional deputies were identified for suspected issues. They have both been placed on administrative leave and are the subject of internal criminal investigations related to booking of evidence. The suspected policy violations and the cases that may be affected have been shared with the OCDA. Due to the Peace Officer Bill of Rights, no additional information can be shared at this time due to the ongoing investigation.

"These are not merely cases that have been affected," said Sheriff Don Barnes. "In every one of these cases, a person accused of a crime is owed their right to due process in the criminal justice system. In some cases, there is also a victim who wants to see justice served. I am not only mindful of those facts, they're the driving force behind my desire to uncover the full scope of this issue and hold accountable those who violated policy."

The case review has continued with approximately 22,000 adjudicated cases identified by the OCDA's office that occurred from March 22, 2015, to March 22, 2018. The case review began with OCSD staff and, beginning the week of Jan. 27, two staff from the OCDA's office are working in conjunction with OCSD. The adjudicated case review is approximately six percent complete with almost 1,500 cases reviewed.

Sheriff Barnes will begin holding a monthly briefing open to the media and available to the public online in February 2020. The briefings will cover topics relevant to Orange County public safety and operations of the Sheriff's Department. Updates on the case review will be included when information is available to share. The monthly briefing dates will be announced on OCSD's Twitter @OCSSheriff.

"The vast majority of the men and women of the Orange County Sheriff's Department are dedicated professionals who work every day to keep our community safe," said Sheriff Barnes. "Let's not allow misleading conjecture focused on an issue that we are actively working to correct distract from that fact."

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